

JULY 1990 Rs 8

Parsiāna

"SUCH ARE, INDEED,
THE SAVIORS OF THE EARTH.
THEY FOLLOW DUTY'S CALL,
THE CALL OF LOVE;
MAZDA, THEY LISTEN
UNTO VOHUMANNA;
THEY DO WHAT ASHA BIDS,
AND THY COMMANDS;
SURELY, THEY ARE
THE VANQUISHERS OF HATE."
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Parsiana

July 1990
Volume 13 Number 1

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

The Gheyara dharamshala

By the death of Seth Maneck Jamshedji Ratanshah Gheyara on March 3, 1989 at the age of 75, the Parsi community lost a dedicated social worker who had done untiring work for his community. Born and brought up in a rich family, Seth Maneck Gheyara dedicated half a century of his life to the service of society. He sustained and strengthened several institutions and in the process brought happiness, comfort and progress in the lives of persons of different strata of society. In order to achieve these results, he secured generous donations. He himself gave handsomely and induced his family members to follow suit.

He was the president of the Surat Parsi Punchayet (SPP), but he was a man who did not look at the problems of his community as limited to one city or district, but in totality. At the same time, he focused the attention of the Zoroastrian

world on the SPP. During the last quarter of a century, the SPP was in the forefront of all the punchayets and anjumans in India in the field of social service. The credit for this unique achievement goes to Seth Maneck Gheyara alone.

Bearing in mind his tremendous contribution to the Parsi community, the SPP board of trustees has appointed a memorial committee to create a memorial suitable to the departed worthy. The Seth Maneck Gheyara Smarak Samiti made a public appeal for donations in April 1990.

As Surat needs a dharamshala — the three existing dharamshalas are outdated and in a dilapidated condition — one named after the late Gheyara would be a fitting monument. It would be of service to Zoroastrians who come to Surat to pay homage to the two atash bahrams as also to the touring salesmen and others who find it very hard to get a decent place to stay for a day or two.

The proposed structure of ground plus two floors, with 12 to 15 rooms inclusive of four to five administrative rooms, is estimated to cost nearly Rs 18 to 20 lakhs. The SPP has offered a piece of land worth Rs 10 to 12 lakhs, admeasuring approximately 600 square yards, where the building may be built. They will also contribute a substantial sum towards the construction costs.

The SPP expects that other punchayets and anjumans with whom Maneck was in close contact and had helped in various ways, will help the project along.

Gheyara: viewing community problems in totality Photo: Homiyar Mistry



The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) proposes to donate a six-figure sum. A sympathetic BPP trustee has agreed to donate a similar large sum and the members of the Smarak Samiti are very thankful to them.

The Smarak Samiti would like to start the construction work as soon as possible so that cost escalation may be kept to a minimum. Therefore we request all donors — individuals and institutions — to send their donations at an early date, so that with sufficient funds on hand the construction work may be commissioned.

The Smarak Samiti has appointed Mr Paeterasp Patel, Mr Jiju Nusserwanji and Mr Homi Divwala, members of the managing committee, as their authorised representatives in Bombay. Cross and order account payee cheques may be drawn in favor of Seth Maneck Gheyara Smarak Samiti and forwarded to Mr P. D. Patel at 111, Aderbad, N. S. Patkar Marg, Bombay 400007.

Dr SAM BHACCA
Chairman
SORAB KATPITIA
Jt Secretary

PAETERASP PATEL
JIJU NUSSEERWANJI
HOMI DIVWALA
Committee Members

"Mazda Leasing: A new..."

I was indeed surprised to read the reprint of the article "A new lease on life" by Mr Raju Bist (*Parsiana*, March 1990) which was prepared by him in December 1989, published in *Business India* in January 1990 and reprinted in your magazine which was published in June 1990! The reason why I am making this point is that such outdated business news does not give the correct state of affairs to your readership.

In fact, news of the changing scenario at the Mazdalease Group of Companies was circulating in business circles as early as April 1989 after the Company's annual general meeting when the Rathis were to be associated with the Company. One of their nominees was first inducted onto the board of Mazda Industries and Leasing Ltd in June 1989, and a final take-over was effected in October-November 1989.

What was first projected as friends giving a helping hand to the Company — which was under a financial crunch — turned out to be a total surrender and sell-out by an individual, behind the back of his own colleagues and in a manner

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which makes a fit case of corporate conspiracy. The report of Mr Raju Bist, prepared for *Business India*, was made at a time when the entire situation was fluid and the game-plan unknown. The journalistic pen of Mr Bist did create some sensation in the business world, but now with the dust and din settling, the true designs of all concerned have come to light.

I always expected that a very fair and progressive magazine like yours, committed to the growth and well-being of the Parsi community, would have independently made an investigative study and report about the Mazda story. You have a very competent editorial and reporting staff and an in-depth analysis into the whole affair would have enlightened the community on the larger issue of Zoroastrian entrepreneurship.

I make this special point because in the earlier years you had published a feature on the Mazda Group titled "A company with the Zoroastrian touch" (*Parsiana*, June 1985). Thereafter you had always been supportive of the Company's activities and keenly followed its progress. Hence, when the company ran into difficulties and there was a total sell-

out and surrender to non-Zoroastrian traders, a dispassionate report from your staff would have been appreciated by the public in general and the Parsi community in particular which had reposed considerable faith in the erstwhile management of the company which had a Zoroastrian touch and flavor.

As for me, I am in no way now associated with the Rathi group. When the takeover was effected in October/November 1989, its patriarch Mr G. K. Rathi, proposed to me that he wanted to appoint his brother as vice chairman and managing director of the Mazda Group. I expressed to him that if this decision would help in the larger interest of the Group, I would step down provided all my dues were properly settled. He agreed to do so. He further mentioned to me that he had some very large projects in the pipeline calling for an investment of over Rs 60-70 crores in India for manufacture of X-ray films, artificial heart valves and pharmaceuticals, and offered to associate me with his group activities as a full-time group executive to ultimately take complete charge of one of his large projects. I agreed to give it a try.

I associated myself with the group ac-

tivities for two months only to find that, with the exception of having some ambitious and grandiose plans, the Rathi group had neither the infrastructure nor the ability to translate them into reality. Hence from February 1990 I disassociated myself from the Rathi group. In fact, it was only during my brief association that I could get a view of the effective background of the Rathi group in general and of Mr V. K. Rathi, who was installed as group vice chairman and managing director, in particular.

For the sake of posterity, someone should take a closer look at the "Mazda story," with all its "off-shoots" and "splinters." When properly and truthfully revealed, it will be a good case study on corporate decision making and management and a lesson for future entrepreneurs and managers.

HOMI D. MEHTA

The Editor replies

Due to *Parsiana's* limited resources we regret that we're not in a position to devote the time and effort required to do an independent and investigative study on the subject. We are also not that conversant with all the business and financial



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technicalities/complications such a story would require. We try to devote our energies to covering community events as best we can and to publish our issues as fast as we can. For this reason we carry reprints from other specialized and general publications.

"Making good, clear..."

You have published a thought provoking article by Mr Aspi Moddie ("Making good, clear choices," *Parsiana*, March 1990). He writes, "Trustees everywhere need to upgrade their concern for education and career guidance with a new look HRD (Human Resource Development) Policy backed with enough resources, especially of high quality people. A higher investment three-track course for different human potentials would include high tech for the high fliers of the future, the middle track for talents in the professions, business or administration, and vocational education for those unfit for, or not desiring to go for higher education, but needing gainful employment."

In page 3 of the same issue (Readers' Forum: "The Parsis of Gujarat") one of the suggestions arrived at by the Com-

mittee on the Parsis of Gujarat says, "Ladies who are capable may be trained in typing, stenography secretarial work, sewing, stitching, etc."

From the available data on education, economic activity and professional achievements, I had concluded that Parsi ladies have had greater opportunities for self-realization as compared to ladies of other communities. The suggestion of the committee, therefore, came as a shock to me.

Ms MALINI KARKAL

"Shirdi ké Homi Baba"

This is with reference to the Editor's explanation given to Brig N. B. Grant when confronted with the publication of the article "Shirdi ké Homi Baba" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 1990).

In the rather unimpressive reply to the question as to why the cover of *Parsiana* had to carry the picture of Homi Baba, the editor has said that it was the best visual available. In my opinion, I don't see it necessary to give a visual of a topic dealt with in the magazine. Even a plain design would have sufficed. I ask, could *Parsiana* never obtain a visual of Zarathushtra for the cover page? Do they never get

awe-inspiring articles of our dasturs and scholars? Having the Baba's photo on the cover is not only trying to extol the Baba cult but is also going against the principles of our religion which believe in the worship of God and not worship of man.

In replying to the same letter the editor says that Zoroastrianism has failed to inspire its followers. He has also added that every Parsi home is now looking to other religious orders and beliefs in addition to Zoroastrianism. It is no doubt correct that Parsis have really been taken in by Babas but then is it not the duty of a Parsi magazine like *Parsiana* to enlighten the people on the tenets of our religion and prevent them from falling outside the community? This magazine should be a torch-bearer of the community, preventing it from internal harm.

At one stage in his reply, the editor says that it is an obsession with the Parsi community to keep non-Parsis out of the religion and almost immediately adds that there is nobody who wants to enter the fold of Zoroastrianism. If nobody wants to come, how does the question of conversion arise? Why then do our Parsi girls (who have married outside the commu-

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P. S. KUKA
Chairman

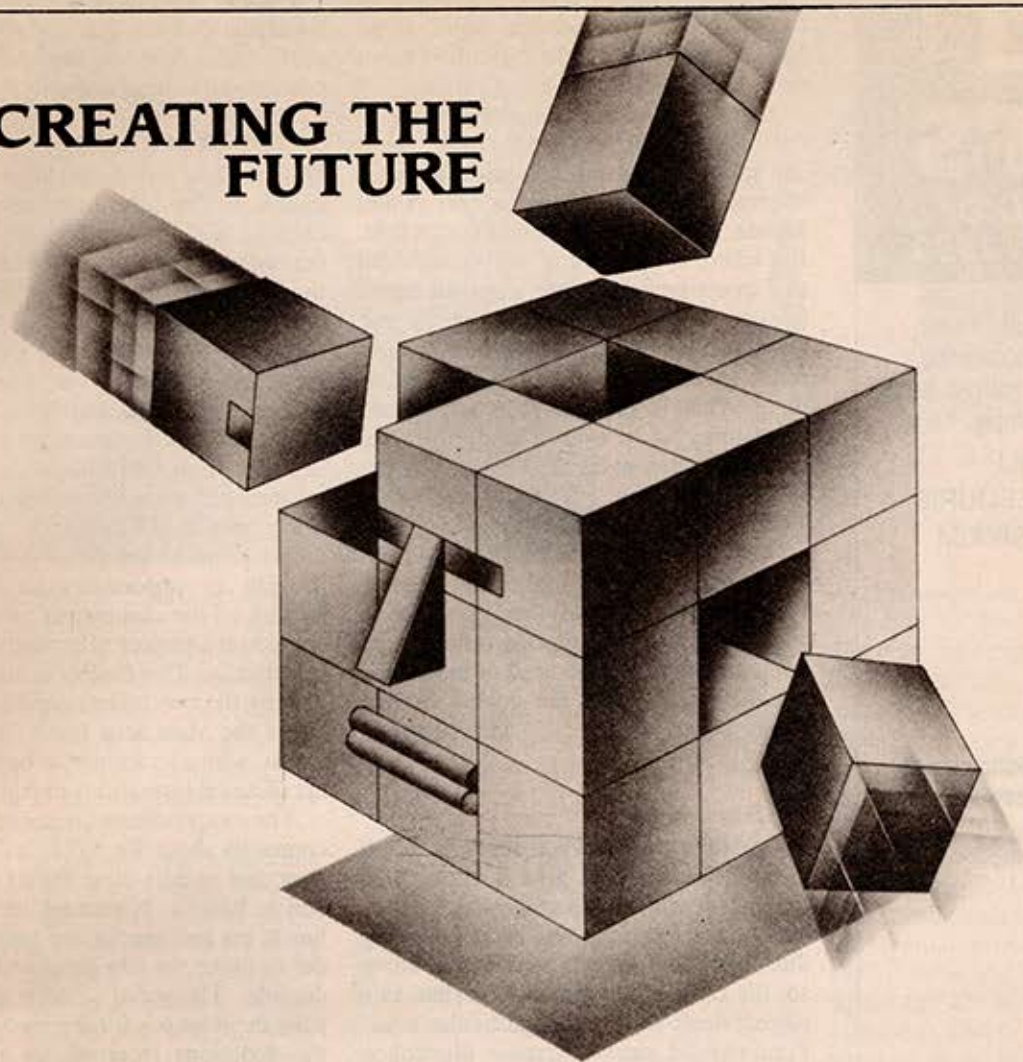
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nity) cry hoarse over the issue that their children be entered into the Zoroastrian fold? Since our religion has failed to inspire Parsis, why do these mothers want their children to be treated as Parsis?

It is in fact quite ironical that some of the non-Parsis know much more about our religion than most Parsis and who, inspired by the teachings of Ahura Mazda, want to be converted to our fold. But where is the need of converting them to Zoroastrianism? When our own Parsis do not follow the path shown by our Lord, one cannot expect the non-Zoroastrians to keep the light of our fire burning. What is the use of a large Parsi community when even a single member does not know even the "basics" of our religion?

So, the so-called "enlightened" Parsis should forget the idea of conversion but instead try and make the existing Parsi community and the Parsis as a whole into true and devout followers of our great religion. The need of the hour is not the quantity but the quality of true Parsis.

Ms SANAE ANTIA
Patiala

The Editor replies

Ms Antia is correct when she says that it is not "necessary to give a visual of a topic dealt with in the magazine." However, since *Parsiana* has been following this policy and intends to continue doing so, the cover will continue to relate to a subject dealt with in that particular issue. *Parsiana* did carry a graphic illustration of Zarathushtra in 1974 and would carry it again were there one suitable and if we had an appropriate article to go with it.

As regards *Parsiana* being a "torch-bearer of the community" and "enlighten(ing) the people on the tenets of our religion and prevent(ing) them from falling outside the community," these are not the functions of a publication (they appear to be the functions of a prophet). The purpose of *Parsiana* is to keep readers informed of happenings in the community.

In regard to conversion, no Parsi mother who has married a non-Parsi needs to "cry hoarse over the issue that (her) children be entered into the Zoroastrian fold." Anybody can convert: they don't need anyone's permission. The question is, having converted, can they avail of trust benefits? This issue would be decided by the trust deeds and the trustees of the concerned trusts. It is unfortunate that in this regard the law discrimi-

nates against the children of Parsi women married to non-Parsis. It is even more unfortunate that no Parsi woman married outside the fold, or her children, have contested this legal anomaly.

Trips to Iranshah

Of the eight holy atash bahrams consecrated in India, the Iranshah of Udwada occupies the place of highest esteem as a bestower of blessings and faith to the entire community. Every devout Parsi cherishes a wish to bow his head at the feet of Iranshah at least once a year. However, with the ever increasing cost of travel, lodging and boarding, it becomes difficult for even the most devout Zoroastrian to fulfill his wish. We know instances of several poor Parsis who have never been to Udwada.

To promote religious awareness and provide an opportunity to the weaker section of the community, we have embarked on a project of arranging free trips to Udwada. This project is mainly organized by the two undersigned social workers of the Muncherji Joshi Parsi Colony, Dadar, who also happen to be office bearers of noted institutions in that area.

The expenditure incurred per trip comes to about Rs 6,000 and nearly 50 poor and middle-class Parsis are able to derive benefit. Nutritious breakfast and lunch, tea and snacks, are provided in order to make the trip comfortable and endurable. The social workers who accompany the poor pay for themselves and thus the donations received are utilized entirely for the weaker section of the community.

We have been quietly going about with our work for the past two years and have met with tremendous success. However, with a view to augmenting the frequency of such trips we appeal to our more fortunate brethren in India and abroad to contribute their mite to our work. Donations may be addressed to Ms Shera Billimoria at Imperial Mahal (above A to Z Shop), Dadar T.T., Bombay 400014 (Tel: 4126200) or Mr Sapal Dalal at 739, Road No. 5, Parsi Colony, Dadar, Bombay 400014 (Tel: 4128503; 4126942).

The tour is usually arranged on Sundays and we would like our donors/sponsors to accompany us and experience the joy that lights up the faces of the devout.

Ms SHERA BILLIMORIA
SAPAL DALAL

Edited by Amavaz S. Marna

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Events and Personalities

AET's graduates

"Remember, you are the chosen few and if you carry out your responsibilities correctly, the trustees and donors will be emboldened," vice chancellor of Bombay University and Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Dr (Ms) Mehroo Bengalee exhorted the first batch of 11 mobeds who had graduated through a four-year course of post-madressa study coordinated by Dr (Ms) Jeanie Bharucha under the aegis of the Athravan Educational Trust (AET). The occasion was celebrated at the Albless Baug on June 24, 1990 with a thanksgiving jashan conducted by Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, chairman of the AET, along with 19 other athravans, followed by speeches and distribution of prizes, a short entertainment program and dinner.

Apart from training in the practice and significance of Zoroastrian rituals, highlights of priestly history and ancient literature, a basic understanding of comparative religious thought, the rudiments of psychology, sociology with reference to social work and elementary English were imparted to the students five days a week at Godrej Bhavan. AET founder trustee and trustee of the BPP Homi Ranina informed that the mobeds had had to face "regular tests as in any college."

Teaching English was most difficult, according to Zoroastrian Studies (ZS) founder and AET trustee Khojeste Mistree. The AET considered a grasp of English the most important as their aim is to produce mobeds who can function as parish priests — helping the families around them with sundry problems, apart from ritual functioning. "English is the lingua franca of the community (which) wants responses in English. Without English we're hitting problems with the younger generation," Mistree explained.

"The boys themselves had umpteen problems. We don't realize that priests themselves have problems they are not able to unburden," Mistree continued, complimenting Prof Farokh Buchia for his patience and competence in helping the priests overcome personal difficulties

while teaching them to cope as future counsellors to the community.

Nine of the 11 students have been performing the ijashni and vendidad ceremonies, five perform the nirangdin, Mistree informed. Some of them knew how to perform these higher liturgical ceremonies before they joined the AET course. Others learnt here, noted Mistree, adding that the ability to perform higher rituals would lead them to higher income and status.

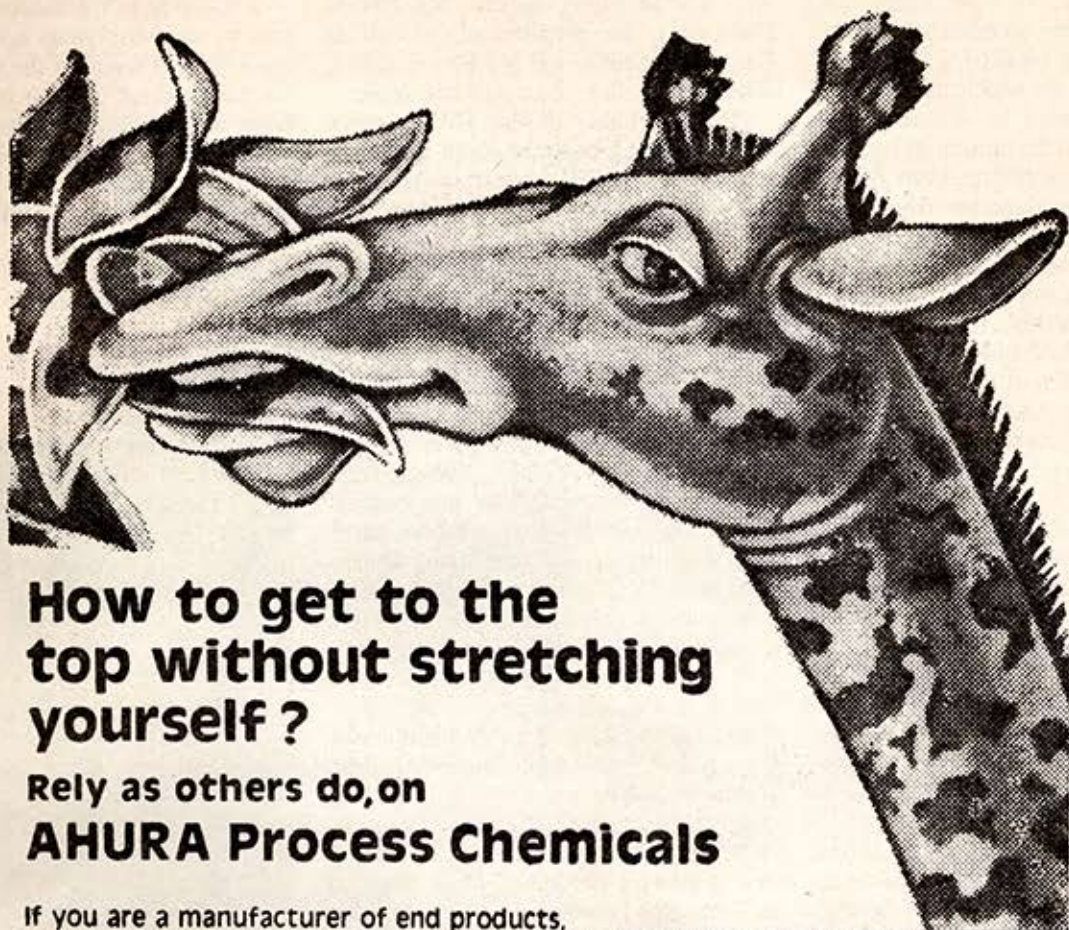
"What are the present needs of the community? Does this training program fulfill those needs?" chief guest Bengalee enquired. With the absence of elders "in the unitary family system... there's nothing in the home to help children understand the basics of religion." With barely five percent of Parsi children attending Parsi schools, no religious education can be organized there either, she said. The community needed men like the late scholar-priest Dastur Khurshed Dabu, men who are able to disseminate religious knowledge in the homes and the fire-temples, she said. Referring to the 11 AET graduates as "enlightened torchbearers of the Zoroastrian community," Bengalee concluded, "Prosperity of the community depends on the mental and spiritual strength of our mobeds. If we can ensure this, the future of our community — never ever think we'll ever die — will be much brighter than it looks at present." Then, summoning Bharucha to the podium, Bengalee told the audience that she was presenting the bouquet she had just received to Bharucha as a mark of appreciation, "on your behalf and mine."

Zarir Bhandara and Dinyar Vazifdar were cited for best all-round performance; Homiar Karanjia and Cali Jijina won the prize for regularity and punctuality; Farokh Dhabhar, Minocher Nalladaru and Aspi Surti were respectively awarded prizes for performing the highest number of nirangdins, perseverance, and perseverance in studies and social work. Vazifdar received an additional prize for general appearance and conduct.

Four of the 11 AET graduates took the mike in turn to present a brief resume of their experiences. Vazifdar recorded how Kotwal had taught them the "meaning of almost every word" in their prayers. Karanjia and Bhandara (the only one to speak in English) expressed their gratitude to Ms Huzan Kharas (now Frazer). "We are here today because of her," noted Karanjia. "Huzan Kharas is not present with us physically today but will remain in our hearts and minds," said Bhandara. (Kharas' research for her master's thesis had concentrated on the plight of Zoroastrian mobeds. The AET was an outcome of that research and Kharas was the Trust's founding chairperson. Her abrupt resignation from the AET board has never been explained.) "Our behavior, attitudes have improved because of Farokh Buchia," Karanjia recorded his appreciation. "Most mobeds have lost their enthusiasm, devotion, dedication...because of having to wander from agiary to agiary. (There is) no mental peace. Many mobeds are without a home. If these problems are ironed out, more athravans will be forthcoming," Karanjia noted in Gujarati.

The AET has dispersed Rs 90,000 to needy mobeds according to their progress report. Mistree informed that 200 doctors — dentists, gynecologists, plastic surgeons, radiologists — were participating in the AET's medicare scheme for mobeds and their families. Among them are non-Zoroastrian doctors who were thus repaying their debt to Parsi charitable funds which had helped to educate them. The doctors gave free consultations to the families of mobeds who carried AET identity cards and some of them even provided free medicine. Explaining the situation in the light of criticism that the AET was claiming credit for a service which Zoroastrian doctors had been providing all along, Mistree said, "Some Parsi doctors did give free service, but the priests were never sure whether they'd have to pay or not."

The AET's corpus is currently 16 lakh rupees, "much below the targetted figure of one crore," informed Ranina. Its 80-G



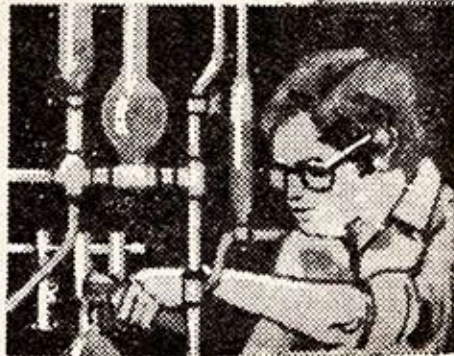
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certificate (entitling donors to a 50 per cent reduction of the donated amount in their income tax returns) has been renewed up to 1992. The trustees are hoping to build the corpus to 35 lakh rupees in the next three or four years, said Ranina. The thorny problem of community money being used by a cosmopolitan trust (a point on which the AET had been severely flailed by its critics) has been solved by the institution of two corporates -- one, for the priests, from Zoroastrian donations and another from donations by cosmopolitan charities like the Godrej Foundation. The latter had funded the publication of two scholarly books and scholarships for postgraduate work in the field of Indo-Iranian rituals with the cooperation of Prof S. S. Dange, head of Bombay University's Sanskrit department, notes the report.

"Our critics said, '*Ek varas rehine baddhu sooi jasé. Kai sooi nuthi gayu*' ('The project will die out in a year's time.' We are very much alive)," but, cautioned Mistree, "Don't expect miracles...Give us neutrality if not support."

Ms Pheroza Godrej represented the Godrej family and received a floral memento on behalf of her father-in-law and AET trustee, industrialist Naoroji Godrej who could not attend for reasons of health.

Ms Shehnaz Munshi had composed the ditties of a sort of Qawali competition between the two groups of behdins and athravans, singing out their grievances against each other to popular refrains. The second item was a scene from *Aagal Dhusya, Pachal Khasya* -- the play the late Adi Marzban had scripted for the ZS in 1984. The function had been financed by specific donations and not from the AET's own funds, informed the trustees.

Amavaz S. Mera

BPP makes holidays fun

Two holiday programs for youngsters were conducted at Rustom Baug, Byculla, under the joint auspices of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and the Rustom Baug Association. The Holiday Program for Youth (HPY) for the nine to 14-year age-group was conducted from May 2 through 12, 1990 with the objective of providing "supervised recreation and opportunities for creative activity." The subsequent Holiday Youth Camp for college students from May 14 to 25 was aimed at developing the participants' personality through knowledge of self, inculcating leadership qualities and

managerial skills, imparting vocational information and gearing them for subsequent adjustments in life.

Both the programs were organized by Ms Homai Billimoria, consultant, community counselling project, Ms Koomi Daroovala, vice president of the Rustom Baug Association, and Ms Banoo Ismail, school counsellor, notes a press release.

The highlights of the HPY were a craft session, a cookery class, a dramatics camp, a quiz contest, a religious class, a games session and outdoor trips to Esselworld and the Nehru Science Center and Planetarium.

The Holiday Youth Camp had envisaged a more intensive program for the teenagers. It was inaugurated by Prof Jehangir Mistry, vice principal of St Xavier's College, Bombay, who stressed a creative approach. Subsequent sessions focussed on story, poetry, dramatics and art appreciation, effective communication skills, sex education, religion, structural engineering and identifying leadership potential among youths at the camp conducted at the Leslie Sawhney Centre at Deolali. Additionally sports were organized for the participants as also other educative-cum-entertaining outings to the Garware Institute, the Nehru Science Centre and Planetarium and Esselworld, further adds the release.

Victims of house collapse

When the rear portion of Mota Mansion at Grant Road collapsed on the afternoon of May 17, 1990, there were four casualties among whom were Jal Maneckji Daruwalla, aged 63, and his sister-in-law Ms Jerbanu Kaikhushru Daruwalla, aged 70. According to a report in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of May 20, the Daruwallas, who were residing on the first floor, were midway through their lunch when the kitchen floor of the top storeys caved in. The list of injured included seven-year-old Ms Nasreen Daruwalla.

A German shepherd: well-trying friend



Except for the occupants on the ground floor, the remaining tenants in the 80-year-old, four-storeyed structure, also known as Vasaymal Building are believed to be middle-class Parsis.

According to the tenants, the building was repaired five years ago by the Housing Board. Thereafter the new tenants on the fourth floor tried to get the topmost floor repaired and renovated for which reason they had reportedly stored construction material in their kitchen. Inability to bear the load of the construction materials on the top floor has been cited as a reason for the house collapse. Officials from the Housing Repair Board

Mota Mansion: the bare walls remain after the floors caved in

Photo: Rashid Bamanbehram



claim their permission had not been sought before conducting structural repairs, according to a report in *The Independent* of May 18.

The dog connection

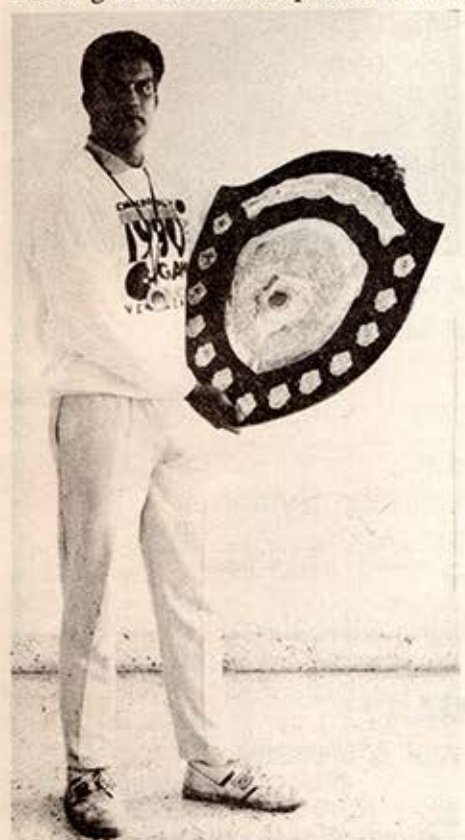
"The generally pervading love of dogs among Parsis appears to be founded on a firmer footing than some of our other idiosyncrasies," writes Phiroze Javeri. To substantiate his point, he sent *Parsiana* an extract from a 1918 book on the German Shepherd by Colonel von Stephanitz, an authority on the subject, who has tried to explore the roots of the man-dog relationship.

The saying in the *Vendidad* that "By the intelligence of the dog was the world created," assumes Stephanitz, could only have arisen among a people who believed that "the dog was not only a well-trying companion and comrade, but for

whom...the dog had become the dispeller of evil...the vanquisher of their enemy." Further, the *Vendidad* is also supposed to include a detailed commentary on the different varieties of dogs, and the treatment that should be meted out to them, according to the author.

Nagpur's new board

Sixty-five percent of the 594-strong electorate of the Shree Nagpur and Kamthi Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman exercised their vote at the last Anjuman elections in January this year. Since there were no contenders, the ruling office bearers continue for the third term in succession, notes an intimation from the honorary secretary of the Anjuman. Thus Dinshaw F. Bapuna as president, Justice Hoshang D. Patel as vice president, Keki



Bala as honorary secretary and Aspi Bapuna as honorary treasurer will be in charge of the Anjuman's affairs for the next three-year term.

There were 11 candidates who stood for the seven seats on the committee. Those elected were: Edul F. Bhagwagar, Shiraz K. Doongaji, Yezdi D. Bhagwagar, Aspi K. Dadina, Jamshed P. Cassad, Farokh H. Dastur and Homi M. Kavarana. The six members nominated were Rusi F. Dastur, Adi E. Billimoria, Phiroze F. Bhagwagar, Ms Rhoda M. Patel, Shiraz J. Gimi and Minoo P. Daru-



Center: A mirror painting of Zarathushtra by artist Rutnagar (right)
(Bottom left) Billimoria: seventh time national judo champion



wala, notes the intimation.

The real tussle however was for the post of lady member where Ms Thrity D. Patel won by a margin of 66 votes over her rival Ms Havovi Govadia; an election that is believed to have created "great excitement and some unpleasantness in the community," further notes Bala.

Billimoria retains title

For the seventh consecutive year Bombay's Cawas Billimoria won the judo national championship title, notes a press release from the family. The judo champion won the gold in the open weight category by full points or 'ippons,' winning bouts before the completion of the scheduled five minutes, the release notes.

Four hundred judokas from 30 teams participated at this Thirteenth Senior Men's Judo National Championships held in Ghaziabad from April 13-15, 1990, according to a family source.

Billimoria, an Asian Games medalist, is an employee of Tata Steel.

Mirrored paintings

Many artists choose sensuous nudes, Marilyn Monroe, Charlie Chaplin, prophets, saints and geometric designs as the subject of their exhibits. However what distinguishes artist Rusi Rutnagar is the mirror medium with which he works.

"Unlike other artists who paint with oils on canvas and can cover up a mistake, if I make a false move, I've blown it up," notes Rutnagar, whose mirror paintings were on display at the Frangipani Room of The Oberoi Towers on March 28 and 29, 1990.

Of the 52 paintings he displayed at the exhibition, titled "Reflections," 28 were sold out, he informs. His most popular

work was a Chinese woman. However, it was his motif of entwined swastika signs that took him the longest to complete. "My paintings are mostly bought by hotels," explains Rutnagar who has undertaken projects for international concerns like The Oberoi and Leela Kempinski in Bombay and Rama International in Aurangabad.

Prior to taking up an assignment, Rutnagar, who is in his late '30s, sits before the mirror for hours trying to visualize the end product. Taking about 20 days to complete each painting, he starts out by making a sketch on the reverse of the mirror; never an Indian one, he specifies. He then etches the sketch line making sure that no scratches show on the mirror in front. When in the process of etching the sketch line gets erased, he has to rely on his mental image to recreate that impression. The etched part is then filled in with the oil paint.

This is Rutnagar's second exhibition, the first being held in 1986. Though he has not attended art school, he has always had an inclination for art, says the artist. In fact, he gave up the security of an interior designing job to take up art as a profession. His other hobbies are photography and music.

SPOTLIGHT

Kersi B. Hathiram was promoted to the rank of deputy zonal secretary of the Eastern India Martial Arts Association, Calcutta, notes a write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed* of May 27, 1990. He has also been conferred the second dan black belt in the Ketsugo system of self defence, it was reported.

Compiled by Roxana H. Kaka

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Kudos to Captain

"Mr Shahpur Captain's sincerity, hard and dedicated work for the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) is beyond our capacity to realize," noted Iranian philanthropist Meheraban Zartoshty in a message from Vancouver. Zartoshty's fulsome praise was but a part of the chorus of appreciation that greeted Captain when the WZO chose to celebrate its tenth anniversary by conferring its honorary membership upon Captain on May 27, 1990.

Captain was primarily responsible for the establishment of the WZO in London at the behest of Dr Farhang Mehr (Iran's assistant vice prime minister and acting finance minister under the late Shah Reza Shah Pahlavi) in 1980 when the political upheaval in Iran necessitated organized assistance for Zoroastrian refugees. "In those early days, that was Shahpur's full-time occupation. He wrote letters to the State Department of the USA, the Canadian government, the UK government, the ambassadors of these countries in the UK and elsewhere, met the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees in the UK, attended appeal hearings and helped many, many Iranian Zoroastrians to settle in the west. In this arduous task, Shahpur was assisted by Mr Shahrokh Shahrokh and by Mr Shahriar Behradnia," WZO chairperson Dr (Ms) Shirinbanoo Kutar informed the 400 guests participating in the function at Bromyard Leisure Centre in London.

It was, however, only one of Cap-

tain's achievements in the course of 30 years of community service as enumerated by WZO joint honorary secretary Rumi Sethna. Twenty years prior to the establishment of the WZO, Captain took in hand the funds of the London association and nursed them from £ 28,000 in 1960 to £ 3,62,000 by 1986 when he resigned as president of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) in the wake of the controversy that engulfed the UK association when orthodox segments bulldozed a resolution through the managing committee preventing non-Zoroastrian spouses from attending the muktad ceremonies and the Farvardian jashan as they had traditionally done since their inception in London.

Enrolling the ZTFE as a registered charity — it was Captain's suggestion that the board of management had eventually accepted — had marked a substantial watershed in the management of its funds through substantial tax refunds and avoidance of assessment of capital gains, as Sethna noted. The establishment of the anonymously funded World Zoroastrian Trust Fund for the benefit of Zoroastrians worldwide with Captain as a trustee, bespoke confidence in his integrity and financial management. But above all, Sethna recalled the grit and tenacity with which Captain pursued the Association's case against the Brookwood Cemetery Authorities (BCA) when the latter imposed large increases on burial services and demanded £ 40,000 for the purchase of an additional plot of

land. Captain convinced a worried managing committee "that the 1946 contract with Brookwood Cemetery was valid and binding that that the Association must protect its asset." Having persuaded the committee into a unanimous decision to initiate legal proceedings against the BCA, Captain attended the hearings at the High Court and succeeded in obtaining such favorable terms from the court as the payment of only £ 1 for an additional large plot of land; the transference of freehold of the existing burial ground to the Association; the refund of all excess burial charges that the Association paid for three years under protest. Moreover, even the legal costs of the litigation had to be borne by the BCA.

Captain had also been instrumental in the purchase of the present Zoroastrian House property at 88, Compayne Gardens and the building of an extension to it in 1982.

Enumerating facets of the Karachi-born Captain's personality, Kutar spoke of his love of painting and gardening, of singing, dancing and public speaking, of his teenage years as a sea scout and later as university champion in swimming, tennis and badminton. The scroll that Kutar presented on behalf of the Organisation noted, in part, "Shahpur continuously strived to maintain peace, harmony and prosperity in the community. The committee of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, London, hereby place on record their heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation of the services of Mr

Members and office bearers of the WZO managing committee (L to R): Sethna, Medora, Falahati, Ervad Magol, Ms Contractor, S. Captain, Ms J. Captain, Vafadari, Ms Kutar, Ms Bhungara, Bhimadiwalla and Modi



Shahpur Framroze Captain and also for his devotion, dedication and love for the Zoroastrian community in the United Kingdom and throughout the world."

"Listening to all that has been said this evening, my wife Jiloo, daughter Armaiti and son Xerxes must have been wondering as to who the speakers were talking about!" Captain responded to the encomiums. Then, in more serious vein, he acknowledged his gratitude to all who had helped to nurture his ideals and abilities, including his maternal grandfather Framji Limbuwalla who labored for over 25 years as honorary secretary of the Karachi Parsi Anjuman and his own father Framroze who worked nearly as long as honorary treasurer and secretary of the Karachi Parsi Institute. Captain remembered too the religious training imparted by Dastur (Dr) Manekji Dhalla at the Bai Virbaiji Sopariwalla Parsi High School and its principal Dr Maneck Pithawalla who "inspired pupils to excel in every walk of life."

At the end of the official function which included the presentation of a scroll-scripted poem by Soli Master depicting highlights of Captain's life, the reading of congratulatory messages by WZO treasurer Dinyar Modi and the presentation of floral tributes by joint honorary secretary Ms Mani Bhungara, the guests partook of a *dhan-dar-patio* and *kulfi* dinner, informs the report.

Immigrant history

"Parsis and Aussies get along as well as meat pie and sauce or *dhansak* and *ka-wab*. No problems in getting together. (When we say) '*saalaa*' the Aussies say '*mate*.'" This happy summing-up by a respondent to the survey on Zoroastrians in Australia should generate substantial confidence in prospective migrants.

The survey, undertaken by erstwhile president of the Australian Zoroastrian Association of New South Wales Purviz Kolsawalla, was purported to establish the history of Zoroastrian migrants from the late 1960s onwards for the benefit of future generations of Zoroastrians in Australia. A secondary purpose was to document the initial and later experiences in order to help future migrants, notes Kolsawalla in the introduction to the 20-page, xeroxed report.

The respondents migrated to Australia between 1969 and 1988. Before the mid 1960s, there were no Zoroastrian migrants because of the country's 'white

Australia' policy. Much earlier, however, around the turn of the century, there must have been Zoroastrian migration as "evidenced by the existence of Parsi surnames like Gundevia and Masani extant in Sydney." Investigations revealed them as grandchildren of Zoroastrians who had since relinquished the faith, notes the report.

The respondents had arrived in Australia in their 20s and early 30s. Some of them had relatives and friends to help them along. The motivation behind the migration was to better the existing way of life from the viewpoint of living conditions, children's education and quality of life. The initial response on arrival was largely favorable tempered, in a few cases, by homesickness, a perception of subtle racism and the Aussies' "limited view of the outside world." Most found a job in a time interval spanning three days to four weeks while others had to wait up to three months. Those who migrated between the late 1960s and early 1970s were happier in this respect.

A major obstacle was in getting Indian professional qualifications accepted in Australia. "In the field of medicine, law, dentistry, accounting, it is virtually a closed shop, and migrants often have to pass certain exams before getting their qualifications accepted at a professional level... Hence it is imperative that a potential migrant obtains in writing from the (concerned) professional body whether (his/her) qualifications are (acceptable) before coming to Australia. This would avoid a lot of heartache later on," warns the report.

Being used to the services of maids, washermen, sweepers and cooks, the primary fact of life which accosts the immigrant from the Indian subcontinent is the necessity to take on all these chores and more: gardening and lawn mowing, being a handyman and motor mechanic. Understanding the Aussie accent and having one's own accent understood is an initial hurdle, especially for migrating school-goers who also have to contend with different schooling standards.

Though "Australia is one of the few countries in the world which is truly multicultural and multiracial," discrimination was initially faced at work. Most Zoroastrians found however that it did not take long to adjust socially. Noted one respondent who "made social contact with colleagues and neighbors by calling them over for dinner. Although they were very warm and friendly and

very appreciative, they did not respond by calling us back as often as desired." Reviewing initial expectations in the light of experience, one newly arrived immigrant noted, "We were given to understand that housework was automated and hence was easy. But we have our hands full with housework. The taxes are very high and though the salaries are good, the money disappears."

However, only one respondent replied in the negative when asked if they would choose Australia if given a second chance. And nobody wanted to resettle in the land of their birth.

"One of the main changes in attitude after migration is a stronger sense of religious and cultural identity... What was taken for granted in their country of birth... takes on a new dimension (here)," notes the report. Most respondents missed the fire-temples and nearly 50 percent wanted to hold their children's navjote in the home country. The *chowk* (colored floor decorations), *toran* (floral door hangings) and *divo* (ritual oil lamp) routine continues in some homes. The enjoyment of native language and food, family togetherness and community friendships has intensified.

Though some were worried about old age and failing health and of their children losing their cultural and religious identity, only one respondent forecast the community future in Australia as "bleak." A more stouthearted coreligionist noted, "If we learn to love this country and be proud to call it home; if we can stop feeling guilty about 'deserting' our motherland; if we can accept this country that we have chosen — nobody forced us — nothing and nobody can stand in the way of the community, culture and religion from flourishing and living amicably with other communities of this multicultural country." Added another, "Even after 1,300 years or so, our religion is not dead in India. So why should it die here?"

The informative, heartening report suffers from the extremely small size of the sample: only 16 respondents. They all originally belonged to the Indian subcontinent. According to Kolsawalla, none of the Iranian Zoroastrians responded to the survey. The participants had demanded — and received — a guarantee of absolute anonymity and hence all references to individual identity has been suppressed.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

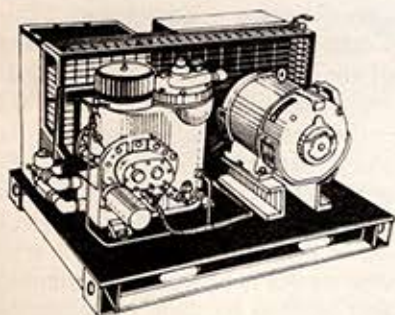


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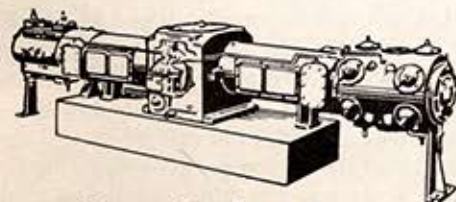
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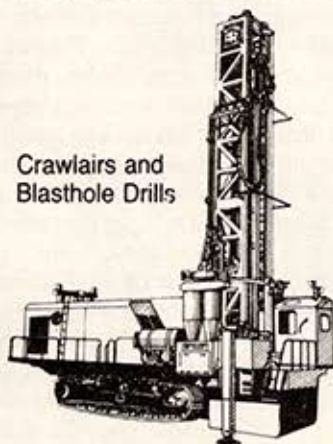


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Does the Federation serve a purpose?

Parinaz Gandhi

A candid evaluation of the Federation meetings was obtained from the delegates in the questionnaire distributed at the meet

Is the Federation too much talk and too little action? "Yes," replied 43 percent of the delegates who responded to a questionnaire at the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held in Bombay on March 17 and 18, 1990 in response to the question, "Do you think there was too much talk and not enough concrete proposals?"

Of the 22 delegates (there were 40 present at the meeting) responding to the questionnaire, 90 percent felt that everyone had a chance to talk although 48 percent opined that the proceedings were dominated by a handful (a complaint often voiced about the meetings).

Eighty-eight percent, however, felt the meeting served a purpose, 64 percent of whom were of the view that the most important decision taken at the meeting was to initiate action on the recommendations of the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress held in Bombay last January. That the agenda of the Bombay meeting dealt with the major issues before the community, was concurred to by 95 percent of the respondents.

Among the different projects initiated by the Federation, work on the defunct anjumans front was perceived to be making the maximum progress, followed by other projects like paramobeds, youth welfare, careers in government service, research and the schemes for growing kathi.

With the exception of 14 percent, the remaining 86 percent said they were re-

ceiving the *Fed Newsletter*, the Federation's four-page monthly publication. All those receiving it said that they read the periodical. This is the first time that the Federation has undertaken an opinion poll to evaluate its functioning...

Waning attendance, a feature common to executive council meetings of the Federation held in recent times, was noticeable in Bombay too. Two of the five vice presidents were absent, many of the Gujarat anjumans were not represented and there were barely any youths to be seen at the Muncherji Khareghat Hall, the venue of the meeting in Bombay.

Ten of the 40 delegates present were, in fact, from Bombay. But Dr Aspi Golwalla, president of the Federation and chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) clarified at the outset that discussions concerning Bombay should be kept to a minimum so that other anjumans could have a greater say. To concentrate on "the very important agenda" on hand, he specified that topics like youth counselling and matrimonial counselling, projects undertaken largely by the BPP, should be given the miss as also the customary self-introductions that usually set the pace for the meeting.

Subjects that generated substantial light and heat at this meeting were: the recent judgement by the small causes court authorizing a non-Parsi domestic, who claims to have been adopted by a Parsi, to inherit trust property; the rural rehabilitation program where the BPP in partnership with the Surat Parsi

Punchayet (SPP) is collecting funds to better the lot of the rural Parsis in south Gujarat; the housing research undertaken by the BPP to ascertain whether lack of housing is the chief reason for a decline in population; the paramobed training scheme; the program for coaching entrants to the defence services; the formation and location of the secretariat of the Inter-Regional Zoroastrian Congress Council (IRZCC) which is the outcome of the Fifth World Congress; and plans for the next Federation meeting in Delhi.

Lt Gen Adi Sethna, president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) and vice-president of the Federation, informed that they have invited the President of India as also other senior officers in the defence services to the felicitation function planned by them on September 22, to honor Parsis in the armed services. This year marks the twenty-fifth death anniversary of Lt Col Adi Tarapore who was posthumously decorated with the Param Veer Chakra, India's highest award for bravery in battle. To induce other Parsi youngsters to join the services, the DPA has offered to host, free of cost, 10-15 prospective entrants to the defence services during the next Federation meeting in Delhi on September 22 and 23, 1990 which is being organized to coincide with the felicitation function.

The fear of the possibility of an adoption law for Parsis being misused by non-Parsi menials with vested interest in their employers' premises has perturbed those in charge of trust properties. If an adop-

tion law were to be recognized by the community, it would support the case of those trying to encroach on Parsi property on the pretext of being adopted, felt Federation joint honorary secretary and BPP trustee Eruch Desai. "It will create more problems than solutions," he insisted.

The chief cause for concern is the verdict of the small causes court which held that tenancy rights in a trust property can be bequeathed to a non-Parsi. The matter which is reportedly now pending with the appellate court could have dire repercussions on trust properties. Maintained Desai, "Nearly a dozen cases have cropped up in the last six months of lone occupants adopting servants." But minorities commission member Homi Taleyarkhan was of the view, "We've got to come to some decision. Arrive at some kind of unanimity instead of deferring this issue meeting after meeting.

Don't give the impression that we are on the doors of indecision." This remark made Keki Gandhi, joint honorary secretary of the Federation, repeat the background story to the enactment of an Adoption Act for Parsis with an offer to send Desai a note highlighting the salient points in an Adoption Bill that can solve the tenancy problems.

The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act was amended two years back but several outstation Parsis may lie outside its purview if marriages are mistakenly registered under the civil marriage act instead of the Parsi Act, it was reiterated. It is up to the parties contracting marriage to ensure that they ask for, and fill in, the relevant form --- there is one applicable throughout India --- which will entitle them to be governed by the Parsi Act. When the same questions regarding procedure for registration, broached time and again, were once again voiced by the

delegates, Gandhi noted, "Everyone comes without doing their homework. The same issues are being repeated."

The amendments to the Indian Succession Act, with regard to granting of equal status to women and permitting bequests to charity even if the donor dies before the stipulated time lag, are expected to be brought up in Parliament, assured Taleyarkhan.

Relief to Gujarat farmers will be provided from the Rs 4,20,000 collected but this sum falls far below the targetted Rs 10-11 lakhs a year for the five-year plan, noted BPP's chief executive Rustom Anklesaria. Though Ms Kashmiri Bhaya's research report based on which the work was organized by the BPP and the SPP showed a need for over Rs 80 lakhs, a more approachable target is being pursued. The printed appeals had not generated much response, but when anjumans and individuals present at the



Top row (from left): Golwalla, Gandhi, Guzder, Desai and Nargolwala
Middle row (from left): Sethna, Taleyarkhan and Bhacca
Bottom row (from left): Kanga, Shroff and Ranina

Federation meeting were asked to donate, Rs 30,000 plus were promised round the table: Rs 10,000 from Calicut, Rs 5,000 each from Dinshaw Dabu Charity Trust and Jamshed Guzder, Rs 2,000 from Minoo Shroff, Rs 1,000 each from Eruch Desai, Meher Anklesaria, Dinshaw Anklesaria, Aspi Irani and Dara Deboo, and Rs 500 each from Bardoli and Dumas. Other anjumans undertook to send amounts subsequently.

The amounts collected are expected to meet only the immediate needs of the farmers, most of whom own 10-15 acres of land and some of whom are so poor that they cannot afford to even pay the conveyance costs of their school-going

children. Davar Kavasji Modi of Surat who is believed to have spent Rs 25,000-30,000 to better the lot of the farmers opined that "Aid, to be effective, should be immediate." When Capt Homi Dandiwalla, of Allahabad enquired, "How much of the amount has been spent? I thought it was very urgent," Bhacca countered, "Those who are talking of urgency...how much contributions have they made?" Dandiwalla had earlier specified that a clause in the constitution of the Allahabad Anjuman prevented them from donating for any cause other than that concerning the Allahabad Parsis. Similar were the rules governing the Poona Panchayat. Hence it was individuals from both these places who pledged donations.

Gandhi advised that the rural subcommittee should first study whether the holdings are economical, and then with the aim of making the farmers self-sufficient, offer them advice. Only those co-operating should be given financial aid, he felt. There were further suggestions of getting the city youth to help out the villagers in their holidays. "Could we use the wealth of Gujarat for Gujarat itself?" wondered BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga. He elaborated that an inventory should be made of properties lying idle or going to waste, and before the land is lost to the community, intermediaries should negotiate between buyers and sellers and use the money for a deserving purpose. In Bhimpore, 45,000 sq yds of land are reportedly on sale that could attract three star hoteliers. There were also plans to sell the Bordi sanatorium but a clause in the trust deed preventing such sale had led to a change of plans -- renovation and beautification with the help of Aspi Irani and the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman.

When disposing of unmanageable trust properties the trustees should negotiate, keeping the interests of the community in mind, was the view of Thana Anjuman president Rustom Cursetji. He cited the case of the Divecha Trust in Thana which allegedly sold its land to a commercial builder at the rate of Rs 170 per square foot when the market rate is Rs 1,000. The trustees of the Thana Parsi Anjuman, and the Federation as intervenors, contested this land deal on the grounds that trust lands should not be sold for commercial purposes. The Thana Anjuman has 400 Zoroastrian applicants willing to purchase flats at Rs 450 per square foot, mentioned Cursetji. The charity commissioner ruled that the



*Above (from left):
Dandiwalla, Dumasia,
Pervez Mehta, Marshall,
Bhesania and Cursetji
Below: Rustom
Anklesaria (left) and
Katpitia*



sale should be permitted to the commercial builder but 25 percent of the allotments should be reserved for Parsis. Until the High Court ratifies this judgement, the stay on construction continues. Cursetji voiced the need for a surveillance body, "a censor body — for trustees who are abdicating responsibility —" and requested Taleyarkhan to intervene so that he could urge the charity commissioner to amplify on issues he has not touched upon in his judgement.

In their efforts to retrieve community properties in defunct anjumans like Junagadh, Surendranagar, Nadiad, Cambay and Khandwa, SPP's chief executive Sorab Katpitia and others working at the behest of the Federation found that there were instances of not only a Hindu and a Muslim claiming a share in the Zoroastrian trust lands but also a Parsi claiming that one trust land belonged to him. In some places there is absence of evidence in the form of records, tablets, etc that is causing a delay in ascertaining the rightful owners. While further news is awaited from Alibaug which has a Parsi-founded dharamshala, the mistaken reference to Calicut as a defunct anjuman elicited a refutation from Darius Marshall of Calicut: "We are not defunct. It is a well-run and well-administered anju-

man." Actually, at the last Federation meeting in Madras they had offered to host an executive council meeting of the Federation.

To ascertain whether housing is really the important factor responsible for the low birth rate, or one of several factors, the BPP will be conducting a survey of 300 to 500 couples who have been recently allotted a flat by the Panchayet in keeping with its policy of earmarking 45 percent of allotments for those engaged to be married or recently married. Additionally, those staying in flats not provided by the Panchayet will also be surveyed to determine the number of children per couple. The questionnaire, to determine the correlation of housing with increasing birth rate, was drafted by Ms Katy Gandevia of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Ms Roda Pardiwalla, the BPP's matrimonial counsellor, and the study will be financed jointly by the BPP, the Federation and the SPP who will contribute in equal amounts towards the Rs 21,000 estimated cost.

"What is more important is the future. How about taking a survey of (unmarried) youths?" enquired Gandhi. He felt that youths in the marriageable age-group should be confronted directly as to the number of children they would like to



Poona delegates (from left): Meher Anklesaria, Kaikobad and Dinshaw Anklesaria

parent. But Anklesaria was wary, "You can certainly get promises. But will they keep it?" Gandhi felt that the survey would at least serve as an indicator of the trends and attitudinal pattern. Since the survey was aimed at confirming whether housing is the sole factor or one of the many factors responsible for a decline in community numbers, BPP trustee Minoo Shroff recommended that the other contributory factors like the couple's age-group, educational qualifications, affluence could also be correlated. Citing his own example, BPP trustee Jamshed Guzder, a father of four, revealed, "None of my children have followed my example." He offered to provide data on the birth pattern among beneficiaries of allotments made by the Petit Trust and the Garib Zoroastrian Rehthan Fund.

Besides, other reasons like the size of the accommodation, the breakup of the joint family system, lack of parental support, both partners working, could also be restricting the size of the family. To provide some relief in such cases, families with an income of less than Rs 4,500 have been assured that if they have a second child, 50 percent of the costs borne for day-care facilities will be borne jointly by the BPP and the Federation. Since there are not many takers for this scheme, Anklesaria recommended that help should be offered beginning with the first child so that they would be tempted to think of a second.

One topic that created the most furore at the Federation meeting was the creation of the IRZCC and Aspi Moddie's proposals regarding follow-up work to be undertaken as an aftermath of the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress proceedings. Since details on these had not been circulated

prior to the meeting, initially there was hesitation to take up these issues for discussion. Reprimanded Golwala, "Why are we meeting tomorrow? For *chai-pani* (tea) and biscuits? Take time off tonight and read this for 15 minutes." Supported Shroff when delegates preferred to procrastinate, "That way nothing gets done. What happens when we attend conferences abroad? Who's got

"Zoroastrians
believe in *vohu*
mana — 'one's own
wisdom' and not 'the
good mind'"

the time to wait for months and take up the issue at the next meeting? The chairman and secretary apply a time limit. Those who come prepared can voice their views, those who don't, listen."

Though the IRZCC is conceived as a coordinating body that will keep in touch with the programs undertaken by different regions, some of the Federation's executive council members questioned the need for duplicating the World Zoroastrian Organisation (the nature of whose constitution is under question), the accountability of those chosen to represent on it, the estimated cost of running the IRZCC secretariat at one lakh rupees per annum, etc.

Rather than have this Congress like the preceding ones where every five years ("similar to the case of Rip Van Winkle" who woke up after a long interval, remembered Kanga) the same questions are discussed, debated and then for-

gotten, this time they want to ensure that there is some progress at the anjuman, the federation and the global level, continued Kanga. Shot back Desai, "That's what congresses are meant (to be)...institutions of thought." "Then it does not justify the money and effort," maintained Kanga. Guzder as chairman of the Congress assured, "This committee (IRZCC) is not to supplant the world body but only to supplement the Congress."

Aspi Moddie's 17-page summation of the Congress proceedings elicited different reactions. The organizers themselves did not agree with all his views, believing that some of the Congress recommendations had been "overstated and some...understated" in the words of Guzder. It was therefore not surprising when different members responded differently, each focussing on issues which they believed to be salient: demography, according to one who believed that it should be perceived like a "war which is too serious a matter to be left only to generals;" religious education; unification and standardization of a Zoroastrian calendar; liaisons with different pockets of Zoroastrians; constitution of a world body; involvement of the youth; functioning of community trusts...

Opinionated as the Parsis are supposed to be, seeing this trait surface time and again at the meeting one delegate observed, "Zoroastrians believe in *vohu mana*, except that *vohu mana* is interpreted as 'one's own wisdom' and not 'the good mind.'"

The discussion on youths once again saw a debate between those who were in favor of youth bodies functioning independently of the anjuman and those who wanted youth wings to be an extension of the anjuman. And this triggered a set of queries on the immaturity and inexperience of the youth and whether they could be entrusted with responsibility on the governing bodies of anjumans. Pervaz Irani of Dahanu was the only youth to brief the delegates on the activities conducted by his youth wing and how they even planned to start an ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) school to benefit the Zoroastrians residing there. Secunderabad and Calcutta were also cited as good examples where the youth wings and the trustees function harmoniously. Said Calicut's Marshall,

"I don't see any crisis among youth in India so let's get on with our work." Responded Gandhi, "We are talking about the involvement of the youth to avoid any crisis in the administration of anjuman if youth are not trained to take charge of the affairs when the elders are no more."

Further encouragement for the youth came from Homi Bodhanwalla of Jamshedpur, vice president of the Federation, who offered to get the necessary funds for the institution of a Federation award for youth excellence. The criteria for the other Federation awards that had been drafted by Bodhanwalla were also discussed so that full justice could be done before the awards distribution at Delhi in September. Federation treasurer Peshotan Nargolwala, who had offered to finance an award for a large happy family at an earlier meeting, spelt out his criteria for a candidate to merit that award: *asli* Zarthustis with three children and an age-limit for the head of the family at 55/60 years!

Though in 1987 and 1988, in addition to the awards, special mentions had been made in each field of specialization, the practice would be discontinued this year unless sponsors can be found for the special mention categories. Specified Kanga, "The purpose of these awards is to create inspiration for others and make them feel that the community is proud of them." The publicity that they get in community publications helps to make them

role models, it was reiterated.

The *Fed Newsletter*, the organ of the Federation, is, according to the survey findings, well-read and almost all were satisfied with the contents. Matrimonial news, job openings and information on anjuman and youth activities were subjects for possible inclusion suggested by the delegates who filled in the appraisal form to assess the Federation's performance. The financial position for the next 12 issues of the *Fed Newsletter* should be secure with assurances coming in from the BPP (for three), *The Bombay Sama-*

Some farmers cannot afford even the conveyance costs of their school-going children

char (for two) and one each from the DPA, the SPP, Poona, Calicut, Guzder, Bodhanwalla and Aspi Irani.

One Federation service that should prove helpful to the smaller anjuman with a fire-temple is the posting of trained paramobeds to these areas where regular priests are not willing to go. Two such paramobeds are believed to be qualified for performing religious ceremonies. One will be going to Allahabad and the second paramobed perhaps may go to Mount Abu which is reportedly in need of a priest. When referring to the scarcity of mobeds, Minochaheer Bharucha of Bhavnagar suggested that non-athornans should be allowed to train at Bombay's Dadar and Andheri Athornan Madressas. This proposal dealing with a "controversial religious issue" that is usually barred at Federation meetings did not generate much enthusiasm. Neither did the plea from Paurusasp Magol of Karachi for funds for The Zoroastrian Religious Trust for Udvada Mobeds that he has co-founded with three others. In fact there were many people tendering him reasons why his one crore target project was not practical. As reasoned by Delhi's Dadi Mistry, "If every trust of a similar nature is going to put its hands in the same community pocket, how much help can you expect? Can there not be one single collective effort?"

"Should we encourage people to burn

sandalwood?" Kanga broached the sensitive subject. "It's such a valuable asset which can be put to other uses," he continued. Questioned Dandiwalla, "Is it more valuable than religion?" Explained BPP trustee Homi Ranina, "Kathi which is meant to preserve the fire embers can't be substituted for sandalwood. Perhaps some other wood." In the meanwhile Dara Deboo of Navsari is progressing with his project of growing babul trees on 30 acres of land near Navsari. If more land is available he offered to grow even more babul trees to cater to fire-temple (an agiary daily needs almost 20 kg of kathi, about half the produce from one babul tree).

Among the new projects that the Federation should initiate, according to the responses to the assessment report filled in by the delegates, were the growing of more trees, amalgamation of agiaries in cities and towns, and stemming the population decline. There was only one respondent, Dandiwalla, who felt that new projects should not be taken up as "even the ones on hand move at an ant's pace." Dandiwalla was emphatic, "We are repeating the same agenda day after day, year after year." It was Minoo Shroff who in his concise style summed up the proceedings, "The subjects are fine but there is too much digression from the topics listed. We should stick to the subjects and allocate time (for the discussions on hand)."

Those present at the Federation meeting were: Capt Homi Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Pervez Mehta from Bardoli; Minochaheer Bharucha from Bhavnagar; Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, Jamshed Kanga, Jamshed Guzder, Homi Ranina, Minoo Shroff, Rustom Anklesaria, Ms Gool Tata, Ms Sheroo Master and Peshotan Nargolwala from Bombay; Darius Marshall from Calicut; Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Keki Gandhi, Dadi Mistry, Farrokh Rustomji, Hormazd Cama and Homi Taleyarkhan from Delhi; Edulji Dumasia from Dumas; Aspi Irani and Pervez Irani from Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Homi Bodhanwalla from Jamshedpur; Dara Deboo from Navsari; Marzban Kaikobad, Meher Anklesaria, Dinshaw Anklesaria and Brig Noshir Grant from Poona; Dr Sam Bhacca, Sorab Katpitia and Davar Kavasji Modi from Surat; Rustom Cursetji and Parvez Bhesania from Thana; and Homi Mehta from Zai Bordi. The Press was represented by *Parsiana*.

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Through the eyes of a social worker...

Arnavaz S. Mama

Perceptions must change if the community's downward spiral is to be reversed, says Dr Vera Mehta

"There's no justification for the extent of Zoroastrian poverty," says Dr (Ms) Vera Mehta, secretary-general of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) in Vienna, Austria. In Bombay to participate in the Fifth World Zoroastrian Congress (5WZC), Mehta questioned the assembled delegates, "Where is the concern for the quality of human life?" adding by way of amplification, "There is a void, an emptiness in every life!"

Personality growth enhancement is necessary for the qualitative well-being of the mainstream of the community, says Mehta but adds that it would require "a whole army of social workers." Lots of catalysts are needed to galvanize the community: Mehta would like to see emerging young leaders oriented in social work through programs evolved by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS); she would extend elementary education in social work to untrained institutional staff in the interests of greater

comprehension and hence, commitment to their work; continuing education for trained social workers, specifically in management training, cost benefit analyses, etc; and the training of para-professionals.

"We need people who can inspire the community; we also need a mini training program in social action which would bring together youth leaders and presidents of different communities to discuss their own concept of social welfare," said Mehta at an interview with *Parsiana* on January 20, 1990. She advocates a trust for overall planning and coordinating medical care, culture, leisure and youth work, together with a specialists' cell for social development.

Complimenting the Bombay Parsi Punchayet for its approach to community problems which Mehta described as positive, open and supporting, she noted that the need of the present was to link resources to people, not the giving from the rich to the poor which results in the

stultifying 'charity' that undermines self-help and self-respect. Mehta spoke of the Punchayet's plans involving TISS: The Institute would provide counselling for a survey to establish the nature and extent of poverty in the community, said Mehta. TISS would also provide guidelines for feasibility studies for projects concerned with the aged and the poor, help design new community and institutional services to meet the situation and try to get all Parsi social workers together as an important part of the resource mobilization and the designing of self-help projects. Stressing the urgency for manpower planning, she reiterated a piece of information that had scandalized her when it emerged at the workshop on the aged during the Congress: The Liaison Committee pays a bare Rs 1,500 to its lone trained social worker of 40 years standing when fresh graduates today begin their careers at Rs 2,500!

The report that Mehta presented the Congress in her capacity as chairperson

of the workshop on the aged and the poor sought an integrated approach to the development of community welfare services, organized on a neighborhood basis in the colonies and bays. The activities to be organized included "a play-center for children of working mothers, day-care center for the aged and the elderly, work centers for the able-bodied, self-employment opportunities for the entrepreneur boys and girls, supportive or remedial education, school social work, health insurance, vocational guidance and employment assistance. Financial assistance should be given only to the disabled, socially neglected and mentally impaired." The report stressed, "Beneficiaries also need to be treated with dignity by the trust officers."

Activities and functions help to generate the Parsi/Zoroastrian feeling, agrees Mehta, but people must come forward to help. They will only do so when there is "compassion within," compassion being defined by Mehta as a combination of love and understanding. "When you have that, the entire approach changes," she adds. According to Mehta, "welfare needs commitment combined with religious, spiritual and moral education (expressed in) the urge to serve. Experience in serving can bring out a deep sense of humanity..."

"We say everyone has the God-essence, but we don't live it in our com-

munication with others... The quality and tone of voice changes when we treat others as sacred. It should become a way of life," says Mehta. She suggests meditation as a means of reaching that "mindfulness" of our surroundings which could and should become a way of life. "Anger stems within," Mehta told the Congress. Let us reestablish "Asha in ourselves," she urged.

Mehta fervently believes in the need and the ability of Zoroastrians, as individuals, to raise their level of cognition above the daily trivia, the petty little inconveniences and quarrels that we imbue with such heavy emotional overtones. Progressively widening our perspective to accept the commonality of such daily occurrences, of shared frustrations, would eliminate much of the sting under which we smart so often and so long, she implied. A gradual withdrawal from such thoughts would free the mind for more constructive activities. In Mehta's words, "Consciousness raising, awareness, enables people to live at a different level (and) not be victims of circumstances or situation or environment," as they often are.

"Consciousness-raising requires inner discipline, control," Mehta elaborates. To the extent that you are not self-directed, you are not a free, liberated individual, she says. No, she is not speaking about rebels or radicals, she clarifies, but

about the freedom generated by inner discipline which "brings dividends of originality, physical, emotional and mental well-being — ease, harmony, health."

Mehta is acutely conscious of the dichotomy between Zoroastrian ideal and practice. As a trained social worker she sees beyond the polished veneer. "Parsis brag about being straightforward, honest, but it is only the need to release aggression. Truth should lead to nurturance, growth production, conversion of the heart..."

"Looking at Zoroastrian doctrines and traditions through the eyes of a social worker," Mehta traces the community malaise to the gulf between religious precept and practice, leading to a poverty of the spirit. The teaching of religion in classes is not combined with an attempt to engender inner development, she notes sadly. "Take the scriptures into application in daily life, not just at the intellectual level. Games, puzzles, oratory are okay, but side by side there must be a connection with one's soul, a consciousness of one's being," she advises and asks, "What techniques and traditions do the scriptures provide to tackle the upheavals, traumas, tensions of daily life?" In the context of the persistent pleas from the youth for religious education at the 5WZC, Mehta noted at the plenary session on 'The survival of tradition in the twenty-first century,' "Poisonous emotions poison our daily living... disease is the final manifestation of conflict between personality and soul," and made an impassioned plea to provide "spiritual tools to youngsters to look at (their) inner self, make the mind free of debilitating forces."

Mehta believes that the access to Vohu Mana — pure, clear thought — is blocked by the chattering of the petty mind, resulting in a large number of controversies. "Discern between freedom of the press and destructive criticism. When there is spirituality, we would not destroy as often as we do. There are many thankless jobs. Do we wait to assess how much effort is being made?" Mehta asked the assembled delegates. "When you have experienced Vohu Mana you don't go about hitting out at people; you acquire an enlightened approach... The moment you are on a higher level, everything else — charity, understanding, thoughtfulness — follows," she reiterated at the interview.

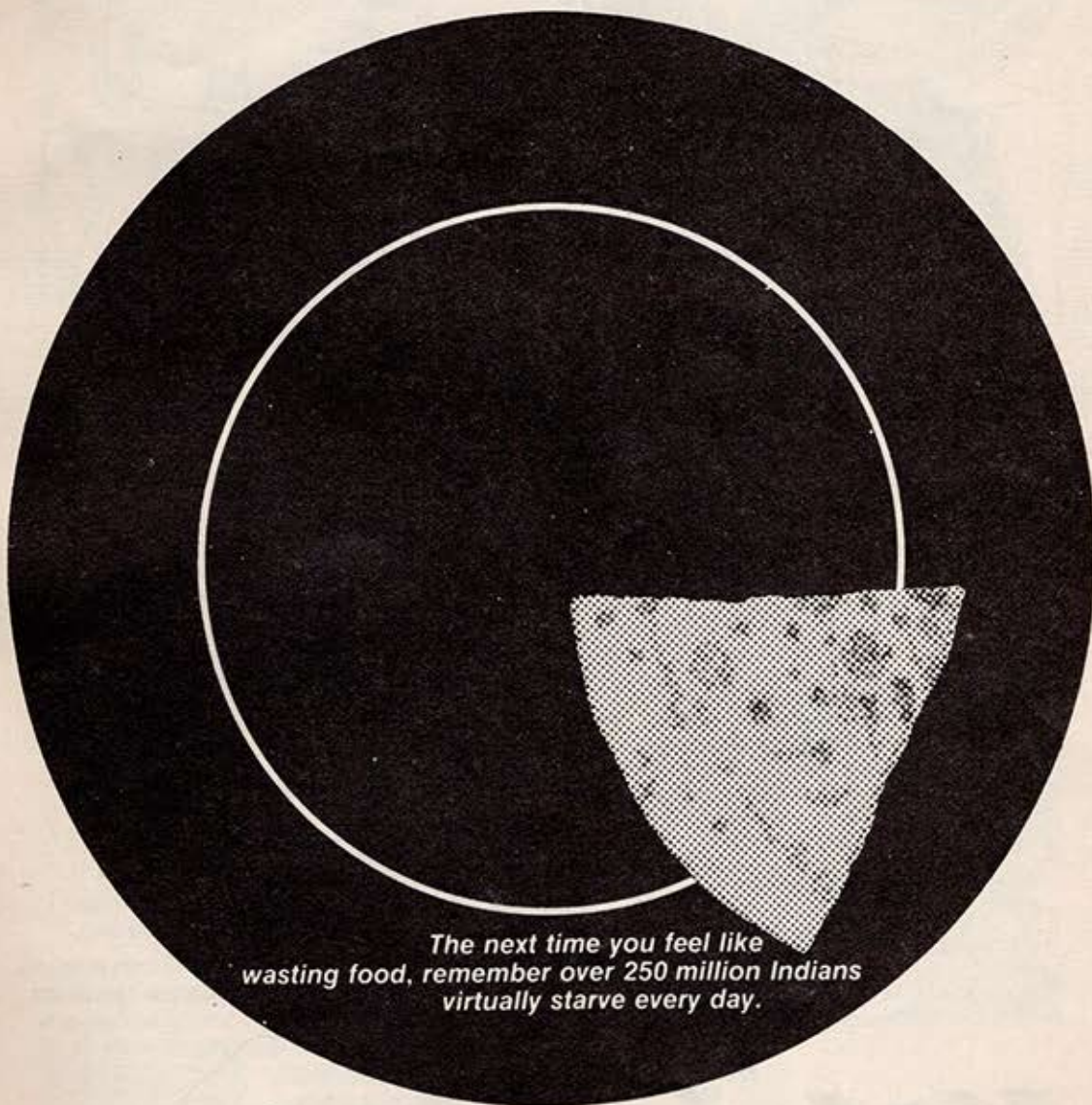
Mehta is the first Asian secretary-general of the 60-year-old IASSW whose

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1,600 members belong to 80 countries — indeed, the first from the third world. A product of the Alexandra Girls' English Institution, St Xavier's College and TISS, Bombay, Mehta acquired her master's in social work from Boston University and her doctorate from the Technical University of (West) Berlin. Thereafter, for 17 years Mehta taught at Bombay's Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work. When a vacancy arose in Vienna, about 70 names were proposed from all over the world for the prestigious post. Interestingly, Mehta says she was sponsored by Germany, not India! The selection procedure spanned nearly two years and she won from a final shortlist of about five candidates. Among the criteria the IASSW sought in its incoming secretary-general were high professional competence, a capacity for fund raising, the ability to represent the profession at international fora, to administer and to teach. Mehta speaks of the staff of seven who assist her at the Vienna headquarters where the Association communicates in three official languages — English, French and Spanish. Mehta says she comprehends French and Spanish enough

to correspond: though she cannot write them, she can sense the meaning. "There's empathy when you're in touch with people," she notes.

"Even before political barriers

**"The quality and
tone of voice
changes when we
treat others as
sacred"**

opened, we'd already reached East European countries, China... Russia has invited our organization to assist in training social workers," informed Mehta who was due to visit Moscow on invitation in April this year. Programs of the World Bank, once purely the voice of economists, now have an increasing social welfare element, notes Mehta who recently addressed the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The curriculum of social work is widening all the time with new global issues

coming into focus, says Mehta. "In South Africa our black and white colleagues need our international support," she asserts. "My role is to get as many world bodies to have social work consultation" she adds, citing the World Health Organization's multi-million dollar program on AIDS and UNICEF's work for street children who account for more than one half of all third world children, according to Mehta. "Social work extends not only to helping clients but the normal population (if it) needs help," she adds.

Mehta subscribes to the special dietary routine known as Food Combining under which certain foods combine harmoniously in our innards while others — largely due to different digestion timings — create the all too familiar rumblings that dissipate energy. She claims the regimen has enormously increased her capacity for sustained work. She also believes staunchly in the moral imperatives of non-violence in thought, word and deed — a Buddhist concept — and tries to live in tune with the adage, "You cannot make peace; you do not do good; you must be good..."

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TO BEE OR NOT TO BEE



Padma Shri Behram Contractor, alias Busybee, reviews his career as a journalist

Gustasp Irani

He looks up from his typewriter to greet you, then pleads for a moment to complete the sentence he is structuring. He crouches over the machine again, his face frightfully close to the words he scans, then strikes a single key. His thatch of grey hair rises from the typewriter once again. "That's it?" you ask, a little taken aback by the brevity of the maneuver. Yes, he nods. Behram Contractor, noted Bombay journalist, founder editor of *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (*The ADC*) and a recent Padma Shri awardee, is as intriguing as the "Busybee" column — a daily tongue-in-cheek comment piece on happenings in the world at large — he writes. Though it is tempting to typecast him in the mold of Busybee, it would be folly to

do so, for behind the good-natured, humorous character projected by the column is a hard-nosed newspaper man. Ask him, "Who won the award, Busybee or Behram Contractor?" and he replies, "I don't really know. I wish it was Behram Contractor."

One must see Behram Contractor in proper perspective, leaving behind, at the age of 49, the security of his reporting desk in *The Times of India* (*The TOI*) which he held for 17 years, to join Khalid Ansari of Inquilab Publications to launch the *Mid-Day* where he continued as executive editor for six years. Then at the age of 55, when most people contemplate and fret about their retirement years, he broke away to become the founder editor of *The ADC*.

"There are no highlights in my career," interjects Busybee before Contractor can reply to our query: "It's probably *The ADC*; to have a paper of your own (to edit), to have the right of choice. Of course, you consult others, but finally it's you who shapes and fashions the paper." Such freedom is paramount to Contractor. He had it for the first two years with *Mid-Day*, then less till, after five years there was none left, he said. "It was then that I left... You leave either because you failed or you succeeded. My parting of ways with *Mid-Day* was because of my success."

Success, however, did not come easy for *The ADC*. "The first year was difficult. We used to do our printing at a press at Sewri," Contractor recalls.



At the fifth anniversary celebrations of *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (from left): Farzana Contractor, Justice Bakhtavar Lentin, Dhun Lentin, Saeed Jaffrey and Behram Contractor

Finding financiers was a problem too but here Contractor found an ally in Kamal M. Morarka, managing director of Gannon Dinkerley and Co Ltd, a construction firm. "He gave us money, and later he gave us more money," Contractor states bland realities. He, however, assures you that the financial help was delinked from editorial interference.

Contractor would not have settled for less. Awards, like the Padma Shri he shrugs off. In fact, he leaves it to Busybee to deal with. In his famous last page column he agonized good-humoredly over the honor bestowed on him — in one instalment he fretted over what to wear at the award distribution function — and finally did not go to receive it from the President of the country because the date of the function coincided with the fifth anniversary celebrations of *The ADC*. "I would have loved to go," he assures us.

Recently, they sent him a certificate in Hindi — his surname misspelt. We look around his small cabin for the framed document, but the search proves futile. "I'm not going to put it up," he states; "In fact, I don't even know where it is. My wife has probably spirited it away." He has been told that two medals are to follow. One large, to display in his showcase; the other small, to wear at official functions. "I'll keep those," says Contractor. "They are made of gold."

Busybee is practical, but he does not take life seriously. He does not take his column seriously either. Never did. It started with the now defunct *Evening News of India*. "I never agonized over it as it was not my main job, which was journalism, (as) a newspaper man. I

would write it on my own time. I still do. It did not pay me enough to take it seriously." The early pieces he wrote were "definitely" modelled on Art Buchwald's writings. With time, the style changed and Busybee emerged as a distinct personality of his own. "Even Art

"If someone tells
me something, I
know how to word it"

Buchwald has changed. He now writes more about US politics rather than general topics. I don't read him much now," notes Contractor.

Time has changed Contractor's perception of Busybee too. The column is no longer a mere financial perk. "Now I write Busybee columns because it is my job, it sells papers," says Contractor. What has not changed is the Busybee style; good-humored and non-committal. Contractor refuses to play favorites with the many characters who frequent his column: a wife, two sons, a friend who lives on the 21st floor, Bolshoi, the boxer. We goad, singling out the dog as our personal favorite. "Yes," says Contractor, "he is probably the most popular. He appeals to children." (Ouch). Contractor dismisses the suggestion that probably Busybee's wife has changed since Contractor got married. "I don't think so. When I write, I don't write about myself so I can't be writing about my wife."

"You don't write about yourself?"

we challenge him. "I may write about a situation, I don't write about myself. Some of my experiences are bound to come into my writings," Contractor maintains his position. "When I write about a situation I write as Busybee, I don't write as Behram Contractor. The two are different; their approach is different. The two get mixed up at times I suppose, but there is a difference."

Contractor's life is rich with experiences and Busybee is dipping in constantly to borrow situations: The Billimoria Boarding School in Panchgani where the air is sweet with the kiss of monsoon flowers on tableland; the early years of journalism with the *Free Press Journal*; the drinking years and drinking companions; travels and more. Particularly intriguing are the two years Contractor spent hitchhiking around the globe (1959-60). "It's a story all by itself," says Contractor as he gives us a peep into chapter I.

It started with Rs 75. "I did not have money for the return fare so I had to keep going forward." The first leg was on a ship to Basra, Iraq. The country was raked by a bloody revolution at the time. The ship Contractor was on, was the first to dock in the port town after the assassination of the King and his Prime Minister whose bodies had been dug up from their graves and dragged through the streets. Contractor found himself in the whirlpool and, before he knew it, he was arrested...

There were other journeys too. "I do travel a lot but not as much as (veteran journalist) Khushwant Singh. I use my travels in my columns, so it appears that

I have travelled a lot more than I have."

Then there are people in Contractor's life, ordinary and famous, whom Busybee portrays. The writing is often sprinkled with good-humored ribbing but never with malice. Occasionally, in these images one detects a sensitivity that is touching. "I am good at writing such things. I can play with words. I write a food column too. I am not a great eater or an expert on food but if someone tells me something, I know how to word it," says Contractor.

The difference between Busybee and Contractor aside, they share the same artistry of language. In fact, according to Contractor the proper and correct use of the language is the greatest asset of a journalist. His hiring policy is based on the applicant's command of English. "If a person writes well, he or she gets the job. In India this is important. Journalism can be taught, one can learn the ropes, but one must be able to write good English first. I don't think that a journalist requires special qualifications. It's not like surgery or other specialized professions." Women, he finds, are generally better writers than men and, in today's world, they are equally competent. "You probably can't send them to Kashmir," he concedes, but adds, "You probably can't send men there either. I've got nothing against men," he clarifies before he can be charged with reverse discrimination.

According to Contractor, journalism in India has changed. Now there is more investigative journalism. "Earlier *Blitz* did it but then it was called yellow journalism... Today if (Om Prakash) Chautala has gone (he was forced to resign as Chief Minister of Haryana), it was because of the Press, make sure about that." Rajiv Gandhi too, in Contractor's equation, lost the last general elections because of the Press. Earlier the role of the media in national events was less vital: "India's independence was not won by the Press," he observes. He concedes that the general public in India may be illiterate but those who read the papers talk and that is how the news gets around. "I think democracy in India has survived because of the Press." Contractor points out that almost every town has its own small paper. "Politicians and police officers can't do too much without it being reported."

However, *The TOI* seems to have remained untouched by time. "The editorial is where it was before, everything is

as it was before." And yet, it is the paper Contractor reads. One reason is that he believes that the majority of *The ADC* readers buy *The TOI* too, and his column is based on news items appearing in the morning paper. "If I wish to write about an item appearing in *Indian Express* or *Free Press Journal* I would have to explain to my readers what it is about." The other factor is that if a certain news item does not appear in *The TOI*, it can be used in *The ADC*.

This is vital for an evening paper for, according to Contractor, there is a distinct difference between a morning and

"Busybee and Behram Contractor get mixed up at times, but there is a difference"

an evening paper. Morning papers are fed stories by the agencies; there is a glut of news. By contrast the evening papers have a problem trying to fill pages without repeating items that have been covered by the morning papers. "We have to use more news features. It's like a Sunday paper, only we come out daily." No, Contractor clarifies, an evening paper need not necessarily be a local paper. In fact, he believes, it must be national, a complete paper. The *Evening News of India* and the *Bulletin* of earlier days were local papers. Being linked to morning papers they suffered: the best stories and the best staff were reserved for the big brother — the morning paper. Later, they tried to change but it was too late; the two papers started by Contractor were too firmly entrenched by then.

According to Contractor, *Mid-Day* and *The ADC* share the evening paper market evenly. "We are more up-market," he observes — no mates, less filmy gossip and no color front page ("You could lose a big front page news story trying to sell a few extra copies"). Being up-market means more coverage of Parsi news — "It helps our up-market image."

Contractor rues the closure of the *Jam-e-Jamshed* daily; the weekly is not quite the same. By default *The Bombay Samachar* has now become the Parsi paper and yet "It's not really a Parsi paper; it is a Gujarati paper that carries Parsi

news. I can't follow their language."

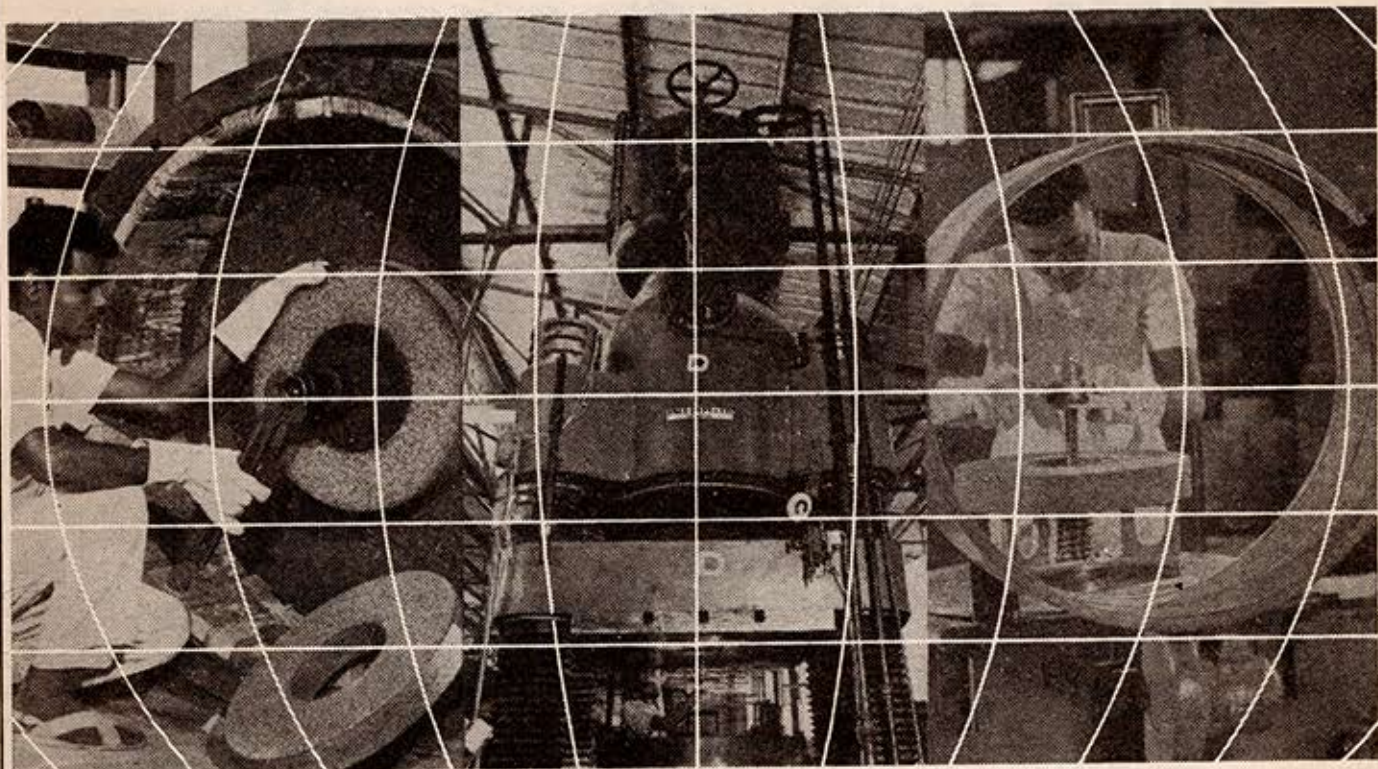
While talking of Parsi journalists in the English Press, Contractor steps back and a non-committal Busybee takes over. Yes, there is Russey Karanjia of *Blitz*; there was Dossu Karaka of *Current*; N. J. Nanporia, former editor of *The TOI*, *The Statesman* and *The Straits Times* of Singapore, still writes a column for *The ADC*; Dina Vakil, Bachi Karkaria, Maneck Davar and Porus Cooper, now migrated to the US, are names that spring to his mind as he thinks of the younger generation.

Parsis, Contractor believes, do have an edge over other Indian communities in English journalism. They are generally well educated and have a command over the English language which Contractor values as the most important skill in the profession. "We do get Parsis off and on." He stops and mentally scans his staff, "In fact we don't have any on our staff at the moment. The general manager, however, is a Parsi, Phiroze Dastur, son of an Udvada high priest, and Contractor is happy with the arrangement. "You can trust a Parsi; he is generally more honest." Is Contractor's sudreh-kusti showing?

Sorry, he does not wear a sudreh-kusti. "I stopped wearing them when I had to buy them myself... I suppose if someone gave them to me, I might start wearing them again. I do have a *topi* (cap)." And he wears the *topi*, once a year when he visits the agiary on Pateti. "My wife encouraged me to start going to the fire-temple," he clarifies. She drives me to the Cusrow Baug agiary, waits in the car while I go in with an offering of sandalwood for the fire." Yes, his wife, Farzana, is a Muslim. Their union did create waves as most intercommunity marriages do. "There were no objections from my community. I don't have a family. The opposition came from her family," clarifies Contractor.

He states that he also has a dagli — his wife's idea. It was his wife's idea too to celebrate the fifth anniversary of *The ADC* with a jashan, live band and *patra-nu-bhonu* (traditional Parsi feast) at the Jeejibhoy Dadabhoy Agiary. "1,200 to 1,500 people attended. For many, it was the first time they saw how Parsis celebrate and feast." And while the Contractors were playing host, they were conspicuous by their absence at the national award ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. For once, Contractor was making news instead of reporting it!

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THE PLACE where it sizzles

The sizzling steak is a family innovation,
says restaurateur Shahrookh Erani of Poona

Gustasp Irani

"They call me the son of sizzler," a bearded Shahrookh Erani leans back in his chair and laughs. A meal splutters, splatters and hisses on the table behind us at The Place in Poona. "The sizzler was my father's creation... It was his original idea."

More than a steak the sizzler is a part of the kitchen brought to your table, Erani explains. "Your food is cooking while you eat it. Food is no fun when it gets cold. With a sizzler you can *gup-sup* (chat) while you eat — the sizzler looks after your meal and keeps it hot." To enjoy the sizzler fully, the meat should be turned over so that it does not overcook on one side and remain rare on the other. "Every sizzler is a complete meal in itself, as it comes with French fries or jacket potatoes and vegetables," Erani adds.

According to Erani, it all started in Kobe, Japan, the place where the world famous Kobe cattle are bred for their meat — especially steak. Looking at these prized animals Erani's father Firoz Erani mulled over the problem of keeping a meal piping hot right up to the last bite. The answer was a thick metal plate imbedded in wood.

In the early 1960s, The Sizzler — the first restaurant of its kind in Bombay, India or the world — opened on the ground floor of the old Excelsior cinema

house. The building was soon to be pulled down and Erani Sr took his sizzler to the Isle of Man where he gave the British Isles their first restaurant of its kind. It remained unique, for the idea did not spark there and the establishment closed after his death in the mid 1980s. His son brought the sizzler to Warden Road, Bombay, where the restaurant Touché opened in 1967 and carried it from there to The Place in Poona in 1971.

How does one sizzle food? "The sizzler is basically grilled food that absorbs the sauce as it sizzles... it's the sauce that sizzles." The sauce? "Now that is a trade

secret. The recipe has been handed down from my father to me," says Erani. But there is more to sizzlers than the sauce. At The Place, only tenderloin steak is served. A tenderloin cut, Erani points out, is the meat that runs down both the sides of the back bone of all animals, starting from the groin -- yes, even humans have it. On an average, one can get only four kilograms of tenderloin meat from a beef producing animal. Since the muscles of this region are seldom if ever exercised, the meat is very tender. "There is nothing more tender than tenderloin," says Erani.

Then there is the sizzler plate. Erani Sr



*In charge of The Place (from left):
Todivala, Vachha and Erani*

had to develop it himself — a special alloy that retained the heat. Probably his brother Keki Erani of Steelage, Bombay, helped him with the technical inputs. At The Place the same custom-made plates are still used. Now, of course, one can purchase standard sizzler plates from the market. It reflects the growing popularity of sizzlers in India: "Today almost every restaurant offers sizzlers. You have vegetarian sizzlers and even Chinese sizzlers," notes Erani.

Yet, pioneering the new concept was not all smooth sailing. Though the sizzler caught on fast enough in Bombay, the Poona chapter of the story was a long struggle before a solid, broadbased clientele was established. The original Sizzler restaurant at the old Excelsior had been ideally located in the business center of the city. For lunch it used to fill up with office executives and members of the trading community; for dinner, there were couples, family and social groups who used to round off the evening at any one of the three cinema halls in the area (those were the days prior to TVs and videos). Touché, at Warden Road, in the affluent shopping and residential area soon became popular with the youth; in Erani's words, it became, "a hang-out joint, a place (at which) to be seen."

Poona, by contrast, was not ready for the restaurant in the early 1970s. "It was difficult in the early stages. People in Poona would eat at home rather than risk eating out. More often, clientele comprised of visitors from Bombay on race days and weekends, or foreigners."

They still come, but now more residents of Poona frequent the restaurant.

"People in Poona would eat at home rather than risk eating out"

Now, "the clientele is mixed... anyone who wants a good meal at affordable prices," says Erani. As he sees it, the foreigners get to satisfy a palate that craves for food that it is used to and the Indians get to feast on genuine Western food that matches up. "There are very few steak houses with reasonably priced menus in India. The only other restaurants that serve good Western food are found in five star hotels where the price plus taxes are prohibitive," says Erani.

The Place has more to offer than the sizzler, though the latter accounts for around 80 percent of its turnover. There is a tandoor section, an Indian section, starters, snacks, soups, desserts, even a

vegetarian section. On Sundays there is dhansak, prepared according to a recipe by Erani's mother Nina. Recently, Erani has started daily fixed lunch menu priced at Rs 35 (including taxes) where the customer is offered a choice between a soup or a starter, a main dish of fish, beef, mutton or vegetables and a dessert. Parsi dishes like *sali boti*, *saas ni machhi*, chicken *farcha* and more will soon be added to the menu.

Babinca, balchao and a number of other Goan dishes have made the grade at The Place. It is no idle boast when Erani claims that his is probably the best Goan food in Poona, for it is the brainchild of none other than Cyrus Todivala who was the chef in charge of the three properties of the Taj Group of Hotels at Aguada, Goa. Todivala refused a promotion — that would have placed him among the three top chefs in the entire Taj chain of hotels — to join Erani. Now he has shed his chef's toque to help run The Place.

For regular customers, Todivala is always ready to whip up something special. This time it was specially marinated, smoked tenderloin steak. "Today, I smoked it with sawdust rather than straw," he explains. The waiter brings a few slices of meat for us to sample. Just looking at the plate, the dressing, we understand what Todivala was talking about



only moments ago: the difference between, "presenting food and plonking it on a plate." After sampling the offerings, we are awed by the touch of a master. Draw him out and he will take you on a fascinating journey through the world of food; of how they smoke meat in a province in Switzerland, of how...of those little touches that make a world of difference in a restaurant. A restaurant is more than food, it is atmosphere, says Todivala. "Put on a table cloth, a vase with a single rose, plates, cutlery — a full service display — and the entire complexion of the restaurant changes." Your clientele changes too; the restaurant would now be targetted at the upper end of the market. Of course, at The Place, the spluttering sizzler rules out the table cloth and the

The exterior and interior of Poona's popular sizzler joint

range of the clientele is wide. Poona, Todivala believes, is not yet ready for a high grade French restaurant. Bombay is. But it remains a 'five star' preserve.

A good Parsi restaurant also has the potential for doing well in Bombay but no one has really given such an establishment a fair shot, observes Todivala. There are Parsi catering institutes like the Sir Ratan Tata Institute (RTI) but they do not fall into the grade he is referring to, which is more on the lines of the privately run Chinese restaurants that dot the city.

Anyone wanting to take up the challenge should be forewarned: the restaurant business is hard work. Handling difficult guests is part of the bother. "You meet all types of people," says Erani. "Recently, we had an elderly lady who ordered a steak when it was obvious that she would not be able to chew it." Erani prefers guests who complain in the restaurant so that something can be done about it. Managing the staff is the other bother. Sample: "You train your chefs and they run away." Presently, six chefs man the kitchen of The Place.

One Parsi who is not afraid of hard work is The Place's charming manager, Ms Farida Vachha. "She goes and does

the marketing personally. The restaurant opens and shuts with her," says Erani. The butcher and fishmonger, she informs, are more than work acquaintances. "They are very human... I've been invited to attend weddings in their families and oh yes, 've gone too!" And they are forever curious about The Place; they want to know what happens to the goods they supply.

Though happy to be a Parsi, Vachha finds certain aspects of the community distressing. "Parsis can be bigots at times," she states. In particular she refers to the rituals surrounding the food and fruits from the prayer table (*bhanaila* fruits). "It can be given to a cat or a dog or a cow but not to a *parjat* (non-Parsi)!" She also knows of a Parsi priest who strongly believes that all prayer is reduced to zero if a *parjat* walks past a Parsi at prayer. "He maintains that you must start all over again, even if you have been praying for 45 minutes, or it is as good as not having prayed at all." But then again, all things considered, Vachha confesses that she is most comfortable with Parsis. Erani agrees: "I'm not particularly religious but I am most at ease with my own community. They have a

certain lifestyle that I understand and can relate to." Yes, even their idiosyncrasies.

The Parsi-Irani divide, Erani believes, is superficial. "We are one people separated by a name. We both speak Gujarati, we both follow the same religion." If there is a difference, it is probably that the Irani is more adaptable to a tougher lifestyle. He cites the example of Irani families who have made a success of agriculture in Dahanu, Gholvad and Palghar and the Irani bakeries and restaurants in Bombay.

In fact, the sizzler story traces its origin to an Irani restaurant perched on top of a small hillock at the end of Worli Seaface. Here Erani's father used to serve mava cakes and soft drinks to British soldiers who used to parade along the waterfront. But Erani Sr was one Irani who broke free of the stereotype of the Irani restaurant owner. When he moved shop to the old Excelsior cinema, he was the first person to sell chicken rolls, hot dogs and hamburgers. "He was the pioneer of the American fast-food concept in India," claims Erani. It was at a time when his other creation, the meal that does not get cold, was sizzling in his mind.

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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) in Bombay ranged from 20 to 45 years, the arithmetic mean being 27 years (the total of individual ages divided by the total number of brides). The corresponding figures for the grooms were 21 and 50 years, averaging at 32 years.

As compared to 83 deaths in Bombay there were 12 births. The major killers were heart disease (18), old age and general debility (16), pneumonia and lung disease (eight). Six patients succumbed to septicemia, three each to diabetes, brain disease and kidney failure, while tuberculosis, malnutrition and hypertension claimed two victims each. Isolated cases of tumor, dementia, paralysis, blood disease, dehydration, stroke, accident and burns were also registered. The medical report in the case of one death was still pending. A 17-year-old youth was lost to the community. The oldest to die was a 97-year-old lady as compared to the youngest age at death which was six years.

This month's list of Bombay deaths includes one Mr Chawda whose demise was brought to the notice of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) by the police. Having died in a suburban hospital on June 23, 1990 the old man was reportedly a pavement dweller whose first name was unknown. The Punchayet interred the sudreh-kusti clad body at Doongerwadi when Zoroastrians in the area confirmed his Zoroastrian faith.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report

would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

BOMBAY

Born

A boy, *Marzban*, to *Rashna* and *Hoshang Udwadia* on May 31, 1990
A girl to *Zenobia* and *Farokh Irani*; June 2
Twins (girls) to *Parizad* and *Bomi Karkaria*; June 4
A boy to *Benaifer* and *Purvez Kutar*; June 6
A girl to *Benaz* and *Minocher Khavarian*; June 7
A girl to *Meenaxi* and *Mehernosh Bharucha*; June 9
A boy to *Shiraz* and *Firoze Katrak*; June 10
A boy to *Firoze* and *Percy Bhathena*; June 13
A girl to *Aban* and *Khushroo Kotwal*; June 15
A boy to *Persis* and *Cyrus Panthaki*; June 17
A girl to *Hootokashee* and *Firdaus Mehta*; June 24

Married

Shernaz Jal Vandrewalla and *Meheryar Faridoon Umwalla*; March 8
Dinaz Nairasangh Kapadia and *Homyar Nadarsha Aibara*; March 29
Huzan Rusi Kharas and *Aresh Firoze Fraser*; May 6
Dhun Shapur Jabbar and *Noshir Kaikhushroo Vasuna*; May 6
Aban Bahadur Udwadia and *Firoze Behramshah Andhyarujina*; May 7
Meherzin Noshir Dubash and *Cyrus Dara Turel*; May 7
Dinoo Jal Gandhi and *Noshir Manchershaw Shethna*; May 10
Kermin Merwanji Masalawala of Poona and *Sami Fali Khajotia*; May 11
Kashmira Jalejar Karma and *Navil Keki Hakim*; May 20
Farida Homi Bala and *Dinyar Merwanji Dumasia*; May 21
Anahita Khodadad Irani and *Freddy Pirojsha Gonda*; May 21

Kashmira Hoshang Nava and *Mehernosh Meherwan Mavalwala* of Nagpur; May 25
Farida Rustom Wankadia and *Jesse Sam Readymoney*; May 26
Mehroo Boman Irani and *Daney Phiroz Gundevia*; May 27
Maki Eruchshaw Chinoy and *Aspi Homi Driver*; May 28
Zarin Jalejar Sidhwa of Udwada and *Parvez Faramroze Billimoria* of Mumbra; May 31
Nancy Homi Deboo and *Kobad Aspi Bugwadia*; June 1
Dinaz Aspi Patel of Jamshedpur and *Parvez Ratanshaw Havaldar*; June 1
Fauziya Dara Devlaliwalla and *Khushnood Aspiandiar Shokrekshuda*; June 1
Mahrukh Adi Daruwala and *Kaiyomert Jehangir Sattha*; June 2
Kolly Ardeshtir Laher and *Darayus Adi Confectioner*; June 3
Bakhtavar Cavas Fatakia and *Cyrus Dara Press*; June 3
Khushnuma Homi Chothia and *Sharukh Cowas Bhathena*; June 4
Daulat Behram Irani and *Adil Jehangir Irani*; June 7
Jasmine Rusi Dordi of Ahmedabad and *Aspi Minoo Sanjana*; June 8
Jolly Jehangir Marolia and *Sarosh Pesi Doctor*; June 10
Pheruza Pheroze Tarapore and *Jimmy Erach Antia*; June 11
Ferozy Minoo Narielvala and *Sam Noshir Chapgar* of Poona; June 15

Died

Sheriar Minocher Irani (75), residing at A-1, S. Proctor Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; May 31
Hormusji Navroji Jamula (90), New Mistry Bldg, Balaram St, 400007; May 31
Perin Jehangirji Sopariwalla (73), A/3, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; May 31
Dhunmai Pestonji Madon (90), Kalpataru Bldg, S. V. P. Rd, Borivli (W), 400103; June 1
Meheramai Hormusji Patel (80), E-6, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; June 1

Shapurji Jehangirji Chinoy (67), 76/4, West View, Sion (W), 400022; June 2
Maneckshaw Dossabhoy Kapadia (89), Ebrahim Mans, Balaram St, 400007; June 2
Hilla Homi Lelinwalla (70), The Reward, Tardeo, 400007; June 2
Nadirshah Hormusji Daruwalla (90), Room 38, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 4
Rohinton Phiroze Daver (50), Meher Mans, Below Tardeo Bridge, Lamington Rd, 400008; June 4
Maneckbai Aspiandiar Irani (89), 9/1, Patel Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 4
Dara Phirozshah Master (79), Hormuz Mans, Opp Bhatia Hosp, Tardeo, 400007; June 4
Sorabjee Dinshaw Parakh (68), Chinoy Mans, Warden Rd, 400026; June 4
Pirojshaw Ardeshtir Vatcha (74), 3, Daruwalla Hse, 3rd Marine St, 400002; June 4
Rusi Dosabhai Banaji (82), Cricket Club of India, Dinshaw Wachha Rd, 400020; June 5
Jimmy Soli Desai (6), 10, Dadi Suntok Lane, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 5
Fareedoon Fakirji Siganporia (54), 5/B, Vishwas Soc, Vile Parle (E), 400057; June 5
Jer Savakshaw Adenwalla (82), Room 203, Ritz Hotel, Jamshedji Tata Rd, 400020; June 6
Perin Munchershaw Gandhi (85), 799, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 6
Ardeshtir Buman Irani (67), Sarkat Bldg, 4th Rd, Khar (W), 400052; June 6
Homai Merwanji Cursedji (83), 23, Pereira Hse, Mazagaon, 400010; June 7
Rustom Sorab Daruwalla (82), 305, Daruwalla Hse, Dhobitalao, 400002; June 7
Shirin Farokh Elavia (57), B/33, Jeevan Sindhu, Andheri (W), 400058; June 7
Gawhar Khodabax Irani (77), 81, M. A. Patel Bglw, J. P. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 7
Sorab Dadabhoy Kurlawalla

(80), V, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; June 7
Jal Hormusjee Siganporia (77), 15, Contractor Bldg, Viju Kotak Marg, Fort, 400001; June 7
Goola Pestonji Chinoy (60), 14/F, China Hse, 1st Carpenter St, Mazagaon, 400010; June 8
Jer Cursetji Banatvala (85), 6, C. C. I. Chmbs, Sir Dinshaw Wachha Rd, 400020; June 9
Khorshed Rustomji Dhabher (90), Uranwalla Mans, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; June 9
Jerbai Hormusji Khajotia (88), T-3, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; June 9
Hoshang Kersasp Vimadali (40), A, Godrej Baug, Nepean Sea Rd, 400006; June 9
Faramroze Sorabji Achadwala (94), Sethna Bldg, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; June 10
Jerbai Sorabji Bhesania (78), Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; June 10
Firoz Pestonji Nariman (50), E-27, Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 10
Cawasha Behramji Tukina (78), 6, Cama Bldg, M. F. Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; June 10
Khorshed Dorabji Billimoria (83), E, Wassiamal Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; June 11
Mani Sorab Chothia (80), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 11
Meherbai Savaksha Khambatta (95), 4, Shroff Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 11
Rustom Cawasha Mehta (82), Sea Side, 147, Colaba, 400005; June 11
Jehangir Manchershaw Chothia (68), 635, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 12
Dina Sorab Dubash (78), J, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; June 12
Gover Rustom Irani (68), 397, Sapar Bazar, Main St, Deolali Camp, Dist Nasik, 422401; June 13
Dinshawji Temulji Panthaki (85), 11, Hill Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 13
Roshan Sam Talati (64), Alpawala Bldg, Station Rd, Mahim, 400016; June 13
Tehmurasp Bejonji Cassad (62), K Bldg, Fort St, 400001; June 14
Rustomjee Dossabhai Ichha-poria (85), Gai Bldg, 646, Parsi

Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 14
Gulla Maneckshaw Patel (77), 9, Doctor Bldg, S. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; June 14
Dina Bapuji Dhondy (74), Dhondy Hse, Land's End, Bandra, 400050; June 15
Tehmina Dossabhoy Doon-gariwalla (81), Dossabhoy Mans, 796, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 15
Jehangir Dorabji Thetha (75), 24, Roop Darshana, Juhu Lane, Andheri (W), 400058; June 15
Jimmy Shapurji Billimoria (83), 21, Cuffe Parade, 400005; June 16
Farida Framroze Dhabher (52), D/21, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 16
Alamai Jehangir Karai (85), 10/7, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 16
Sehroo Pirojshaw Wankadia (78), Rusi Hse, Wankadia St, Nargol, Dist Valsad, 396135; June 16
Zubin Pervaz Mistry (17), Room 63, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 17
Sam Phiroze Siganporia (86), Kaka Bldg, 648, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 18
Jehangir Bekaji Tavadia (85), 275/F, Old Khan Bldg, Chikalwadi, 400007; June 18
Sorab Darabsha Gardin (65), 600, Bacha Manor, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 19
Coomi Pestonji Mistry (84), 47, Karelwadi, Thakurdwar, 400002; June 19
Homai Nadarshaw Mistry (78), Arsiwala Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; June 19
Goolbai Jehangir Unwalla (89), Jehangir Mans, N. S. Patkar Marg, 400007; June 19
Behramshah Hormusji Bhada (75), 5/11, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; June 20
Khorshedbanoo Rustomji Driver (90), Baria Bldg No 3, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 20
Jehangir Shapoorji Khambatta (83), Boyce Bldg, 671, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 21
Fareedon Jamshedji Behramkamin (65), C/o Banaji Fire Temple, Charni Rd, 400002; June 22
Parvez Dosabhoy Chinoy (79), M/4, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; June 22

Freny Minoo Gowadia (50), C-61, Meghdoot Layout, Andheri (E), 400069; June 22
Perin Dara Reporter (75), Khorshed Baug, Opp Thane Rly Stn, Thane, 400601; June 22
Sehra Nusserwanji Bhogiji (77), Damania Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo, 400007; June 23
Mr Chawda (about 80, first name and address unknown); June 23
Dhun Pirojshaw Daruwala (64), 23, Station Ter, Sleater Rd, 400007; June 23
Homi Shapurji Mehta (72), Talukdar Bldg, Marazban Clny, Dr Naik Rd, 400011; June 23
Villoo Adi Mohta (53), Tata Bldg, C. J. Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 23
Keki Rustom Patel (76), C/o F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, 34, Hughes Rd, 400007; June 23
Bomi Rustomji Wadia (77), Park Lodge, 10, Demonte Park Rd, Bandra, 400050; June 23
Piroja Kaikhushroo Bamboat (97), 5, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; June 24
Bachi Kaikhushroo Bharucha (67), The Homestead, 6, Alexandra Rd, Gamdevi, 400007; June 24
Rustom Dosabhai Gai (65), Dubash Bldg, 627, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 24
Banoo Perviz Bharucha (83), Assisi Bhavan, Goregaon (E), 400063; June 25
Manijeh Ratanshaw Katruck (86), Sethna Mans, 10th Lane, Khetwadi, 400004; June 26
Jeannie Dinshaw Kharas (62), 14/A, Nishar Bhavan, Sleater Rd, Tardeo, 400007; June 26
Maneckbai Dinshawji Wadia (92), Kachna Bglw, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; June 26
Dhanjishaw Maneckshaw Siganporia (75), Shroff Bldg No 4, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; June 28

POONA
Died
Piroja Nariman Billimoria (80), 596, Sachapir St, 411001; June 5
Farhad Maneckji Mehta (75), Jehangir Nursing Home, 411001; June 10
Jerbanoo Nariman Irani (86), Khodadad Mans, Namrin Rd, Nana Peth, 411002; June 22

Nariman Nusserwanji Tadiwala (75), Koregaon Bhima, Taluka Shirur, Dist Pune; June 22
Banoo Jal Bhamgara (83), 5/A, Apsara Apts, 259, Bund Garden Rd, 411001; June 25
Moti Aspandiar Irani (60), 486/25, Rasta Peth, 411011; June 27

SURAT Died

Pestonji Jamshedji Elavia (68); June 19
Minoo Kaikhushroo Mody (73); June 22
Kaikhushroo Maneckshaw Patel (72); June 23
Alamai Nusserwanji Mohta (92); June 29
Shera Hoshangji Patel (75); June 30

KARACHI

Died
Rati Behram Khursigara (82); April 2
Tehmina Maneckji Khambatta (80); April 8

MISSISSAUGA, Ontario Died

Jerbanoo Guzder, wife of Fareedon and mother of Khurshed and Sam; February 23

NEW SOUTH WALES, Australia
Married
Roshan Taraporewalla and Behram Katrak of England; April 21

OTTAWA, Canada Died

Jalamai Bulsara, mother of Keki and Jal; April 24

PHOENIX, Arizona Died

Zarine Daruwalla, wife of Noshir and mother of Nazneen, Zenobia and Shernaz; February 22

TORONTO

Born
A girl, *Diana*, to *Phee* and *Phil Vania*; April 12

TOTALS (for this issue)
Born: Boys 5 Girls 8
Married 29
Died 99

Compiled by Roxana H.Kaka

Reaching for the Sky



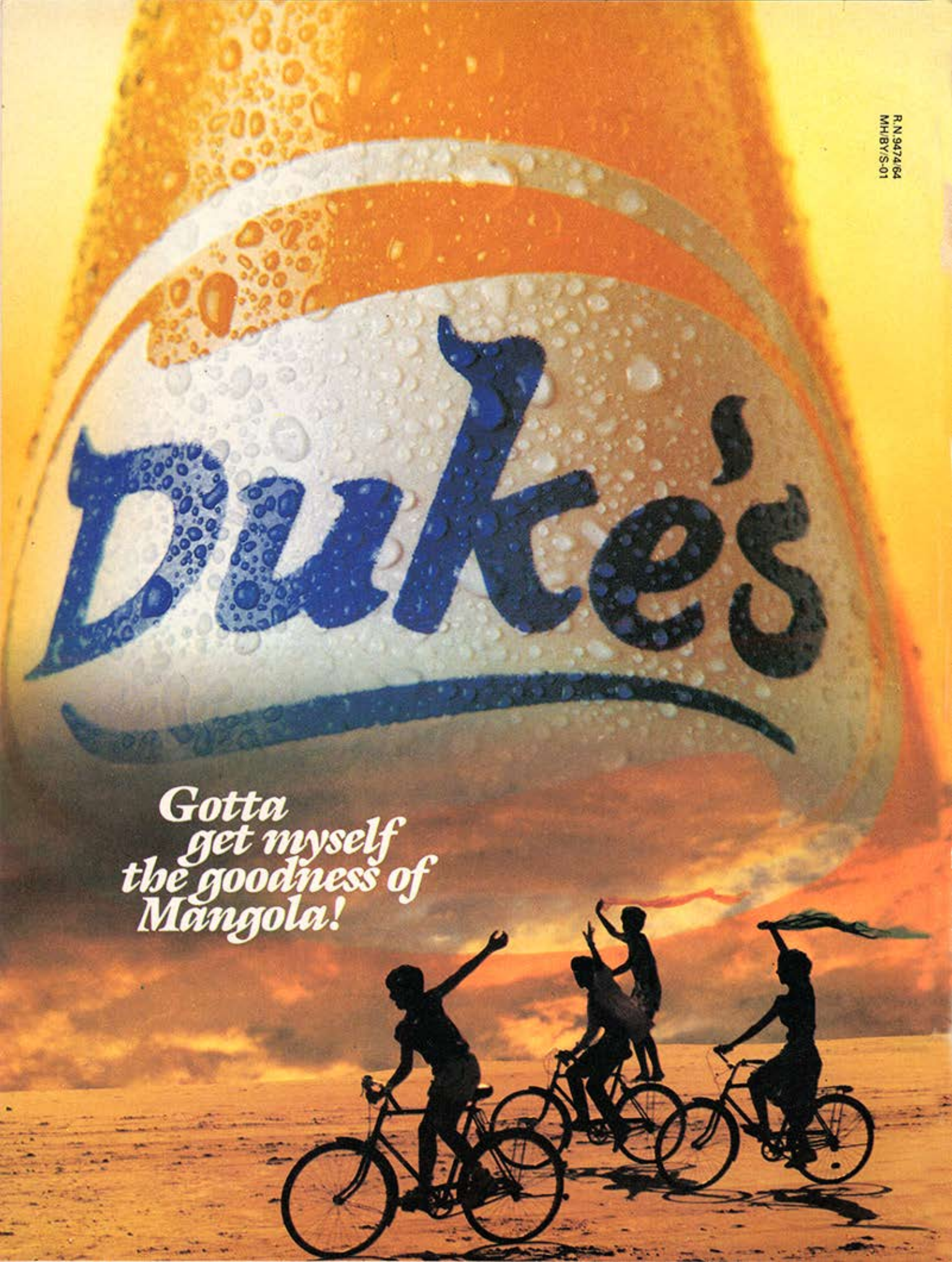
Two landmarks in Bombay – the Commerce Centre of the World Trade Centre Complex and the new Reserve Bank Building.

Both built by Shapoorji Pallonji of course!



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