

ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ

JUNE 1980 Re-8



MANECK GOIPORIA
CHAIRMAN
STATE BANK OF INDIA

The friendly Man from Eureka Forbes is about to demonstrate the most convenient way to keep your home free of dust and dirt.

One of these days the friendly Eureka Forbes salesman will ring your doorbell and introduce himself with his identity card.

This man inspires confidence – which is only natural. Because he is a member of the largest, most successful sales organisation of its kind in India. Backed by dependable after sales service.

He will introduce modern home products to cope with today's problems – dust, pollution, contaminated water and the lack of domestic help.

He has two unique products to demonstrate: EUROCLEAN all-purpose cleaning system, which is

much more than a vacuum cleaner, and AQUAGUARD on-line, water filter-cum-purifier.

EUROCLEAN removes minute specks of dirt and dust in your home effortlessly. Even dust you didn't know existed. AQUAGUARD gives you clear, safe drinking water on tap – at the flick of a switch – even if the raw water has high bacterial contamination.

The Eureka Forbes salesman will show you – in your own home – how these products can bring the advantages of modern cleanliness and hygiene to your family. Making it a cleaner, safer world for you.

You need not wait till his rounds bring him to your doorstep. For further information do write to us at Eureka Forbes Limited, P.O. Box 936, G.P.O., Bombay 400 001.



Euroclean

The all-purpose cleaning system which is much more than a vacuum cleaner.

Aquaguard

On-line, water filter-cum-purifier.



EUREKA FORBES LIMITED
Pioneers in modern cleanliness and hygiene.



Parsiana

June 1990
Volume 12 Number 12

EDITOR Jehangir R. Patel
MANAGING EDITOR Arnavaz S. Mama
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Parinaz M. Gandhi
ASSISTANT EDITOR Roxana H. Kaka
DESIGN Kranti Shilotri, Varghese Fernandez,
Deborah Fernandes
MARKETING DIRECTOR Veera Patel
ADVERTISING MANAGER Zarin Mistry
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE Cheryl D'Penha
CHIEF EXECUTIVE Rustom Thanavala
FINANCE B. I. Arora
EDP Rohinton E. Daroga
CIRCULATION Behram Umrigar
MANAGEMENT Minoo Patel, Jasmine Driver
OFFICE Rajendra P. Nayak,
Khurshid Panthaki, Patricia Lewis,
Rajalakshmi Krishnan, Bakhtavar Batliwalla,

-
- 3 Readers' Forum
-
- 9 Events and Personalities
-
- 13 Zoroastrians Abroad
-
- 16 Goiporia's mounting credit by Parinaz Gandhi
-
- 20 Dorabjee Trust: land(ing) in dispute by Gustasp Irani
-
- 24 The Visitors' Vision
-
- 30 In Memoriam
-

Cover: Transparency by Varghese Fernandez

Parsiana is published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd, at C/o H.L. Rochat, Navsari Chambers, ground floor, 39 A.K.Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd, C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001. Color processing, Comart Lithographers; and black and white processing, Samir Process. All rights reserved. Phone: 2048730 Fax: 2042922 For editorial enquiries: 2048183 Telex 11-85710 RABO IN

Annual inland subscription Rs 60 for one year (12 issues); Rs 100 for two years (24 issues). Foreign subscription rates: Seamail Rs 130 for one year, Rs 245 for two years; Air mail Rs 275 for one year, Rs 525 for two years. For US cheques add \$5 to cover bank charges. For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 4 for bank charges. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana and posted to GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001 or C/o H.L. Rochat, Navsari Chambers, ground floor, 39 A.K.Nayak Marg, Fort, Bombay 400001

WHEN DO YOU WISH YOUR COURIER WAS DHL?

**WHEN
YOUR PARENT COMPANY
IS SCREAMING AT YOU**

**BECAUSE
THEIR REPORT TO THE BOARD
IS BEHIND SCHEDULE**

**BECAUSE
THEY DIDN'T GET
YOUR FIGURES**

**BECAUSE
THE FLOPPY DISC
HADN'T ARRIVED**

**BECAUSE
YOUR COURIER WASN'T
DHL.**

— THAT'S WHEN. —

BECAUSE DHL HAS MORE OFFICES WORLDWIDE THAN ANY OTHER COURIER,
YOU'RE IN SAFE HANDS ALL THE WAY.

DHL
WORLDWIDE EXPRESS[®]
DHL THE COURIER DIVISION OF AIRFREIGHT LIMITED



Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity. Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"Creating the capacity..."

In "Creating the capacity to care" by Ms Arnavaz S. Mama (*Parsiana*, January 1990), it has been erroneously stated that I am a trustee of the Parsi Amelioration Committee (PAC). Kindly note that I am not a trustee of the PAC. I had attended the workshop as the chairman of the board of the District Benevolent Society and the Sir J. J. Dharamshala, a cosmopolitan and completely free home for the destitute aged.

VISHU S. DASTUR

"World Zoroastrian..."

It was interesting to read about the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress (*Parsiana*, January 1990). It is sad that our community will be almost half in number after some years. Those surviving should therefore have more religious knowledge and be more dedicated to their Zoroastrian religion than what we are today.

For that we must start to lay a good foundation now. Our present religious scholars should write text books on our religion for three types of students: for children upto eight years, for students upto 15 years and for adults. Religious knowledge should be made compulsory at navjote time irrespective of whether the child is the progeny of Parsi parents or of an intercommunity marriage. These three text books should be in every Zoroastrian home. Later on, community examinations should be introduced at all stages. In this way, the Zoroastrians, though few, will be well informed in their religion.

Two or three of our scholars should get together and do this work. The text books should be in three languages: Gujarati, English and Persian. Iranian scholars could make the Persian books representative of the Iranian Zoroastrian style. Such books should not be costly and should be available in all Zoroastrian centers, all over the world. There may be a couple of such books available today, but they are very few and costly.

Ms F. B. BOMANJI

Pakistan

"Propagating..."

Apropos Mr Phiroze Dotiwala's letter under the title of "Propagating Zoroastrianism" (*Parsiana*, November 1989), his suggestion to "adopt more conducive methods to gain limelight in the mainstream of western hemisphere," would be applaudable, were it not for the preceding sentence: "In contrast the Parsis propagate mixed marriages and hold endless stereotyped seminars and conferences."

I request enlightenment upon the following questions:

- What is a Parsi? Is it a race? A special branch of religion? Or a special group of people equating themselves with the province of Pars (or Fars) in the southern region of Iran? In my understanding the followers of Zarathushtra Spitama, regardless of origin and/or nationality, are all Zoroastrians.
- How does Mr Dotiwala propose to "propagate" Zoroastrianism if mixed marriages are not to his liking and seminars and conferences deliver no progressive results?

Webster's dictionary defines "propa-

gate" as to cause to continue or increase by sexual reproduction; to pass to offspring; to cause to spread on and affect a greater number.

If other religions do broadcast their religious virtues, the sole purpose is to recruit and convert. That is one of the ways to "propagate" religion. They not only do not shun mixed marriages, but they welcome them, for they bring new candidates "within." Also, they can count on further new members, as a result of such marriages, a very natural, and fundamental way of "propagation" as well as a scientific way of propagating and generating new genes and, consequently, termination of degeneration through intramarriages.

Through bigotry, we shun new additions to the Zoroastrian fold, either by marriage or by voluntary request to enter the religion. Yet we are constantly indignant at the progressive mathematical addition to other religions while the Zoroastrian population decreases.

We do not need the sword nor the propaganda of emissaries to add to the number of the followers of Zarathushtra. The *Gathas* constitute the most powerful instrument available.

Three millennia ago, when the rest of the planet earth was struggling in darkness, an enlightened teacher by the name of Zarathushtra Spitama came to show us the way. In simpler terms, he directed us towards the rewards of the 'Bright Mind' and the downfall of the 'Dormant and closed Mind.' We have digressed from his teachings and yet we become indignant at the diminution of our power and the decreasing population!

I am a Zoroastrian, by choice as an adult and not because I was born unto Zoroastrian parents -- a choice given to me by my creator and endorsed by the teachings of my chosen leader.

FIROOZEH YEGANEHI

Anaheim, CA, USA

[Mr Phiroze Dotiwala's letter was titled "Propagating Zoroastrianism" by the column editor in terms of the meaning: "To foster growing knowledge of, familiarity with or acceptance of (as an idea or belief): publicize" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary)]

I understand that conversion has been a

concern among the Parsi community in India. I feel that if a person wants to follow the religion of Zoroaster (in a ritual sense, that of the pre-Islamic Persians with developments by later authorities) he/she should be allowed to do so (with an appropriate initiation ceremony).

Since it is believed that all valid religions are from Ahura Mazda and considering that Zoroaster's religion originally had missionaries who very possibly influenced others, then following one particular ritual tradition (the older Persian or Fars one, as do Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians), should be no problem if a convert wishes to do so. It is sad that abuse from Muslims and Christians led to a view similar to that of orthodox Jews (and you can see how many of these tribal religionists are left).

Mixed marriages are always a problem — it would be nice if the couple were both Zoroastrians or tried to harmonize their traditions in some rational way. I've heard of one couple in which the woman was a staunch Zoroastrian and the man a former Hindu (now an atheist) — problems there!

Rev DAVID BROCK

Portland, Oregon, USA

"Why I became..."

This refers to "Why I became a Zoroastrian" by William Brawner (*Parsiana*, December 1988 and January 1989). In his response to my query regarding the status of our religion in the USA, William Brawner writes (excerpts):

"It is to be regretted that so many born Zoroastrians are ignorant of the many beautiful and noble truths taught by Asho Zarathushtra, and it is a crying shame that there are so many who would close the door to the Good Religion forever. Such would be a denial and betrayal of our beloved prophet. Surely, he did not labor at teaching the religion to others for so many lonely years, yet believing that his was not a missionary religion! No! Rather he prayed that all of humanity would embrace his teachings.

"In the West, Islam, Judaism and Christianity have failed. More and more people are losing confidence in these religions...There are a large number of Westerners who are now ready to consider and accept the teachings of Zarathushtra.

"The religion here in North America will be quite different from what is normal in India. We are discarding all those beliefs and practices which contradict or are inconsistent with the teachings of

Zarathushtra as set forth in the *Gathas*. There are many beliefs and practices held by the orthodox which Asho Zarathushtra did not teach or practice, even some which he condemned. As difficult as this must be for some people to understand, all religions change over time and gradually errors come in. After a time, it becomes necessary to go back to the teachings of the prophet and to sweep aside all those changes which came later and of which he would not have approved.

"So I, and those who believe as I do, are not orthodox. We are restorationists because we seek to restore the original teachings of the prophet to their proper place in the religion. Among us, there are very few rituals. Our emphasis is on the teachings of Zarathushtra and the implications of his teachings on how we should live our lives.

"Two very noticeable differences here will soon be that we will abandon the hereditary priesthood and allow any person, after suitable training, to become a Zarathushtrian minister (clergy). Also, the 'priests' will no longer be in one room while the people are in another. Everyone will come into the room where the fire is, in order to offer worship to Ahura Mazda before its flames. And that worship will become congregational — with all the people joining together to offer praise to God. The days of the priests, sitting by the fire alone to chant words which they don't even understand, will be gone forever.

"These steps are now being taken here in North America. I am a member of the Council of Elders of The Zarathushtrian Assembly, Southern California. This new organization is a Zarathushtrian missionary organization which will be actively spreading the Good Religion throughout the world. It will be accepting as converts anyone who desires to become a Zarathushtrian and who has a suitable basic knowledge of the faith. The Zarathushtrian faith, as taught by this Assembly, will be limited only to that which is consistent with Asho Zarathushtra's own personal teachings in the *Gathas*.

"Later, we will be establishing branches even in India. We need people who are truly committed to understanding and practicing the religion as Asho Zarathushtra actually taught it, without the superstition and other nonsense which was tacked onto the religion later.

"We already have a large number of

people who wish to join. About half of these are born Zoroastrians, the rest are people who wish to convert."

It is a pity that foreigners want to spread our religion but we do not want it. Our community has come to a very grave period, with our diminishing population comparing poorly to the adherents of other religions numbering in crores. One now needs a rationalist spirit. An organization — Zoroastrian Front — can be formed for this purpose. Indeed, Prophet Zarathushtra did not say anytime to keep his teachings to ourselves; rather he prayed for so many years, wishing that all of humanity would accept his teachings.

SOHRAB A. LUTHI

Daman

A burning problem

Much has been written and discussed by the stalwart thinkers of our faith on the problem of extinction facing us as a race and the great religion we practice. However, we do not seem to have come to any consensus. Why is it that we, our claim to adaptability notwithstanding, cannot come to grips with the real problem, the essential crux of the matter?

It is apparent that we cannot hope to disentangle this important problem by taking sides. Also most thinkers seem to confuse religion with racial purity.

Today more and more youngsters are marrying outside our community and our thinkers feel that this is very wrong and proclaim it in loud tones. Whether these youngsters are at all affected by it or not, is another issue altogether.

It is a great injustice to find that children of Zoroastrian girls marrying outside our faith, are debarred from practicing our religion. However, those of Zoroastrian boys can take up the religion of their father. On this issue, it was the learned view of the late Dr Minocher D. Karkhanavala that "this so-called preferential treatment given to Parsi men marrying non-Parsi ladies, is due to a legal advantage grudgingly accorded and does not have religious sanction." So far, so good. Some learned thinkers opine that when a Parsi Zoroastrian boy or girl marries outside our community, he or she automatically stands excommunicated: having voluntarily opted to marry a non-Mazdayasni, whether to retain the religion or not is no longer theirs to decide. I do not think anywhere in our religious texts, this issue is mentioned. Barring those cases where a boy or a girl voluntarily takes up the religion of their non-

**We uphold
every woman's
right to
exclusive taste.**



**Borosil Bake & Serve
glass dishes.**

To raise
your life above the
ordinary. To make it
a celebration.

You can choose from
a number of different
shapes and sizes.

The pie dish.

The casserole set.

The mixing bowls.

The cake dish.

And many, many more
still taking shape.

So your dinner table
can look just that little
bit more interesting.

It's a woman's right.

BOROSIL

BAKE & SERVE
IT'S A WAY OF LIFE

Zoroastrian spouse, the others should be allowed to exercise their freedom and be considered as Zoroastrians for all practical purposes. One does not cease to practice religion after one marries.

Further, these scholars maintain that when a girl marries, she automatically goes and belongs to the family of the boy. They cite examples that a girl not only takes up the name and surname of her husband but is even presumed to have left her family and merged with that of her husband's. For example, if a daughter of an athornan marries a behdin, then her name in the ceremonies thereafter is taken as "behdin so and so" and conversely, the daughter of a behdin, if married to an athornan is identified as "osti so and so" as if she was born in the family of her husband. Similarly, they give instances between Shehenshahi and Kadmi marriages. Well, this may be true, but do all these things have religious sanction or merely social sanction as a measure to avoid confusion and chaos among families and to maintain unity and identity. We should think deeply about this.

Another related issue is the case of the priests refusing to take names of the daughters married outside the commu-

nity, in the *Farmayashni* (citation of immediate survivors who have commissioned the ceremony) at the time of death of the parents. I feel that by refusing to do so, at the time when one's emotions are in turmoil and when one is in need of sympathy and understanding, we are unnecessarily trying to punish a person by raising the question of putting one's relationship with the parents at stake.

All these scholars claim that in the past our forefathers preserved our great religion, by not indulging in inter-communal marriages. With all due respect to our great ancestors, they were living in an altogether different social milieu. The girls who were kept at home and who had no access to higher education, did not have the opportunity, leave aside the inclination, to even mingle with those of other communities. Similarly, the men, owing to the type of social atmosphere in which they were born and reared, did not seek partners from other faiths. Does all this hold valid today?

Today the immediate need is to put the problems staring in our face in the hands of good non-partisan thinkers, of whom there's no dearth in our community. They could set up guidelines in dealing with these important problems.

These guidelines can be of immense help to youngsters who are contemplating such marriages but do not have the capability to view all the pros and the cons before taking such a momentous and irreversible step.

All practical problems notwithstanding, children from such mixed marriages, either from a Zoroastrian mother or father, should be allowed to come into our faith if the non-Zoroastrian partner has no objection in this matter. Then, we shall be able to retrieve at least 50 percent of the loss. After all, a child is not born with any religion. Is it fair to deprive an innocent child of the protection and strength of a true and enlightened faith?

I am neither "in favor" nor "against" such marriages. But I feel that when we take a definite stand, one way or the other, we limit our vision and become dogmatic and bigoted. Let us not become so blind that we cannot find a way to preserve this noble, profound and priceless heritage for which our forefathers sacrificed so much and for which they migrated so far.

Ms ARMATY H. BHABHA

Edited by Amavaz S. Mama

MATCH YOUR AMBITION TO A CAREER

To do so we offer you:

- * Diploma Course in Business Management (Postal) (IMC)
- * Banking CAIIB Course (Postal)
- * Executive Secretarial Course
- * Private Secretarial Course
- * Personal Assistant's Programme (working Stenographers)
- * Shorthand & Typewriting (English/Hindi/Marathi)
- * Telephone Operating & Receptionist Techniques
- * Electronic Telex Operating
- * Electronic Typewriting & Word Processing
- * English Conversation & Writing Skills

Enquire at:

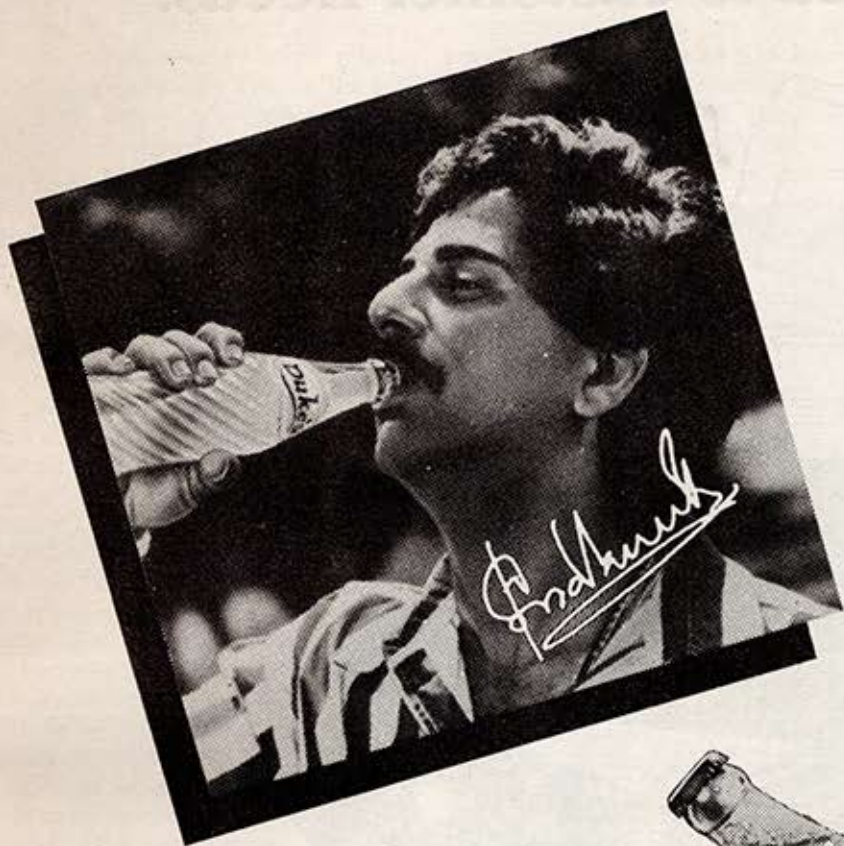


Sir J. J. College of Commerce

14, Nanabhoy Lane, Hutatma Chowk
Bombay 400001 Tel: 2871185

**The
Winner
in
taste.
The
Winner
in
Size!**

**Duke's
Lemonade**



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

Fine-tuned to customer needs.



At Kelvinator, we believe our performance speaks for itself. So while others talk about their work, Kelvinator just works. Quietly and efficiently. Serving our customers. Year after year.

Kelvinator ***of India Limited***

28 N.I.T., Faridabad-121 001 (Haryana)

Manufacturers of Refrigerators, Deep Freezers, Mopeds, Cash Registers, Laminations, Compressors, Controls, Tools and Electric Motors.

Events and Personalities

BPP trains leaders

Take to farming, was the advice given by Dr Homi Sethna, ex-chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and principal secretary to the Government of India, in his inaugural address at the Fourth Holiday Youth Programme (HYP) 1990 organized by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP). Our ancestors had prospered as agriculturists, Sethna reminded the 114 participants, who had enrolled after appearing for their school leaving examinations, while impressing upon them the need to avail of career openings in carpentry, welding, electronics, computer science, etc.

In keeping with his recommendations, the organizers had arranged for outstanding professionals from different fields to brief the youngsters from Bombay, Dahanu, Navsari, Panchgani and Satara, notes a press release from the BPP. In addition, the adolescents benefitted from a well-laid out program that included talks on religion, workshops on effective communication and parent-child relationships, seminars on topics of interest to the youth, self-awareness and personality development programs, aptitude testing and career counselling, and visits to institutions of educational value.

The registration fee for the 24-day program in April, including lunch, tea, drinks

and stationery was Rs 100 per participant. The project coordinators Ms Diana Marfatia and Ms Kamal Damania were guided by BPP chief executive Rustom Anklesaria and assistant secretary Ms Sheroo Master, adds the release. Others working with them on the organizing committee were Prof Noshir Kaikobad, family counsellor Ms Roda Pardiwalla and community counsellor Ms Banoo Ismail.

At the valedictory function on April 30, BPP trustee and Bombay University vice chancellor Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee was in the chair and Bombay sheriff Nana Chudasama was the chief guest. The credit for conceiving the HYP goes to Bengalee who, four years ago, was keen to encourage leadership among the community youth and mold them into becoming responsible citizens, it was noted. The Program has since become an annual event. Many from this year's batch have offered to join the BPP Youth Club which organizes social and community service programs like the grandparent adoption scheme, it was reported.

History by the Wayside

"One small place where the windows are still open, the footpath still walkable..." Congress member of Parliament Murlu Deora was describing the haunt of generations of officegoers, advocates, artists and journalists: The Wayside Inn at Kala

Goda, Bombay.

The marble-topped tables freshly covered with red checkers, heaped with paties, sandwiches, canapes, awaited the ceremonial snipping of the red ribbon. The comfortable old chairs, freshly lacquered, invited the throng of familiar patrons gathered to celebrate the reopening of the 75-year-old cafe after one and half years of renovation and building repair. Over the last 56 years the Inn has flourished under the devoted management of three generations of the Patel family — ever since Maneckji Rustomji Patel bought it over from a Ms Edwards in 1934.

The traditional coconut, red-scarfed chambura (pot-bellied silver vessel) and *diva* (lamp) nestled against the wall, shedding an auspicious aura as Deora snipped the ribbon on June 1, 1990 to be welcomed by Ms Pinky Parvez Patel who is enthusiastically involved in the running of the Inn.

In his welcome speech, Parvez Patel, proprietor of the restaurant he inherited from his father, Ruttonshaw, in 1978, introduced the chief guest and other patrons of long standing. Deora had been invited to do the honors "because he represents today's youthful dynamism, likes to do things, has made a notable contribution to the city of Bombay..."

Qualifying that his appearance was in

(Left) At the inauguration of the Holiday Youth Programme 1990 (from left): Marfatia, Homi Sethna, Eruch Desai, Gool Sethna, Anklesaria and Damania

(Right) At the valedictory function (from left): Bengalee, Anklesaria, Nana Chudasama, Munira Chudasama and Master

Photos: Asian Photos



his personal capacity, Deora reminisced, "Pervez Patel was my guru. I remember the days when he taught us public speaking."

A loft built into the high-ceilinged Inn to generate greater sitting space has been sealed off on the municipality's injunctions, Patel informed the gathering. Commiserating with him, Deora noted, "The punishment of wise men is to live under the government of unwise men, if you don't come forward, don't take part (in government)." Deora urged the gathering -- among whom were high court judges and professionals from various disciplines -- to stand for municipal and state elections. "Come and see me with problems regarding administration at any level," Deora offered. "Catch us (in our mistakes)... only then the city, the state, will improve."

The new beige and light brown color scheme provides a pleasant background to the stained-glass ventilators and the old wall plates, while the brandy and rum vats -- Old Smuggler, Johnnie Walker, Black and White -- remain a prominent focus of the decor. Patties, cutlets, rolls, chappatis, etc are available directly, at the new takeaway counter. Another innovation is that the Inn, which over the years used to be closed on Sundays, now offers a three-course meal of Parsi delicacies at Rs 60 per head, along with the normal à la carte fare.

The eatery which specializes in simpler western cuisine like mixed grill, fish and chips, crumb chops, etc has seen history in the making. There it was that the

late Benjamin Guy Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, Russy Karanjia and another had agreed to launch the *Blitz*, that Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar had spent many an evening drafting the Indian constitution... The premises are due to be used for the filming of a documentary on Ambedkar's life informed Patel.

Amavaz S. Mama

The High Court verdict

The Athornan Boarding Madressa, Dadar, and the Dadar Parsi Youths Assembly High School (DPYA) have bowed to the verdict of the Bombay High Court and reinstated Kobad Jehangir Bharda, the 12-year-old boy who was dismissed for misconduct from both institutions in 1988. The appeal bench comprising Justice G. H. Guttal and Justice V. V. Kamat thus reversed the verdict of the single judge, Justice S. C. Pratap, who had dismissed Bharda's petition, notes a report in *The Times of India* dated May 13, 1990.

The judges held that since the Madressa "was subject to state control and performed a public duty," a writ can be issued against it, informs *The Times*. A far reaching aspect of the judgment holds all recognized schools, whether receiving grant or not, to be mandatorily subject to the Secondary Schools Code, notes the report.

According to *The Times*, the judges had accepted the claim of the petitioners, Dr Minoo R. Bambot, a medical practitioner and Kekobad Savaksha Pavri, president of the Ahmedabad Parsi

Punchayet, that Bharda had been made a scapegoat in the ire of the Athornan Madressa trustees against a letter dated September 9, 1987 written by Mr Kerawala of Bharuch charging gross mismanagement of the Madressa. The letter, addressed to Farrokh Sidhwa, Jehangir Shroff, Ervad Rustom Panthaki and Dinshaw Kapadia, trustees of the Madressa and respondents to the petition, had alleged that the Madressa's inmates were subjected to beatings with wooden rods, were refused food and locked up for 24 hours at a time; that meals were insufficient and Parsi Oliver Twists asking for more, were coerced into silence. "The division bench said the allegations were grave and, if true, must shock public conscience," reports *The Times*. The Madressa trustees denied these allegations.

It may be pertinent to note that during this very period 1987-90, the Zoroastrian community at large registered its own vote of confidence in the 70-year-old Madressa -- perceived as embodying the spirit of cooperation between the trustees, the principal Ervad Rustom Panthaki and the donors -- by contributing 15 lakh rupees towards the construction of an annex.

The case had initially come up for hearing before Justice Sujata Manohar who had appointed a committee -- comprising Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, High Priest of the H. B. Wadia Atas Bahram, Dr (Ms) Nelie Noble, a social worker and former trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, Jal Contractor, a former deputy commissioner of police, and noted lawyers Sohrab Morris, Dara Zaiwalla and the late Firoze Damania -- to look into the workings of the institution and the complaints which were made. Though it is known that the committee met several times there is no reference to its conclusions in the judgment as featured in *The Times* story.

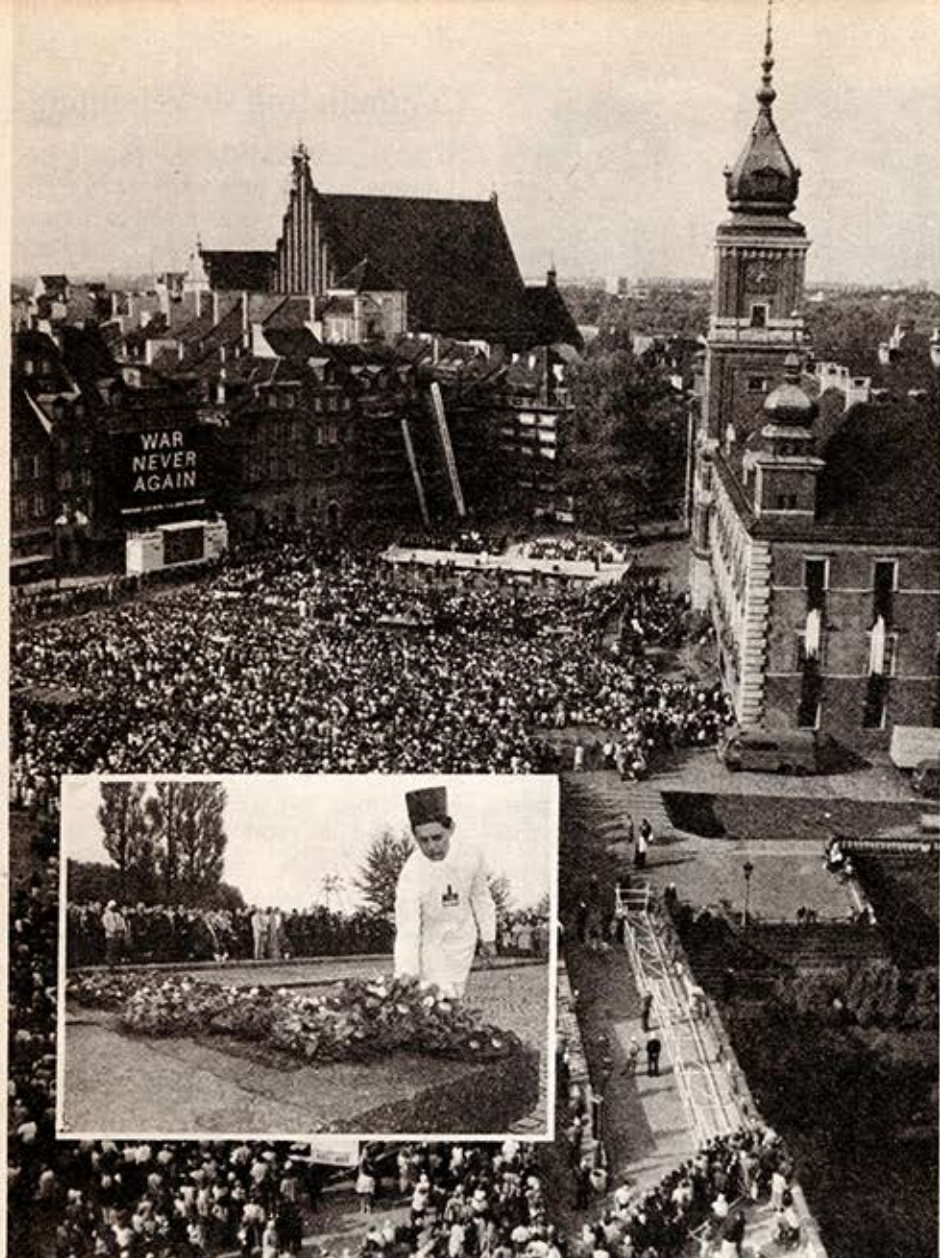
Pilgrims of peace

To remind the world of the devastation caused by World War II and to forestall its recurrence, 160 pilgrims of peace congregated at Warsaw on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary since the inception of the War, notes a report sent by Zoroastrian scholar Dr Homi Dhallia.

No religion would condone the use of war, was the message reinforced by the representatives of different faiths who met in September 1989 under the aegis of the Vatican and other co-sponsoring organizations of Italy and Poland.

Left: Entrance to The Wayside Inn
Right: Deora (cutting ribbon) at the inauguration of the eatery as Parvez Patel (left) looks on





An aerial view of the gathering at Zamkowsky Square. (Inset) Dhalla laying a wreath at the International Monument for the Victims at the Birkenau concentration camp

Dhalla, the only Indian invitee apart from Justice H. R. Khanna, explained the concept of peace from the Zoroastrian perspective. Prayers on peace from different religious scriptures, a peace march to the Zamkowsky Square where each delegate lighted a torch of peace, and written appeals sent to world leaders to restore harmony, were some of the activities undertaken at the meet.

The highlight was a solemn ceremony at the concentration camp at Birkenau (Auschwitz) where each representative laid a wreath at the International Monument for the Victims. The Second World War was symbolic of destructive power

was the message the delegates carried back to their respective traditions and cultures, further notes Dhalla.

Best triathlete

At the first ever individual triathlon in India, 20-year-old Ms Khushnaaz Adal Subedar was declared the women's champion, notes *The Times of India* of February 12, 1990.

The triathlon, in February this year, attracted 165 entrants who had to swim, cycle and run to prove their physical fitness. Subedar, a state swimmer and cyclist, came fourth in swimming and cycling but managed to get an edge over others in the last course, running. During the race she fell off when a car came dangerously close to her but undaunted she completed the event with a timing of one hour, 11 minutes, 13.52 seconds, reads *The Times* report.



Subedar: proved her physical fitness

Coached by Naval Pithawala, Subedar is a member of the Mahatma Gandhi Swimming Bath and the Wheel Wheelers Club of Pune. The sportswoman is presently doing a home science course at Nirmala Niketan, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of March 4, 1990.

Patel's PhD in law

A doctorate degree in law was conferred on Ms Thrity D. Patel, lecturer at the post-graduate department of law, Nagpur University, notes a press release. Her thesis, "Dimensions of personal liberty under the Constitution of India — Article 21," finalized under the guidance of well-known jurist Dr S. P. Sathe was recognized by the Pune University which conferred the degree.

A senate member of the Nagpur University, Patel is also a member of the academic council and the faculty of law. Subsequent to obtaining her masters in law she took up the lecturer's post at the Nagpur University, according to the write-up. A law graduate from the Nagpur University, she started her legal practice at the Nagpur Bar.

She was recently reelected lady member on the managing committee of the Shree Nagpur and Kamthi Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman for the fourth time in succession, and is a trustee of the J. N. Tata Girls' High School, further adds the release.

Chargeman on friend'ship

The only youth from the state of Maharashtra and the only Zoroastrian on the

Ship for World Youth Programme 1990, Hoshang N. Chargeman was one of the 18 youths selected to represent India, notes a press release. The two-and-a-half-month cruise was organized to promote global friendship among participants from 13 countries and to encourage discussion on matters from an international perspective. Sponsored by the Japanese Government, the Programme enabled the participants to visit Japan, Singapore, India, Egypt, Greece and Oman, further adds the release.

To qualify for this Programme, Chargeman had to pass gruelling interviews conducted by the Ministry of Human Resources Development. Another point in Chargeman's favor was his National Cadet Corps (NCC) background. At the 1989 Republic Day Parade, Chargeman, representing Maharashtra, was the platoon commander of the NCC contingent, it is reported. Aspiring to be an Air Force pilot, 20-year-old Chargeman is a member of the NCC air wing and the Bombay Flying Club where he holds a student's pilot license, informed



Patel (left): thesis on personal liberty
Chargeman: a global glimpse

Rustom Cursetji, president of the Thana Zoroastrian Anjuman.

His college education was initially at the St Xavier's College and later at the R. N. Ruia College. The versatile youngster's hobbies include swimming, reading, elocution and playing the guitar, it is reported.

As president of the Thana Parsi Zoroastrian Youth Wing Chargeman takes a keen interest in community projects like blood donation camps and visits to the homes for the aged.

Commanding shareholding

"It is South India Viscose (SIV), the company he took over in the early eighties, that would do most proud to his acumen as a corporate investor," industrial magnate Pallonji Shapoorji Mistry, who owns the construction firm Shapoorji Pallonji and Company, is commended for his bold decision in an article in *Business India* of March 5-18, 1990. Undaunted by labor trouble, power crisis, water shortage, poor management and falling profitability, he reportedly consolidated his holding in the Coimbatore-based viscose fiber and yarn manufacturing company until he controlled the largest share (37 percent) of the company's Rs 11 crore equity capital.

With a change in the managerial team Mistry was able to alter the fortunes of SIV — against sales of Rs 19 crores and a loss of three crore rupees in 1983, to sales of Rs 103 crores and a net profit of Rs 12 crores last year. "I knew the company had a good future if managed

continued on page 32

Steamship agents — master stevedores dubashes — lighterage contractors **Darabshaw B. Cursetjee's Sons (Bombay) Pvt. Ltd.**

Darabshaw House, Ballard Road, Bombay - 400 038.

Grams: 'DEADWEIGHT' Telex: 5824 DBCB IN

Phone: 260021 (4 Lines) (Dock Office: 262230)

Also associates at

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

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

THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

Arnavaz S. Mama

Zoroastrians have blazed a trail in anti-apartheid politics, medicine and trade

Unlike the Parsi communities in East Africa and the Mozambique, the majority of Parsis have chosen to remain settled in South Africa. Dr (Ms) Jer Randeria from Durban informed the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay last January. Thirty percent of the Zoroastrian population of about 80 individuals comprises children, 30 percent are over 60 years and the rest include young adults and the middle aged, she adds. The community is currently on the lookout for a mobed.

Stemming from the general conditions of apartheid, one of the factors most detrimental to the community is the blanket ban on the immigration of Asiatic spouses born elsewhere. The prevailing problem of paucity of likely mates being thus exacerbated, young Parsis choose to either remain unmarried or migrate from South Africa.

After some 120 years in the country, the identity and history of four generations of Parsis of Natal, the Transvaal and the Cape have been archived through a national video this year, notes Randeria.

The impact of the minute community — estimated at 0.0125 percent of the total Indian population of South Africa — on Asiatic life in South Africa and the repercussions of that minuteness, was also studied by Dr Thillay Naidoo of the Institute for Social and Economic Research of the University of Durban-Westville.

The 56-page mimeographed report, published in August 1987, is witness to Naidoo's painstaking assessment of the community's past, present and future in South Africa, largely concentrating on the attitudes revealed by a host of questionnaires and interviews.

The Zoroastrian contribution to the professions in South Africa has been phenomenal and varied — doctors, lawyers, architects, teachers and entrepreneurs spanning the gamut of commercial activity in insurance, shipping, film distribution and motor cars — notes Naidoo.

President Paul Kruger (1825-1904) of the Boer (Afrikaner) Republic in the Transvaal stayed overnight with the Talati family in Barberton in the course of his ox-wagon journeys, notes Randeria. A Parsi named Camay (first name not available) was Postmaster General in the early days in Johannesburg — the city of gold — and Parsis were employed as guards on trains, a position often regarded as a white man's preserve, adds Randeria.

An attempt in the early 1900s to claim special status on the basis of physical appearance, Aryan heritage and British citizenship was, however, rejected by the authorities, informs Naidoo, though informally they were "often accepted as (white people) in cinemas, restaurants and other centers of social intercourse."

Apart from this solitary instance, the Parsis threw in their lot with the Indians

smarting under the apartheid whip. Lawyer Sorabji Shapurji Adajania was the chosen individual to test the principle of Gandhian satyagraha against the Immigration Restriction Act of 1905 which debarred Indians from entering the Transvaal except with a special permit. "Sorabji entered the Transvaal in defiance of the Act and publicly declared his abhorrence of the law," Naidoo describes the event, citing Mahatma Gandhi's 1928 publication, *Satyagraha in South Africa*. "The officer in charge of the case had no orders to arrest him and, being aware of Sorabji's capabilities as a lawyer, felt unsure of himself. Sorabji informed the police superintendent in Johannesburg of his arrival across the border between Natal and the Transvaal. The police summoned him to appear in court, which he did on July 8, 1908. Before the case began, a meeting was held outside the courthouse by his friends and Sorabji made a fiery speech in which he announced his readiness to go to jail as often as necessary for victory and to brave all dangers and risks. He was ordered to leave the Transvaal within seven days and on refusing to do so was sentenced to one month's hard labor... Sorabji, in Gandhiji's words, 'turned out to be pure gold' and 'proved himself to be a first class satyagrahi,'...the first in the Transvaal. His views on satyagraha commanded respectful hearing from many people and he himself suffered

perhaps the longest term of imprisonment," adds Naidoo.

Another outstanding Parsi in South African history is the late Rustomjee Jivanjee who arrived virtually penniless around 1870, says Randeria. Then befriended by Mahatma Gandhi, Parsi Rustomjee, as he came to be subsequently — and respectfully — known, saved Gandhi's life on the occasion when the latter was mobbed by an angry crowd at the Durban dockyard. Rustomjee went on to establish the Bai Jerbai Rustomjee Charitable Trust, pioneering cosmopolitan charity through free medical clinics, contributions to school buildings, hospitals, a Sufi Mosque and finally, the establishment of the M. K. Gandhi Library ("for some time the only Indian-owned library in the country") and the Parsi Rustomjee Hall which provided the platform for the Indian community during the early years of its struggle for survival in South Africa.

The Sultan of Turkey had presented Rustomjee with a gold medal in acknowledgment of his donation to the Red Cross for medical assistance to South African soldiers in the First World War, writes Naidoo. Rustomjee had also assisted Gandhi in the formation of a stretcher-bearer corps to assist soldiers of both armies in the Anglo-Boer War. His death in 1924 was mourned by people of all races in Durban, the then mayor and members of the City Council paying generous tributes. His son Sorabji maintained the same high profile in social and political work being, in addition, the president of the South African Indian Congress. Naidoo notes that he maintained his father's generous traditions and hosted numerous social functions at his home, known as Mayville Castle in Durban which is a landmark in the city — ironically, the present headquarters of the Mayville Charge Office of the South African police.

The first Indian lady doctor to practice in Durban was Dr (Ms) Freni Manchershaw; Dr (Ms) Khorshed Ginwala, a senior specialist and senior lecturer in community health at the University of Natal's medical school is noted for her outspoken views on socio-political issues influencing public opinion in the country; Dr (Ms) Frene Ginwala, a noted historian, was forced to leave South Africa in 1960 because of her strong political views. A full-fledged member of the African National Congress, she writes for the United Nations and various press agencies, says Naidoo; Pirojsha Camay

vehemently articulates the labor viewpoint as secretary of Cosatu, the country's largest labor trade union, says Randeria; Randeria herself belongs to the Cancer Research Unit at the University of Durban-Westville and is credited with being the first person in the world to successfully inbreed certain strains of mastomies, "a most important contribution to the field of cancer research," adds Naidoo.

The first Parsi burial in South Africa dates back to 1902. "The conservatism prevalent among Parsis is strongly reinforced by Hindu conservatism with regard

Sorabji Adajania was the first Gandhian satyagrahi against the Immigration Registration Act

to marriage, language, food, eating habits and modes of worship," writes Naidoo. Thus, non-community marriages of Parsi men have been accepted but the marriage of a Parsi female to a colored person had caused deep hurt and consternation, Naidoo reports the comment of an interviewee.

Naidoo writes that he was able to determine only two Parsis in South Africa who are recognized as priests: "Despite their efforts to combine their religious duties with their secular work, they are subjected to considerable criticism by those who consider the two (jobs) incompatible. This type of internal animosity and ill-feeling in what is a very fluid situation, may yet be the forerunner to eventual demise of the Parsis as a separate community in South Africa..."

"(But) South Africa has need of its Parsis as much as the Parsi community feels appreciative of the abundance of South Africa's God-given resources. They choose to live here because of what this country has given to all its citizens in varying degrees of generosity. Given opportunities (for) advancement, Parsis will inevitably make their valuable contribution to (the country's) growth and development..."

Binding communities

An understanding of the linguistic problems of Iranian Zoroastrians is gaining ground in North America. Spearheading

the drive for bilingual (English-Farsi) publishing is the quarterly *Pak-e-Mehr*, a labor of love for its owner-editor Dr Mehraban Shahrivini of Vancouver, Canada. *Zoroastrian News*, the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, is now quite comfortable with its bilingual format. Joining them is *Gavashni*, the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec, perhaps the oldest and most sustained of the Zoroastrian newsletters of North America. The Farsi debut in *Gavashni's* March 1990 issue, as it entered its sixteenth year of publication, included Nowruz greetings and a translation of the letter from the editor which notes:

"One of the main objectives of (*Gavashni*) is to help unify... Parsi and Iranian Zoroastrians... on this continent. It is clear that this objective cannot be satisfactorily achieved without the participation of the language of our cultural heritage — Farsi..."

"With the influx of highly educated members of the Iranian Zoroastrian community in recent years, their zeal to preserve their culture and language, we feel confident we can achieve the above objective. The Nowruz greetings and reproduction of this letter... is made possible by the cooperation of Dr Mehraban Shahrivini..."

The March *Pak-e-Mehr* also carries a letter from Behram Deboo of British Columbia addressed to Dr Mehrwan Boyce of Houston, the chairman of the organizing committee of the Seventh North American Zoroastrian Congress (NAZC) scheduled to be held in Houston, Texas, August 31 to September 3, 1990. The letter requests that some provision be incorporated by the Congress organizers for the benefit of Iranian Zoroastrians. Writes Deboo: "Mr Chairman, there is a vast population of Iranian Zoroastrians in North America who would like to attend the meeting. However, what has deterred them is their inability to comprehend the high vocabulary used by the scholars. I am in a much better position to understand this problem as my wife is an Iranian Zoroastrian and through her I have come in contact with many of them. I have realized that even after staying many years in North America they are not able to overcome this deficiency."

Referring to an incident at the Sixth NAZC in Toronto in 1988 when in response to a request from the floor, Dr Farhang Mehr, with the permission of the chair, provided his Iranian listeners with

continued on page 22

Pioneering Progress

For over four decades now, we at  have made a pioneering contribution in helping industry to optimise steam utilisation. Long before fuels became scarce and expensive, we were fighting waste – helping Industries achieve economy through efficiency. In collaboration with Spirax Sarco – the word synonymous with steam the world over, we offer first class products as well as complete process steam systems leading to optimal utilisation.

Pioneers in pH and Conductivity, we still remain leaders in Industrial Instrumentation. The 80's have seen several collaborations aiming to bring the latest technology and techniques in all process parameters like flow, level, gas and water analysis

With a strong design/commissioning team and support from our Principals – world leaders in their own fields, we can offer complete design, fabrication, commissioning, installation and consultancy in fuel/steam efficiency and industrial instrumentation for every kind of process industry needs. And what we don't make, we import. Our Scientific Instruments Systems Division makes available High Technology from famous names like Fairchild, Feedback and Links. We offer Image Analysers, Crystal Growth Equipment and Measuring Instruments so critically needed by our country's R&D Laboratories. We bring more than hope to the masses with safe, simple yet sophisticated medical instruments in heart, lung and kidney care.

**SO YOU SEE, IT'S NOT JUST INSTRUMENTATION FOR
MEDICINE, ENERGY AND INDUSTRY, IT'S A TRANSFUSION OF
IDEAS FROM ONE CONCERNED COMPANY TO THE
COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE**

You can measure our contribution by your benefits

J.N. Marshall Group

J.N. Marshall Ltd
Spirax Marshall Limited
Krohne Marshall Pvt Ltd
Arca Controls Pvt Ltd
Sempell Valves Pvt Ltd

JNM Systems & Services Pvt Ltd
Cambridge Instruments (I) Pvt Ltd
Forbesons Engineers Pvt Ltd
Forbesons Tech Centre Pvt Ltd
Moore Controls Pvt Ltd



Corporate Office
Bombay-Poona Road
Kasarwadi, Poona 411018

PROFESSIONS

GOIPORIA'S MOUNTING CREDIT



As the newly appointed chairman
of the State Bank of India,
Maneck Goiporia intends to promote
marketing and consumer services

Parinaz Gandhi

As he sits with his eyes closed, his chin resting on his interlaced fingers, one can sense that Maneck Nadirshaw Goiporia is selecting his words to explain the thrust of the State Bank of India (SBI) since he has taken over as chairman: "We are, as a corporate policy, looking into various innovative things like emphasizing on marketing in banking, consumer services... There are a number of important programs in the offing, but till they become more concrete in shape and receive the approval of the authorities, it would be premature to talk about them." Being at the helm of a 2,00,000 strong work force, believed to be the largest among Indian banks, and 7,462 branches in India and 40 offices in 28 countries, Goiporia's new position calls forth all his banking acumen.

As the seniormost among the current bank chairmen, and with a non-controversial disposition, Goiporia was selected by the central government to head the country's trailblazing banking institution. For 58-year-old Goiporia, this new designation follows a series of appointments as chairman that have come his way since 1978 — first at Dena Bank, then Bank of Baroda, and subsequently Central Bank of India before he took charge at the SBI on February 19, 1990. The versatile Goiporia sees this top-level mobility, this "cross fertilization" as leading to "a very healthy interaction."

Like a contented foster parent, Goiporia states, "The SBI is the largest bank in the country and has been running on very sound professional lines." Actually it is supposed to rank among the 100 largest banks in the world, according to a SBI, publication titled *The Third Eye*. His authority extends to the seven associate banks of SBI viz State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Indore, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Saurashtra and State Bank of Travancore.

If the size of the chairman's room at the SBI is any indicator, then Goiporia's domain must indeed be extensive. In the 20-minute time slot for the *Parsiana* interview on May 7, 1990 (extended to 25

minutes) there are three telephone calls that he attends to: being apprised of a bottleneck wherever, intimating another of his tour plans... His replies to the *Parsiana* posers are brief and to-the-point; no time has he to elaborate. Yet after each terse response he welcomes the next question with a disarming smile that softens the fullness of his features.

The State Bank Group in the last financial year accounted for about 28 percent of aggregate domestic deposits, 31 percent of advances and 32 percent of total investments. The 11,898 offices established by the SBI constitute more than one-fourth of the total number of offices of all scheduled commercial banks (excluding regional banks), notes the Bank's last report. Of these 74 percent are in the rural and semi-urban areas, further specifies the report. "We do try to go all out to keep a good customer with us (otherwise) we will be saddled with only second class customers," Goiporia had stated in an interview with *Business India* of February 19-March 4, 1990.

That social banking has strained banks' profitability is a wrong impression, believes Goiporia. The real causes of dwindling profitability of banks are very low service charges and constantly increasing cost of funds. The establishment costs — periodical wage revisions, high rents for premises and residential accommodation for the staff, travelling, communication, etc — have not been proportionately passed on to the borrowers, he explains the workings.

Viewing a bank job as a "very challenging and rewarding experience," Goiporia qualifies the statement with "but only if one is willing to work anywhere in India." The chairman adds, "Unfortunately it has been my experience that the majority of Parsis, while preferring bank jobs, do not desire responsibility outside Bombay and prefer to

stagnate in clerical or junior banking positions throughout their lives. For such people I do not certainly advocate a career in banking," asserts Goiporia who has spent half his 36-year bank career outside Bombay.

"Please accept responsibilities. Please accept positions that come your way and move out of Bombay," he makes a re-



newed plea. "Only then can you show the management that you are capable of shouldering higher responsibilities..."

"Our community being so small we can't say we dominate, but we certainly play a role" in the Indian banking scenario, is Goiporia's opinion. To impress his point he mentions that the present chairman of Central Bank of India is a Parsi and so are many others holding "responsible executive positions" in India both in national and foreign banks: Union Bank of India, Bank of Tokyo, Grindlays Bank, Chartered Bank, Indo Suez...

Beginning with Sorabji Pochkhanawala, labelled the father of banking in India, "our community has been reasonably in the forefront and played a concrete role in the development and growth of banking. By virtue of their high standard of integrity, members of the community were preferred for appointment to cash departments in earlier days," Goiporia summarizes the community's pivotal role.

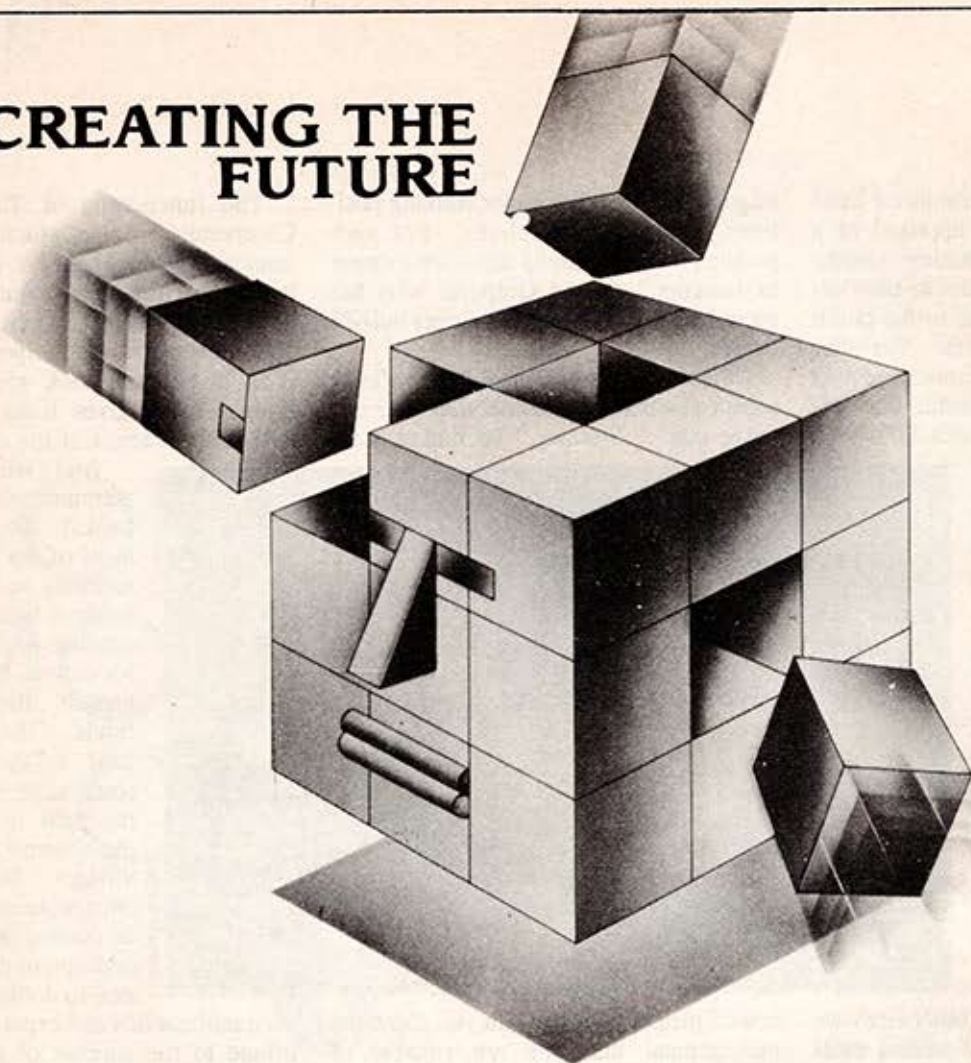
The functioning of The Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank, which was initially founded for the exclusive use of Zoroastrians but has subsequently opened its doors to non-Parsis, has created a "favorable impression" on Goiporia. He views it as "a well-run bank which despite its limited funds gives loans and does its best in the interest of the community."

And what about the community's approach to banks? Do Zoroastrians avail of the different bank schemes and loans to better their financial lot? According to Goiporia's observation, "They do approach the banks for funds. The most patronized is the scheme for small scale industries, and the next in popularity is the scheme for farmers in villages... But the spirit of entrepreneurship needs to be further developed." In addition to capital, it is the zeal to do business, technical qualifications and experience that contribute to the success of a venture, the banker continues.

One pattern that the financial chief is happy to see is that the community, "literate and enlightened, is channelizing its savings to get the maximum returns possible which is essential in today's economic climate. They are out to maximize their returns from investment and that is how it should be. Earlier they used to deposit only in fixed deposits while today we find that the average investor looks for better returns, keeping safety and security in mind. Under the circumstances, investments — in units, national savings certificates, Indira Vikas Patra — which give a good return on savings are being preferred. Those who are more conversant with the money and share market also prefer investing in shares of reputed companies..."

"Apart from a few families who are in the top income bracket, ours is essentially a strong middle-class community — literate, reasonably well-settled and inte-

CREATING THE FUTURE



Some people are better at it than others.

THE NETERWALA GROUP

For three decades, we have been pioneering a diversified range of technology-oriented projects and each year we reach farther, to bring you more.

UNIVERSAL FERRO & ALLIED CHEMICALS LTD.

DIV. UNIFERRO INTERNATIONAL
DIV. NETEL CHROMATOGRAPHS
DIV. UFA MARKETING

UNIFERRO INTERNATIONAL LTD.
DIV. UNI DERITEND PRECISION CASTINGS

UNI ABEX ALLOY PRODUCTS LTD.
UNI KLINGER LTD.

DAI-ICHI KARKARIA LTD.

BAKER OIL TREATING (INDIA) LTD.
PERFORMANCE POLYMERS & CHEMICALS LTD.
DAI-ICHI GOSEI CHEMICALS INDIA LTD.
KINETICS TECHNOLOGY INDIA LTD.
GENERAL PHARMACEUTICALS PVT. LTD.
CHEMICALS & FERRO ALLOYS PVT. LTD.
UNI CAMPINE LTD.



NETERWALA GROUP OF INDUSTRIES

Liberty Building, Sir Vithaldas Thackersey Marg, Bombay-400 020. India.

grating itself well in the Indian environment," is Goiporia's reading of the community's financial meter.

In addition to being the SBI chief, Goiporia also serves as director of the Agricultural Finance Corporation Ltd, the Industrial Development Bank of India and the Discount and Finance House of India Ltd. That is not all. He is vice president of the Indian Institute of Bankers, a member of the governing board of the National Institute of Bank Management and is on the state level security committee of the Reserve Bank of India. He also makes time for his work for the blind, assisting on the placement committee and taking an interest in the rehabilitation, training and employment of the blind.

The reasons for his successful ascent? "I was fortunate to get the right break at the right time... I would say rewards come to those who work hard and get thoroughly involved in the work entrusted to them," the banker remarks. Although 'family reasons' is frequently cited as an excuse for refusing transfers, in Goiporia's case, his family — wife Dolly, daughter Zenobia Patel and son Yazd — have been supportive of his moves. "The 18 years which I have

spent outside Bombay, handling responsible positions, have definitely been a very big stepping stone in my career," Goiporia acknowledges.

As his career takes a new course, he

prepares himself for the untraversed path ahead of him. The painting on the wall facing him sums up the mood: against the backdrop of a rural panorama, a trail winds its way, no destination in sight.

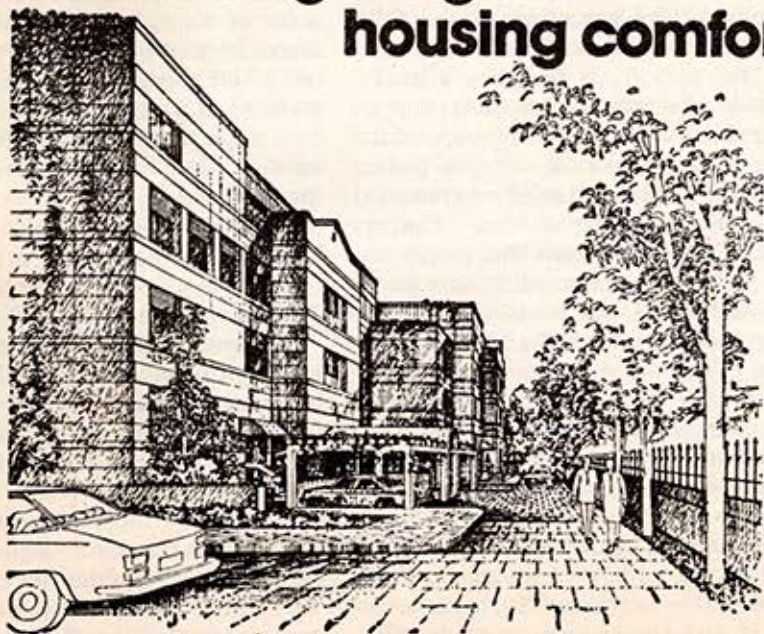
Gifts & Things

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

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

STUDIO AKAR 6T/2660

Tata Housing. Building magnificent new ideas in housing comfort.



In keeping with their spirit of innovation, Tata Housing has designed a wholly different concept in living — a concept that represents comfort at its most luxurious, spacious apartments, splendid views, peaceful surroundings and excellent amenities. Beautifying and enhancing the quality of living — the guiding philosophy of Tata Housing.



**Tata Housing
Development
Co. Ltd.**

D-20, Dhanraj Mahal 2nd Floor
Ch. Shivaji Marg
Apollo Bunder, Bombay 400 039
Tel.: 2026607, 2026427, 2026556
Telex: 011-3234 TANNIN

CHAITRA B. THAKUR

Dorabjee Trust land(ing) in dispute

Gustasp Irani

The Bombay High Court has admitted a plea by the Surat Parsi Punchayet challenging the sale of the Dorabjee Trust land in Poona

This time it is the sale of trust land belonging to the Dorabjee Pallonjee Patell Educational Charity Trust in Poona which has been challenged. Though earlier the joint charity commissioner in Poona turned down the application of the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP) trustees, last November the Bombay High Court admitted their petition questioning the land sale. The SPP's involvement stems from the fact that they have been named beneficiaries/custodians, entitled to a 50 per cent share in the trust proceeds.

The core issue, according to the SPP, is that the land was sold to Savak Patell, who was a trustee of the Dorabjee Trust until a month before the sale was transacted, at a price far below the market price of the land. The trustees of the Dorabjee Trust maintain that technically Patell had ceased being a trustee at the time of the sale and besides, he was the major tenant (occupying 80 per cent) of the Dorabjee Trust land.

The Dorabjee Trust traces its origins to 1911 when Dorabjee Patell founded a trading concern, Dorabjee and Company. In 1930 he sold the business to his wife's brother (Savak Patell's father). However, the land on which stood the business premises, formed the corpus of the Dorabjee Trust that he created for the education of the children he never had: the poor and orphaned Parsis of Surat and Poona.

In March 1989, the trustees of the Dorabjee Trust applied to the joint charity commissioner in Poona to permit the sale of the trust land to Savak Patell for six lakh rupees. The charity commis-

sioner sanctioned the sale but fixed the purchasing price at Rs 9.75 lakhs. Subsequently Savak Patell entered into an agreement with Mehta Raheja Construction Company to develop the property into a commercial complex. According to Ms Thrity Poonawalla, Savak Patell's daughter-in-law, Mehta Raheja Construction Company paid Rs 41 lakhs to Dorabjee and Company, major tenants of the land, for granting them leave to develop the property.

In their application to the joint charity commissioner, the SPP described the sale as "void and illegal...since it is a sale by a trustee to the trustee himself." Sorab Katpitia, chief executive of the SPP, states in an interview: "The main issue is that the property is taken by a trustee himself who retired from trusteeship on grounds of ill health. However, at the time of the (purported) sale, the buying trustee's brothers and relatives continued to remain the sitting trustees." Furthermore, the SPP contends that proper notice of the sale as also advertisements in the local papers were not issued. Besides, the purchasing price of Rs 9.75 lakhs was way below the one crore rupees estimated price of the land. They dismiss the involvement of Mehta Raheja Construction Company as a matter that does "not divest the Dorabjee Trust of the trust property."

Poonawalla argues that Patell was not a trustee at the time of the sale and that notice of his resignation had been sent to the charity commissioner and the SPP. The latter, she claims, even acknowledged his resignation and expressed

their appreciation for the many years Patell served the community and the Trust. She adds: "The SPP is the guardian of the orphans and the poor in Surat. That is the only role they have, and if new trustees are appointed they have to be informed."

However, it appears that when the sale of the Trust property was considered, Patell was indeed a trustee. In December 1987, R. M. Master, one of the trustees at the time, referred Patell's proposal to buy the land from the Trust to Justice J. E. Sanjana (ret'd) for his legal opinion. The retired judge's opinion on the matter reads: "The application smacks of absence of bonafides... the main object (it seems is) to enable Savak Patell who is one of the trustees to purchase the Trust property at a nominal price. A trustee cannot purchase the trust property. It amounts to misconduct on the part of the trustees."

Justice Sanjana's opinion also highlighted other discrepancies. For one, it refuted the trustees' contention that the Trust is not a "public trust." He argues: "The beneficiaries are not restricted to the Patell family. Thus the Trust cannot be a private trust. Merely restricting it (the beneficiaries) to the Parsi community does not make it a private trust."

The opinion also points out an "irregularity" in the management of the Trust in that except for one trustee all the other trustees are from the Patell family whereas the trust deed provides for only one member of the Patell family as a trustee. In sum, Justice Sanjana concludes that the proposal to sell the Trust

land to Savak Patell is not legal and maintains that "no member of the settlor's family can claim any preferential rights in purchasing the Trust property."

Poonawalla, however, sees the equation differently: "My family has always been in the majority (on the Trust board) and the Trust is mainly a family trust that helps the poor children of Poona and Surat." Jehangir Patell, trustee during the time of the sale and currently managing trustee of the Dorabjee Trust, justifies the sale of the land to his uncle Savak Patell by observing: "Besides being a trustee, he (Savak) was also a major tenant of the Trust property and legally the property can be sold to a tenant. It just so happened he was also an ex-trustee." Jehangir Patell admits though that the sale of the property was not advertised in the local newspapers.

Would the sale price have been higher were it properly advertised? No, says Poonawalla, Rs 9.75 lakhs is a fair price. She points out that Mehta Raheja Construction Company had to pay another Rs 57 lakhs to the authorities to convert the property into freehold land. The Rs 41 lakhs paid to Dorabjee and Company was as compensation for their 80 percent tenancy rights. "We will be occupying a much smaller space in the new complex...The value of property belongs to those who actually possess it; the majority of value remains with the tenant."

Was there need to sell the land? Yes, says Jehangir Patell. "In the original trust deed there is a clause that if the rent is not sufficient and if the trustees are able to generate more income elsewhere they are allowed to sell the property." He points out that the building standing on the property is old and in need of ex-

tensive repair — approximate cost Rs 7.75 lakhs — which if undertaken would have been way above the gross annual receipts of the Trust (Rs 33,693 in 1987): "One must realize that we were collecting rents at old rates," says Jehangir Patell.

Katpitia sees the problem differently: "The settlor in his trust deed has specifically mentioned that in the event the trustees of the Dorabjee Trust are unable to manage, then the entire management should be handed over to the SPP."

"But the Dorabjee Trust is very much in existence," counters Jehangir Patell while refuting the inference that the Poona trustees are unable to manage the Trust affairs. Rather, after the sale of the land, the revenue of the Trust has multiplied many times over. The sale returns of Rs 9.75 lakhs have been invested with the Unit Trust of India as per the charity commissioner's recommendation, and the annual income of the Trust is now about Rs 1.20 lakhs. "This year we sent Rs 60,000 to the SPP and distributed Rs 60,000 in Poona. Earlier the SPP and Poona would get only Rs 2,000 each."

Apparently, the SPP feels that getting more than it did earlier does not imply that it is getting as much as it should, had the property been sold at a fair market price which they peg at one crore rupees. Katpitia confirms that Mehta Raheja Construction Company had approached the SPP with an offer to settle the matter. "At present we are studying this proposal but it does not seem practical."

The SPP's initial application to the joint charity commissioner in Poona to reverse the sanction to the sale proposal, had been contested by the trustees of the Dorabjee Trust who submitted that the

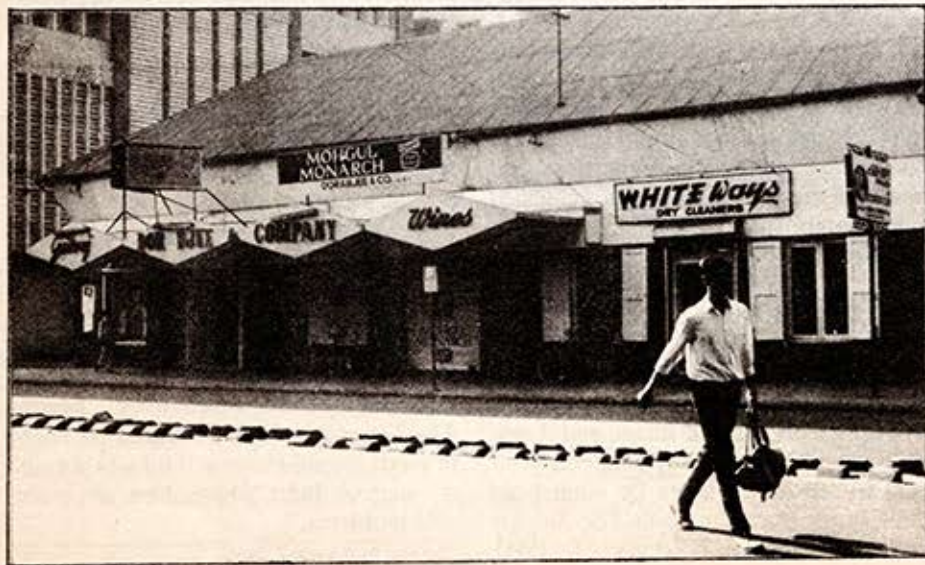
charity commissioner no longer had jurisdiction over the matter since the sale was completed and the land was no longer trust property. The plea was based on a precedent to that effect set by a Nagpur bench and accepted by the charity commissioner who ruled that he was thus no longer the competent body to decide the issue. (Justice Sanjana sees the Nagpur ruling as an important one which will have direct bearing on many Parsi public trust matters.)

Burjor Antia, senior partner of Mulla and Mulla and Craigie Blunt and Caroe, who fought for and obtained admission of the plea in the Bombay High Court sees the Court's acceptance of the appeal as a major victory for the community. "The community should demand the resignation of the trustees and should approach the charity commissioner to have them removed" so that the Trust corpus no longer remains in their charge. According to him any two persons can file such an application. "Since it happened in Poona, someone from Poona should do it or possibly the Bombay Parsi Panchayat should take on this task, lead and guide the Parsi community."

Jehangir Patell sees no wrong done on



(Above) Hoardings announcing the sale of land. (Left) Dorabjee and Company: major tenants Photos: Gustasp Irani



the part of the trustees of Dorabjee Trust. "Technically it was all above board," he states. According to him the sale was legal and the beneficiaries benefitted by it as the Trust income has grown many times over. He concedes that the sale has also helped Dorabjee and Company ("which incidentally is heavily in the red") but only because they were the major tenants of the land. According to Dinshaw Anklesaria, trustee of the Poona Parsee Panchayat, the issue goes beyond Dorabjee Trust; it concerns the right of trustees — the custodians of trust properties — to compromise community interests to sort out personal problems.

BOYS' TOWN Public School Nasik 2

Recognised as a **Public School** by the Department of Education for Indian Merit Scholars. **Excellent Climate — All-round Education:**

All Academic Subjects — Technical Subjects: Workshop Technology, Mechanical & Electrical Maintenance, Carpentry & Farming. Training in **Self-Government** through Elected Boys' Office bearers. **Games — Physical Training — Daily Assembly with Congregational Prayers —** Weekly intensive Zoroastrian — Geeta-Koran classes — **Excellent Modern Kitchen and Dining Room facilities — Airy Dormitories. Moderate Fees. Concessions to Deserving Students.**

Apply to

**THE MANAGING
TRUSTEE**

**P. N. MEHTA EDUCATION
TRUST**

Cooks Building,
324 Dr. D.N. Road,
Bombay 400001.

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD *continued from page 14*

a brief synopsis of his English speech, Deboo recalled the objection of an Indian Zoroastrian to this procedure. He added that whenever the Zoroastrian Society of Vancouver, British Columbia organized lectures, one-day seminars or other meetings, "we invited speakers who were proficient in both languages so that Zoroastrians who lacked a deep knowledge of the English language, could actively participate, could understand what (was) going on and relate to each other."

Deboo suggests that the Seventh NAZC invite bilingual scholars like Mehr, Dr Ali Jafarey and others and perhaps reserve a session when Farsi synopsis could be provided. "If your committee favors such a decision, it should be widely publicized through your brochure," adds Deboo.

Other conscious attempts at integrating the two Zoroastrian communities is the holding of Persian classes by a number of North American associations and a call by FEZANA president Rohinton Rivetna to use the opportunity presented by the convergence of Hormuzd roj according to the Shenhshahi, Kadmi and Fasli calendars on March 21, 1992 — and every subsequent March 21 through 1995 — to arrive at the use of a single calendar. Quoting from a paper "Some historic facts on the Zoroastrian calendar" presented by Dr Jehan Bagli, editor of *Gavashni* and the *FEZANA Journal*, which shows the Fasli calendar as being the most in step with the seasons, Rivetna writes, "From 1992 to 1995 we will be presented with a golden opportunity that will not recur in our lifetimes...On this continent, Zoroastrians are making a new beginning. Whatever we do, or fail to do, will have a lasting effect on future generations." Rivetna's letter addressed to all North American associations urging discussion and inviting comments, suggestions and papers on the subject has been published in the March-April 1990 issue of *Zoroastrian News*.

Grafting a new face

"Patients with genetic deformities are eternally grateful for anything that you can do for them, whereas trauma patients have a very precise self-image and if you don't get it perfect, they are on your back all the time," notes Dr Khursheed Moos in an interview with *The Sunday Times* of Scotland, February 11, 1990.

Moos is consultant oral and maxillofacial surgeon at the world renowned plastic surgery unit of Glasgow's Canniesburn Hospital where those genetically disfigured and those injured in accident or assault are given a new lease of life. The institution deals with about 700 fractures a year — 60 to 70 percent of the workload — stemming directly from physical violence related to alcohol, notes *The Times*.

The article refers to Moos as a pioneering surgeon whose knowledge and experience to perform such complex surgery is daunting: two degrees in dentistry and medicine in addition to specialist fellowship in dentistry and surgery.

Moos is in the news because he is in the process of introducing a new type of surgery to Scotland, informs the article. Hitherto, "patients who had lost an ear or nose, would be fitted with a prosthesis (artificial substitute) which could only be glued on and there was always the embarrassing risk of it falling off. But the Branemark method, first developed in Sweden, involves the implanting of special screws into the bone which allows the prosthesis to be clipped on securely," informs *The Times*.

"The screws are made from titanium and we have found that the bone grows into the grooves of the screws, which makes the implant strong and long-lasting," Moos told the paper. The cost of each implant is reckoned by Moos at £ 1,000 (approximately Rs 29,000) and shortage of funds is Moos' main complaint, the article notes.

The surgeon, who works 12 hours a day in the hospital, forecasts "an exciting future for his speciality with the possibility of foetal surgery on genetically disfigured babies...The technology exists and the surgery has already been carried out on animals."

Cyrus Mehta of Essex, UK who sent *The Sunday Times* clipping to *Parsiana*, informs that the 55-year-old healer is the son of the late Jehangir Moos, a respected president of the London Zoroastrian Association for many years who rendered valuable service to the community as well as other cosmopolitan organizations in England. The scion may have inherited similar leanings: "I think it is very important to learn how the other half of the world lives," he told *The Times* reporter. "I would be happy to work abroad in some third world country such as India where there are extensive problems."

Compiled by Amavaz S. Mama

Best Wishes From
RUSY & PURVIZ SHROFF

With best compliments from

M/s M.Pallonji & Co Private Limited

**Industrial painting and coating, anti-corrosion
water-proofing and construction contractors**

87, Abdul Rehman Street
Bombay 400003
Tel: 324150/330306 Telex: 011-75871 MPEL IN
Cable: "PALLONJIM"

The Visitors' Vision

Gustasp Irani



The community's religious structure is weak and yet adherence to religious principles has contributed to its success, observe two British TV documentary makers

"Be-far-ma-id," Richard Harris, British TV producer on assignment in India for BBC Channel 4, welcomes you in perfect Farsi. You soon come to learn that he is equally fluent in Urdu. His director and cameraman, Jan Pester does not venture beyond English. In one corner of their hotel room in south Bombay, cases of mineral water are neatly stacked — a sign that camp has been established. Books, mainly on Parsis and Zoroastrianism, are scattered around and at the desk is a spread of charts and cards listing the different aspects of the community and religion. Presently, the two start probing, exploring, seeking. Their quest? A better understanding of Parsi Zoroastrians on whom they plan to make a 52-minute documentary film. For about two months in Bombay and Gujarat they worked with single-minded devotion on the project. The blur of the early days had focused into sharp images, not only on film, but also in their perception of their subject matter. Indeed, they had tuned in to the sensitivities of the community.

"The Parsis will have to forgive us for our shortcomings because while the film is made with them very much in it, they are not the target audience," says Harris. "But I do imagine that our film will educate the people in Britain that Parsis do exist and that they are a different type of Indians," says Pester.

According to the filmmakers, the average Brit knows little or nothing about Parsis or Zoroastrianism. Those who might have heard of them probably recog-

nize that the religion has something to do with the title of the book *Thus Spake Zarathustra* or have some vague notion that they are fire worshippers and leave their dead to the vultures. "Personally, I think that this manner of disposing the dead is... as good or as bad as any other method," clarifies Pester.

"I don't think it is our job to suggest to the Parsis what they are supposed to do," believes Pester. It is the message and religion of the prophet Zoroaster that is of consequence. "Zoroaster offers a simple explanation for good and evil which does not blame God for evil. This, and the fact that it is a religion of choice, appeals to me. The other aspect about Zoroastrianism is that it relates to the things that really matter in life: earth, water, fire, air, plants. I hope to get that aspect across in the film: that it is a religion based on the simple fundamental things of life," says Pester. "The issue of air, earth, water are not confined to Zoroastrians alone, they concern the whole world. No day goes by without a major story about pollution," adds Harris. He recalls the time when the film crew was at Chowpatty on *Ava mah*, *Ava roj* to record the Parsis paying their respect to water. "It was quite distressing to see them throw their offerings into the sea along with the plastic bags. Plastic bags do not rot...they are one of the worst forms of pollution. The symbolism (then) becomes meaningless."

Pester agrees: there is not much evidence of Parsis caring for the elements. They may observe the rituals, "but living

in Bombay they are not concerned with things that they are not in direct contact with. Parsis have moved far away from their roots — the nomadic tribes in northern Iran." Signs of our times is the growing migration of Parsis from rural Gujarat to urban Bombay: an abandonment of their rural roots even in India. The crew visited a village near Navsari that had been totally deserted by the Parsis. "The two most substantial buildings in the village were the Parsi agiary and the Parsi dokhma. The rust on the locks testified to the number of years they had remained closed," says Harris. The agiary was full of spiders and the dokhma overgrown with plants.



Harris: "more religious than before" Facing page

(Top row left) After visiting Aslaji Agiary many would worship at the Sai Baba temple Photo: Homyar Mistry (Right) Audience at World Congress: a sea of glasses?

(Below) *Ava mah*, *Ava roj*: worshipping or polluting water? Photo: Homyar Mistry

"It was really quite sad."

In their encounters a problem that Harris and Pester had to deal with was the divergence of views in the interpretation of the Zoroastrian texts. Says Harris, "You ask a Parsi what his religion is and he replies, 'Zoroastrianism.' But the moment you ask, 'what is Zoroastrianism?' you don't get the same answer unless the respondents are high priests. 'Behind this divergence (among the laymen) is the lack of a unified system of religion... Very often, what Parsis hold as Zoroastrian beliefs don't turn out to be orthodox Zoroastrian beliefs. You ask a Parsi what Zoroastrian beliefs are and he says XYZ. So you ask a dastur about XYZ and he says, 'No, XYZ is not a Zoroastrian belief.' There is no doubt that the dasturs are very learned men." According to Harris, it is only among the high priests that there is consistency in what really is Zoroastrian belief.

Harris singles out the strong mobeds of the past as one of the strengths of the community. As an entity separate from the behdins they had been an important factor in the survival of the religion. "The behdins could go about their task knowing that the mobeds were looking after the religion. This strength of the past has now become a weakness. I find very little respect among the Parsis for their priests. They are very willing to dismiss them as ignorant and backward. The behdins have changed over the last 100 years in a very obvious way. In comparison there has been very little change in the mobeds. They are no longer capable of answering the social

needs of the community. If a Parsi has a problem, the last person he will go to for help is a mobed."

Though the religious structure may be weak, the British filmmakers recognize that much of the success of the Parsi community is because of their religious principles. "The success of such a small community in almost any field can be traced to two Zoroastrian principles: one which approves of wealth and the other which encourages charity. These two are very workable principles," says Pester. "I can't think of any other community

that has created as vast a welfare system for its own as the Parsis have," adds Harris. "It does not stop the Parsi from being dissatisfied, but that's good. Dissatisfaction shows that they are struggling to improve." Harris elaborates on the significance of a sudreh and kusti to a Parsi: "An armor against evil. I think that's true. I think that they are very powerful symbols for those who wear them are aware that they are engaged in a battle against evil. If more people are engaged in this battle, the society we live in benefits. Parsis have to stand up and be counted. The Parsi recognizes that he has to constantly fight this evil because in the city of Bombay you are surrounded by *drug*. It manifests itself everywhere: poverty, dirt, appalling living conditions..." But worse, according to Harris, is the fatalism of the East which "makes people accept their lot as karma rather than fight the evil and rise above it. To the degree that a Parsi, as expected by



his religion, fights this evil, he is more western in his attitudes to life than other Indian communities.

"The Parsis are the closest in dress and attitudes to the culture I come from," says Harris. "A Parsi's idea of good is my idea of good, and yet there is a gap between a Parsi and me." The gap, according to Harris is manifest in the judgment of Justice Frank C. O. Beaman, one of the two judges in the landmark *Petit vs Jeejeebhoy* case of 1906. The judges had to decide whether a non-Parsi who converts to Zoroastrianism could be admitted to a fire-temple, have his body consigned to the Towers of Silence and avail of other trust benefits. Both judges, Beaman and Dinshaw D. Daver, concluded that the trusts were founded for the use of Parsi Zoroastrians and therefore a non-Parsi, though permitted to convert to Zoroastrianism, could

not avail of the trust benefits. Beaman said that the Parsis had followed the caste system of the Hindus and viewed themselves as a higher caste. They therefore chose to bar others from entering their place of worship.

"I think all Parsis should read (this judgment) and ask themselves: 'Is this the way we want to be viewed as we enter the twenty-first century?' What an extreme contradiction this is to the other view of the Parsi — probably the most progressive and Western of all Indian communities."

According to Harris' reading of the judgment, the verdict is that Zoroastrianism accepts converts and the Parsis accept the prevailing caste system in India. "It's not a question of others viewing Parsis as part of the system, but the Parsis thinking of themselves as part of it. You must realize that the judgment is based on the submissions made by Parsis themselves." But Harris is quick to add, "It's for the Parsis to decide if they want it that way; it's their right. Yet there are Parsis who think it rather silly to be obsessed with these ideas of racial purity."

The obsession with racial purity can manifest itself in hideous ways. "On one extreme you feel that the religion of Zoroaster has so much to offer the world and then there is the other extreme when a Parsi (referring to a mobed who spoke from the floor of the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay in early January 1990) was able to stand up and quote extensively from Adolf Hitler on

the importance of racial purity, which frankly surprised and appalled me. For if there were two people in the twentieth century who stood for bad thoughts, bad words and bad deeds, one was Hitler (the other, in Harris' opinion was Stalin)." Says Harris, "I'm willing to accept the idea that you can be a Zoroastrian without being a Parsi. I'm not a Zoroastrian and I've not been invited by any Parsi to become one..."

Pester believes that there is a large difference in the attitude towards religion in the West and in the East. "In the East you are pitied if you don't have a religion. In the West people are very cynical about organized religion. I was brought up as a Christian; was the lead guitarist in the church pop group. Now I work out my own religion and what I have worked out is very close to Zoroastrianism." He points out the paradox that while many religions spring from Zoroastrianism — Christianity, Judaism, Islam — now there is a very real danger of it being absorbed into other religions. Both Harris and Pester refer to their shooting expedition outside Aslaji Agiary on Meher roj, Meher mah. Parsis would stream out of the Agiary, cross the road and go and pay their respects at a Sai Baba temple there. After that experience, the picture of a Sai Baba devotee on the cover of *Parsiana* no longer puzzled them.

According to Pester the "question of conversion of children of Parsi mothers and non-Parsi fathers is going to become a greater issue as the rest of India becomes more cosmopolitan." The solution? "I don't think it is the role of a couple of ill-informed Europeans to tell

the Parsis how to solve their problem. If the most talented community in the world can't find a solution to its own problems, who are a couple of European filmmakers to tell them what the solutions are?" asks Harris. Yes, he stands by his statement, the most talented community in the world. "If you look at the number of talented Parsis in every field of endeavor and compare them against their total numbers, then there is no other community in the world that is as talented. The Jews are very talented, but they number many millions. The Parsis are just about a lakh."

Like the Jews, the Parsis too have distinct physical characteristics. "It happens in any small community," says Harris. "You can recognize a Parsi from a distance. He has a certain translucence of the skin, a certain sense of fragility, (though) I know that they can be very sturdy." Another Parsi characteristic became apparent during the inaugural function of the World Zoroastrian Congress. As the camera panned over the crowd, Pester was amazed at the amount of reflection he was getting till he realized that he was looking into a sea of glasses: "Ah, another result of inbreeding — poor eyesight."

The other problem, of course, is one of dwindling numbers. "It's always very sad to see something dying and we definitely got the impression that the community is dying, at least its numbers are dwindling. I don't know what can be done about it. I don't know if anything can be done," says Harris. He is, however, cautiously encouraged by Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Homi Ranina's experiment in resettling Sanjan with Parsis, though, of course, the venture is commercial rather than agricultural. "I wish him success. He is trying to give Parsis what they need: houses, business, work and a place of worship. One hopes the project in Sanjan will come to something."

"I have not seen what I have shot," says Pester on the final day as he packs to leave. "My editor's initial reaction will be important since he will come in as a relative stranger. It will be difficult for me to be objective now." He clarifies that since the budget is limited, the documentary will run for only 52 minutes. "To cover every aspect of Zoroastrianism would be very ambitious." Given the limitations, the film will touch briefly on the Iranian side of the community and even less on the community settled outside India and Iran. Pester ex-

Adeserteddokhma with overgrown weeds

Photo: Homiyar Mistry



Reaching for the Sky



Two landmarks in Bombay – the Commerce Centre of the World Trade Centre Complex and the new Reserve Bank Building.

Both built by Shapoorji Pallonji of course!



SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

Shapoorji Pallonji Centre, 41/44, Minoo Desai Marg, Colaba,
Bombay-400 005. Phone: 2870211/2870195/2870197.

pects it to be shown on BBC Channel 4 in late 1990.

Regarding the technical aspects of the film Pester observes: "Documentary films in Britain are approached differently, in the sense that we don't start with a script. Richard and I started out on this project with a very open format. We had a whole set of wall charts, very much like a war campaign, only it had to do with visual and mental ideas." In quest of these ideas they claim to have waded through about 150 books on Parsis and Zoroastrianism between them, tugged many tons of sophisticated equipment from Britain all over Bombay, Surat, Navsari, Udwarda, the rural areas, argued at octroi checkpoints that their equipment was exempt from entry tax and more. Helping them in their task was their camera assistant, Ms Kathy Friend and sound recordist, Stuart Wilson, both from Britain. The balance of the crew was recruited from Bombay itself.

We observe Pester who has just carted a weighty piece of equipment from the hotel lobby to the vehicle parked outside. He blows into his scarred and dirty hands. "Show business is a glamorous

life, isn't it?" he quips to his camera assistant Friend. Pester who owns his film equipment and motion pictures service company in Glasgow and has worked on a number of commercial films, traces his involvement with the Zoroastrian project to his long standing friendship with Harris. However, it was only recently that the two were able to pool their professional talents. Their first project together was a 20-minute film on an Islamic theme — the *Quran* in Britain. The day after they completed the shooting for that assignment, they flew down to Bombay to start work on their current film. "Since I have done these two projects I definitely have been more religious than before. I don't know if it is a combination of that or just the age I am at — 39," confesses Pester.

Harris traces his contact with Zoroastrianism to his childhood when he read Edward Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*. Later, in his words, "for reasons I can't recollect I wanted to study Urdu. In the '60s there was a growing awareness of India in the West and I did not want to get involved like the hippies." So he did it differently. He studied Urdu. "Urdu leads

you to Persian and Persian leads you to Zoroastrianism which is undoubtedly one of the great religions of the world." After having discovered Zoroastrianism, the next step was to make a film on it. However, it took him five years to persuade BBC to okay the suggestion even though an eminent Parsi, Farukh Dhondy, heads one of the departments of the station. In fact the okay came from another department (religious and educational programs). "Dhondy has no control over our program and he probably wants it that way as he wants to be fair." According to Harris, "appearing to be fair is as important as being fair."

Dhondy was probably one of the Parsis who Harris knew and who molded his initial impressions about the community. "Before, my image of the community was based on the Parsis I knew, and all of them were educated, middle-class people. It's like judging the cake by its icing. The whole cake is richer than one section. I did not realize how diverse this tiny community is. It's an old Parsi joke — there are as many views of Zoroastrianism as there are Parsis." There will soon be one more — on BBC, Channel 4.

WITH
BEST COMPLIMENTS FROM

SOFT-HEARTED 'WIBS' BREAD

WESTERN INDIA BAKERS' PRIVATE LIMITED

KHODADAD BUILDING, 100 D'LIMA STREET
DOCKYARD ROAD, BOMBAY 400010

A MISSION MAKES A COMPANY

Knowing a market and its needs and utilising one's resources to fulfil those needs in a reasonably optimal way and ending up with a surplus, is the normal role of business. But understanding the market in depth, stretching it to the fullest potential, creating new unfulfilled needs, putting all of one's talents and that of the entire team in clear focus, being obsessed in the process, and emerging as a leader — this is living a Mission. This is the role and the heritage of a value-added society. It is exciting, it is rewarding and it is never ending...

THERMAX LIMITED

THERMAX HOUSE
4, BOMBAY PUNE ROAD
SHIVAJINAGAR, PUNE 411 005

GROWING
WITH
A MISSION



Lucknow's Khodaiji



Died: Boman Jalejar Khodaiji, 66, president of the Lucknow Parsi Anjuman and member of the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Minorities Commission on March 27, 1990 following a brief illness in Lucknow.

Regarded as a "pillar of strength to the community all over UP," it was Khodaiji's advice and guidance that was sought on different occasions, it was recalled at a condolence meeting convened by the Lucknow Parsi Anjuman on March 31, 1990. Among those who came to pay their last respects to Khodaiji were the former finance minister Narain Datt Tewari, former chief secretaries of UP, the commissioner, the peons of the various departments that he had served during his association with the government as also Parsis from the neighboring towns of Kanpur and Varanasi who held him in high esteem, notes a family source.

The community projects in which he is said to have taken a special interest were the creation of a mobed's benevolent fund, the repair of anjuman buildings, the construction of the Katrak Block for which his wife Bapsy helped him collect donations, and the repair of the aramgah bungli which he was keen to see completed, mentions a write-up from the family.

An Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer for 36 years, he was consid-

ered "an authority in matters of housing policies and planning at a national level and his expertise was utilized by many states and the center," writes F. M. Soonawalla, vice president of the Lucknow Anjuman. He had been appointed member of the working group constituted to improve the performance of housing boards in India. On his retirement from the IAS, he was made chairman of the UP Housing and Development Board for two years, notes a resume of his career.

During the Emergency he served as secretary in the home ministry in UP, the "largest and politically the most sensitive state in the country," mentions Soonawalla, commending him for discharging "these onerous responsibilities with utmost fairness." The "straightforward, good-natured" officer's conduct of public duties was so exemplary that he was popularly referred to as "the honest officer," it was stated at the condolence meeting.

Keen to see other members of the community join the IAS, at the executive council meetings of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India that he attended as a representative from Lucknow, he would invariably volunteer more information on this subject. He believed that it was not necessary for all aspirants to make it to the top echelons of the IAS ladder — even from the lower rungs they could be helpful to the community. Khodaiji, who had studied at the Bharda New High School in Bombay during his early years, had graduated from St Andrew's College in Gorakhpur before he joined the civil service.

His advice on other community issues — whether in dealing with the encroachers on the Saharanpur aramgah property or inducing the youth to launch business schemes from government subsidies for minorities — was practical. As a member of the UP minorities commission, he made it his business to be accessible to all. Since '85 he had been appointed director of the UP Minorities Finance and Development Corporation Ltd. On the Banking Services Recruitment Board, he had served as bench chairman on several occasions, informs the family.

He was vice president of the Society for Himalayan Environmental Rehabilitation and Peoples Action, the Uttar Pradesh Nagrik Sangh and the Indian Council for National Solidarity. An avid

reader, writer and lecturer, a chapter written by him on "Zarthusra and his Teachings" has been translated and approved by the government for inclusion in the syllabus of UP government schools, according to his bio data.

Khodaiji is survived by his wife Bapsy, sons Jal and Kaiyomarse, and daughter Freny.

Warm hearted iceman

Died: Rustom Ardesher Boga, 78, respected industrialist and philanthropist of Amritsar, on February 7, 1990 following cardiac arrest.

"I do not think there is a single Parsi in the north-western sector who would not have heard of the...charities of Mr Boga." These sentiments are expressed by K. B. Antia, deputy chief manager, Bank of India, presently posted in Patiala. "The help extended by him to the members of our community during the partition of the country is still fresh in the minds of many," adds Antia before confirming that Boga's reputation for "kindness and hospitality was unmatched."

"The last Parsi in the region," as Boga came to be recognized, to him goes the credit for having set up the local Parsi Anjuman in Amritsar, informs his daughter Minnie Grosskurth from Delhi. He is also known to have spent considerable time and resources on the maintenance of the Parsi cemetery in Amritsar.

He had established "a number of charitable, cultural, educational and social service organizations... for the well-being of poor and downtrodden" citizens, notes a write-up in the *Indian Express* of February 9, 1990.

Evincing a keen interest in the rehabilitation of TB patients, Boga served on the governing body of the Amritsar TB Association for over 50 years and donated both land and money for their education, treatment and welfare, it is stated in the write-up.

The Lions movement was introduced to North India by Boga who was subsequently responsible for its expansion to all the major centers in the Punjab. In

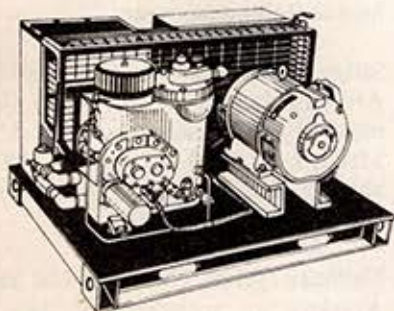


For Pure Diamonds

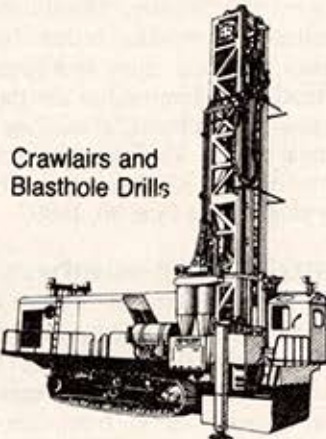
K. WADIA

JEWELLERS

324, GRANT ROAD, BOMBAY 400 007. TELEPHONE: 371483
APPOINTED VALUERS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



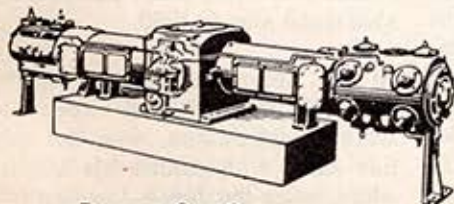
Rotary Screw Air Compressors



Crawlers and
Blasthole Drills



Water Well Drills



Process Gas Compressors

Portable Compressors



Air and Gas Compressors • Construction & Mining Equipment



INGERSOLL-RAND

Ingersoll-Rand (India) Ltd., Maybaker House, S.K. Ahire Marg, Bombay 400 025

IR.191.88

addition to holding responsible posts in this organization he was also recognized with international awards. Under the auspices of the Lions Club he was effective in setting up a children's park, a doll museum and a library as also a free polydiagnostic clinic in his area. For over 40 years he was an active member of the Masonic order, rising to the rank of deputy grand master of the United Scottish Freemasonry of India and Pakistan, according to a family source.

"The civic-conscious philanthropist"

had earned his wealth in the family business, the Amritsar Ice Factory founded by his grandfather Edulji Boga. The Amritsar Ice Factory, reportedly the largest ice factory in the Punjab, got a boost under his management when a cold storage division was added to the existing plant, notes a family source. The businessman-cum-social worker had learnt the business skills on the job itself. Actually on the death of his father when he was 18 years old, Boga had perforce to give up his studies at the Khalsa College

to join the family business.

A strong believer in the universality of all religions, the Amritsar-born Boga was interred at the Parsi cemetery there. By his graveside, in addition to the Zoroastrian rites, were also recited prayers by a Christian priest, a Sikh raghi, a Hindu pundit and a Muslim mullah, mentions his daughter.

Boga is survived by his wife Mohinder Kaur, and daughter Minnie Boga Grosskurth by his first wife, Freny.

Written by Parinaz Gandhi

EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES *continued from page 12*

well," believed Mistry who brought in the dynamic G. S. Keshavamurthy as managing director of SIV in 1986. "We have been able to exploit the potential of the company rightly. The workers have been properly motivated. We have built a sense of belonging among the employees of the company," Keshavamurthy sums up the reasons for his success.

After a decade of consolidation, the emphasis will now be on expansion and diversification. The capacity of the company's staple fiber plant and wood pulp plant was increased, earmarking Rs 77 crores for the modernization of the existing capacities. In addition, Rs 200 crores will be expended on diversification in areas ranging from edible oil, lubricants, forestry, pesticides, etc. "Our aim now is to grow in other areas and be a multi-product company," says B. L. Gupta, vice president in charge of diversification. SIV is also preparing to take over a pesticides company, a textiles firm and a boilers factory, reports the *Business India* write-up.

The success of SIV is expected to enhance Mistry's clout on the Indian corporate scene, notes the journal. Already, Mistry is believed to be the largest shareholder in the Tata group of companies, in addition to holding substantial shares in other companies like the ACC (Associated Cement Companies Limited).

Die-hard support

Taking an active interest in the Bombay-based The Society for the Right to Die with Dignity are several Zoroastrians. In fact the executive committee for 1990-1991 comprises of an all-Zoroastrian team, according to a press release. With M. R. Masani as president emeritus, the others on the committee are Dr B. N.

Colabawalla, chairman; S. E. Heerjibehdin, treasurer; Ms Preen Lalkaka, honorary secretary; and J. J. Ollia, B. S. Paymaster and Dr N. H. Wadia, members at large.

The Society, which is affiliated to the International Federation of Right to Die Societies, has as its first objective "to assert the right of every man and woman of sound mind to freedom, within the limits that may be laid down by law, to choose to live or to die."

Referring to the public reluctance to support the Society, Masani said, "The intellectual conviction is there but when it comes to action, there is a great deal of hesitation." Membership on the Society continues to remain "static," as per their annual report. Their records show 56 life members and 350 long-term members in the year ending June 30, 1989.

Japs' falling numbers

Just as the Parsis are hit by declining numbers, the Japanese too have registered a decrease in their birth rate. The total number of babies born in Japan in 1989 were down 71,000 from the previous year, according to population statistics from the health and welfare ministry. "This was the first time in the past decade that the number of babies born in the nation in a year" had shown such a decrease, comments *News* (February 16-28, 1990), the fortnightly publication from the consulate general of Japan in Bombay.

The reasons attributed for the declining birth rate are also similar to those applicable to the Parsi community: couples marrying later in life, as also a reluctance among many to tie the knot. Even then, in Japan a baby was born every 25 seconds as compared to a death that occurred every 40 seconds.

SPOTLIGHT

Inspector Homi Sorabji Irani was awarded the President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service. The Governor of Maharashtra, C. Subramaniam, presented him the medal on May 1, 1990, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of May 6.

Yachtsman Farokh Tarapore, medalist at the 1982 and '86 Asian Games, won the Danish Spring Cup in the 470 class in Denmark on May 6, 1990, notes *The Times of India* dated May 10. In Europe, he was training for the Asian Games to be held in Beijing this year.

Shiavax Chavda was felicitated as the Artist of the Year 1990 by the Government of Maharashtra, notes *Bombay* of March 7-21, 1990. It is his line drawings, abstract oils and dance figures that have won acclaim in art circles.

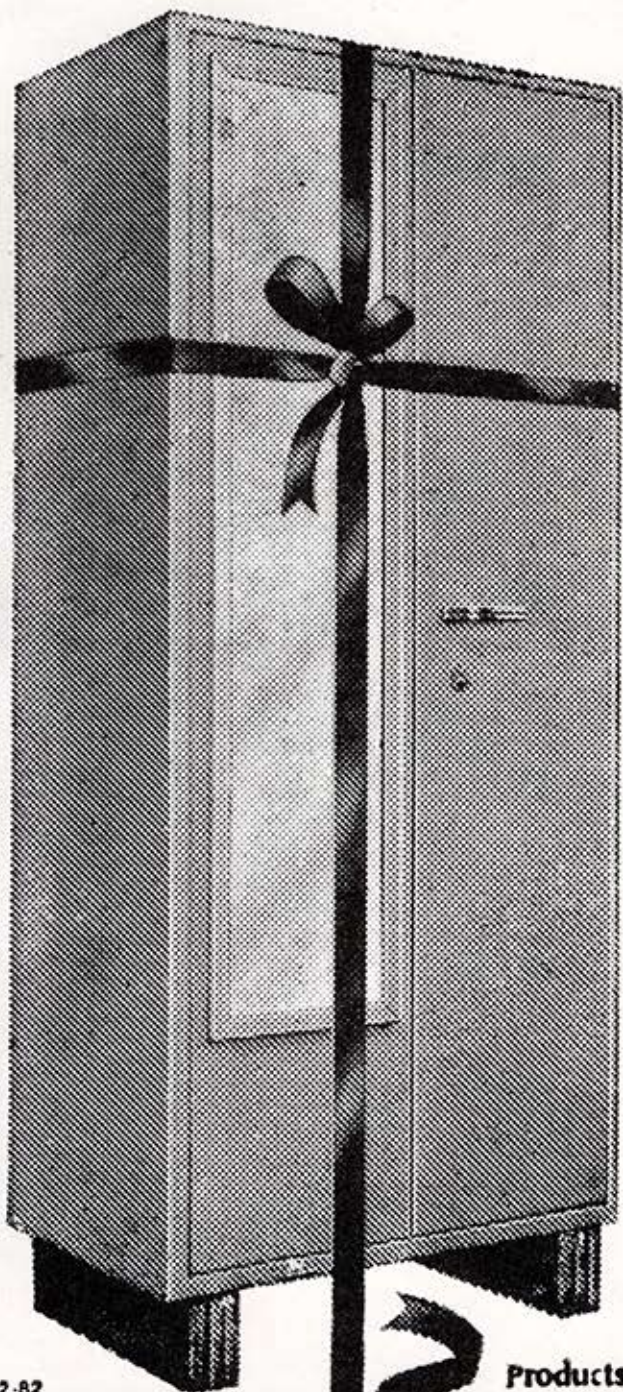
National cycling champion Ms Jasmine Arethna is included in the Indian women's team that will participate at the International Cycling Championships in France this year, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* dated May 6, 1990.

At the Sub-junior Carrom Championships, Ms Dilshad Rusi Cooper, representing Maharashtra, won the doubles title along with partner Ms Mansi Paradkar, notes the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of May 6, 1990. The Maharashtra team bagged the team championships at the meet in Madras early this year.

D. M. Tavadia takes over as vice president (marketing) of Unilite Marketing, notes *The Daily* of December 31, 1989.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

Godrej Storwel – the gift of a lifetime

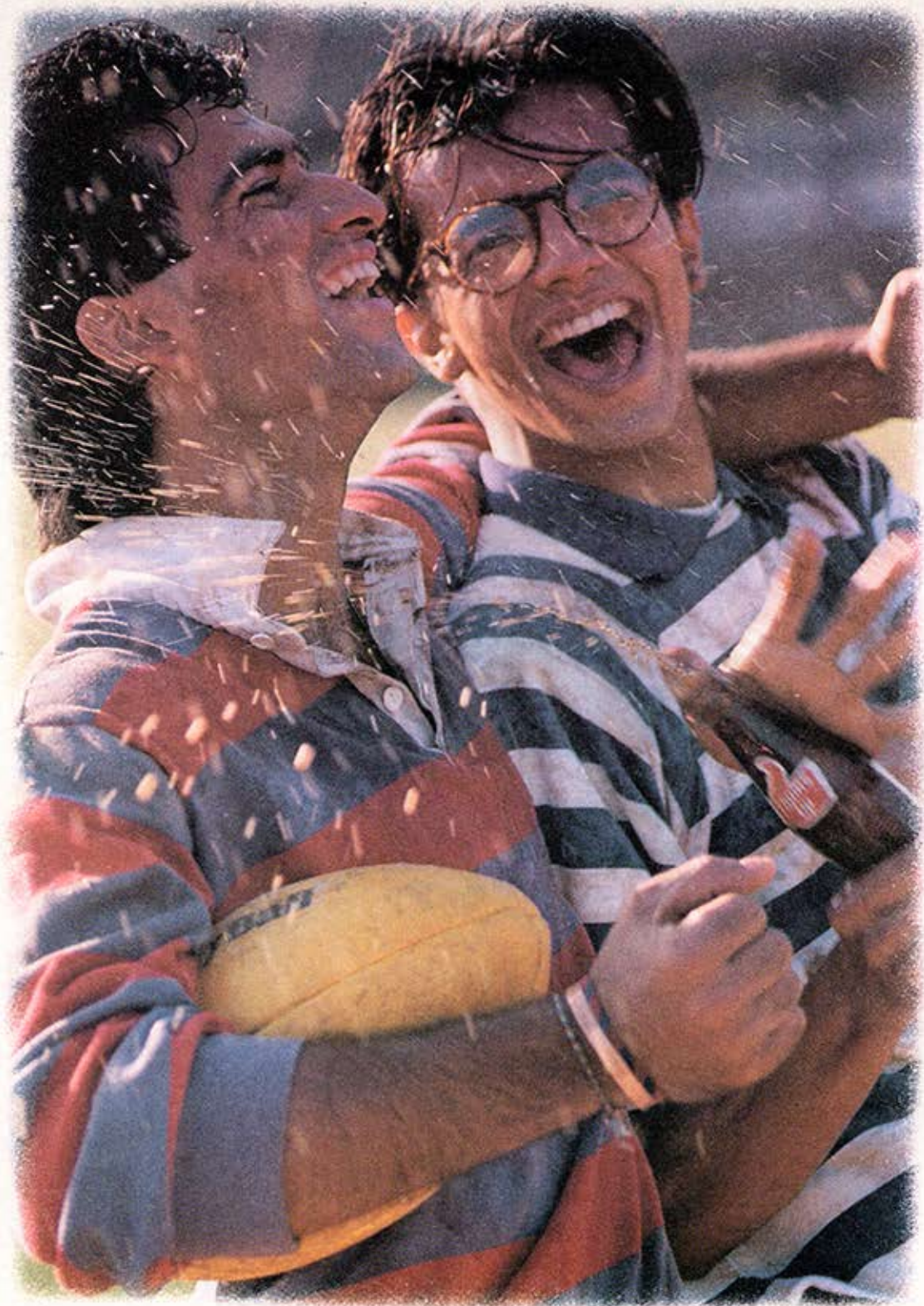


The Godrej Storwel is the ideal gift for any occasion. A gift that will be appreciated for a lifetime. The most functional yet elegant steel cupboard, it offers distinct benefits like greater durability and more security as compared to conventional cupboards, steel or wood. And to add to its elegance it has a superior scratch resistant finish obtained by a painting process exclusive to Godrej.

Besides a full length 137 cm mirror of imported plate glass it has unpickable locks, coricealed hinges, a 3 way interlocking bolting device, and adjustable shelves. All this makes the Godrej Storwel a memorable and lasting gift.

Godrej®

R.N.947464
MH.BY.S.01



First, empty stands. Cold evenings.
An angry coach. Broken bones. Sweat.
Tears. Black eyes. Bruises.
Then, 30,000 cheers.

**TASTE
THE
THUNDER**



Ambience/TU/6