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Parsiana

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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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

Whither, Parsiana?

I have been reading *Parsiana* for ages, and I must congratulate you on your copy and color but do I have to read events of August in November? Please rectify this.

I read your copies with interest, but I am upset when your readers bicker about Zoroastrianism, and how each one is correct about his interpretation of our Lord Zoroaster. I do not specialize in religion but permit me to make a few observations. Ahura Mazda made us equals and we shall remain so till we die. Events after death are debatable and I hope writers will debate this event in your columns soon.

I do not believe for a second that God will punish a Parsi for marrying a non-Parsi and vice versa. This is a matter of individual belief and one just does not sit in judgment over this.

We are marching into the new millennium and yet some of our ideas are an-

cient, corresponding to the 10th century.

We are a community of less than one lakh people. There is so much to learn and appreciate in Zoroastrianism yet we tear each other to shreds. Can't we be kind, considerate and giving as were our forefathers? Where is the Parsi hope or for that matter faith and charity?

I read with tremendous interest about the Parsi/Zoroastrian happenings in UK, USA, Canada, Australia and Japan. Do we have to go abroad to express our 'Zoroastrianness'? It seems so. I also read of Parsi achievements, personalities, books, poems. There are some whose pictures appear regularly. I am sure there are many behind-the-scene Zoroastrians who need to feature. Your item on Zarin Mistry was lovely, yet very sad. Your wedding and birth columns are a treat. At the birth of new Zoroastrians I rejoice. About weddings I am cautious as our divorce rates are high. I love to read some of those surnames. I thought I had a scary surname, but some are real tongue twisters. So keep up the good work (on time) as many of my friends borrow my copy.

I have 10 beliefs (as a Parsi): I believe in myself (absolutely); I am honest (99.9 percent); I live a healthy life (try to); I am not a martyr and will never turn the other cheek; I fight for the underprivileged (all the time); I love animals especially dogs, and an animal beater in my books can also be a human being abuser; I respect my parents (100 percent); I love to eat (pizza, steak, salad and brownies in that order); I do save for a rainy day (not much); I am satisfied (with most things). **Dr RUZBEH K. MOWDAWALA**

Guarding the faith

Thank you very much for sending me the Parsi calendar. My wife and I really appreciate your gesture in sending it airmail.

We got together with a number of Parsi families in the Sacramento area here in N. California on Xmas day. However, we were a bit dismayed to see so many good, handsome, highly educated Parsi boys with non-Parsi spouses. I am not at all sure now whether Parsi Zoroastrians will continue as a cultural group in its pure form beyond the next two generations. On the other hand the Irani Zoroastrians, although by and large not as well accomplished as Parsis, may yet

continue our traditions and way of life and ultimately the religion as we know it.

On New Year's day, which dawned with brilliant sunshine, my wife and I proceeded to our nearest Darb-e-Meher in San Jose, which is on the serene Hamilton Mountain road. The view from its location of the city of San Jose about 1,200 feet below is breathtaking, especially at twilight! There is an Irani Zoroastrian family who lives on the premises and takes care of the Darb-e-Meher. All Zoroastrians must forever be thankful to Arbab Rustam Guiv and his wife for their generosity and farsightedness in making available funds to purchase such prime property for our Darb-e-Meher. I wish there were more true guardians of the faith amongst us, especially amongst our youth!

The University of California-Davis has asked me to put up a small wall display of our religion as a part of their drive to highlight the diversity of cultures, beliefs and faith on the University campus. I have obtained most of the material, downloaded from the Internet. I hope to get soon a color photo of Zarathushtra from the Union Press. Our religion is so little known outside the departments of theology. I found only one, just one, book on Zoroastrianism (by Mary Boyce) in the book stores in Davis, while there were scores of books on every other religion or cults.

Recently 2,500 Sikhs marched through Yuba City in N. California in procession with their holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Their photo and a huge write-up about their religion appeared in the newspapers. This highlights our most major problem -- falling numbers! **Dr ARDESHIR B. DAMANIA**

California, USA

Healing relationship

Anger is an appropriate reaction to the suffering of good people. It can all seem unfair and unjust. In terms of faith, it poses unanswerable questions about the relationship of Ahura Mazda (a God of love) to the suffering of the world. Has Ahura Mazda forgotten to be merciful? Has He in anger withheld his compassion? These are cries from the heart indeed. "I cried out to Ahura Mazda for help. I cried out to Ahura Mazda to hear me." And, so the heartrending cry ultimately comes: "Has his unfailing love

Reaching for the Sky



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

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vanished for ever?"

There seems no intellectual argument that will answer such distress. Those who are "too troubled to speak" will also be too troubled to hear. The only comfort must lie in the conviction that the "unfailing love" will never cease but will be felt in the assurance of the divine presence in every situation and above all in the depths of agony. This is a matter of faith, not proof; of experience, not theory. Within the standpoint of Zarathustrian faith, it is the only hope.

Those who seek to care for others pastorally must have the ability not only to sympathize with them, but also to empathize with them, to understand their situation and share their pain. This is especially so in times of loss and bereavement. To go on to identify with them may, however, be going a step too far. Every grief is unique, and no one else can fully enter into that suffering. The danger of over-identification or being, as it were, taken over by others' problems is a matter for constant attention in the supervision of counselors and care professionals. That danger acknowledged, there is however the need to do everything possible to "sit where they sit." To identify as closely as possible with others' pain is to demonstrate a true empathy. If sensitivity is ever needed, it surely is in times of bereavement. One cannot assure people they will "get over it." They never will. One cannot even assume that parents will "come to terms with it;" most never do. One can only speak and act in such a way that, in the darkest hour and the long, dark days that follow it, one feels for them and with sensitive empathy try to say or do something that will comfort, encourage and sustain them; in other words, to offer a healing relationship.

FURHOK K. TANGREE
La Roche-sur-Foron
France

Building trust

It is reliably learnt that Mr Ratan K. Lalkaka will be retiring shortly from the N. M. Petit Charity Fund. In Mr Lalkaka, the trust will be losing an able and dedicated chief executive.

With his gentle disposition, he was ever ready to help tenants of various buildings managed by the trust. To solve their problems, big or small, he would either call them to the trust's office, or address them during his weekly visits to these buildings. Mr Lalkaka had en-

deared himself to the tenants.

Mr Lalkaka's most outstanding contribution during his tenure as the chief executive of the Fund was persuading both the Fund and the tenants to share costs, in certain proportions, for undertaking repairing, plastering and painting of all Petit buildings situated at different localities. Under his personal care and supervision, this work was successfully implemented. **BHICHAJI M. ADENWALLA**

Ever helpful

To thousands he was a man indeed in their hour of need. Mr Yazdi M. Daruvala passed away in Dubai on August 25, 1998 at the age of 57. His personal help to those in need and his charity far exceeded those more moneyed than him. Every once in a while, he and his wife would drive down to Udvada and other similar villages to distribute rice, wheat, dal, oil, etc to about 70 destitute Parsi families and elderly priests who lived below the poverty line. I have not met any person in our community in the last 60 years who has helped so many so freely.



Daruvala: gave freely

D. K. BANAJI

Parsi pen pals

I'm a great lover of the Parsi people so please assist me to make pen pals with Parsi youths. I can be contacted at Mundamala, Patharkandi 788724, Karimganj, Assam.

GOPABANDHU LEMPA
Karimganj, Assam

Lack of unity

Even though the Parsi community boasts cent percent literacy, our progress is limited. One of the reasons is lack of unity. Every individual, even though lacking in integrity and caliber, considers himself a competent leader. We have in fact more leaders and preachers than listeners and followers. At times advice from an insignificant person can prove useful. We can no longer bask in the past glory. We should move with the times. We should shed our lethargy and be prepared for active, solid hard work to face the challenge from the other communities.

There should be a constitution for the community with some kind of sanctions

in order to maintain order and discipline in our own administration. We have no recognized dedicated leaders.

Seminars should be organized by Parsi anjumans to discuss the increase in divorces and to suggest remedial measures to arrest them. A committee of legal luminaries should suggest suitable amendments and reorganize the Parsi Matrimonial Court to suit the present situation. Every effort should be made to persuade the couple to pursue compromise. Children of divorcees are so badly affected that they are either reluctant to marry or think of marrying out of the community.

We have 1,500 trusts with a corpus of more than 30 crore rupees. Why should poverty persist? The method of functioning of these trusts should be revised. Most of the trustees are professionals and cannot spare adequate time for the welfare of the community. Parsi colonies abound with cars in the compound and every family owns a car as well as a scooter whereas the poor and middle class have to run from pillar to post, sanatorium to sanatorium every few months. All couples require independent accommodation, however small, to maintain peace and harmony, eliminating squabbles and interference in their own dominion.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet scheme for the third child is ridiculous and a mere wastage of funds when no efforts are made to pave the way to accommodate the first child. Many poor, aged and young couples are homeless. How can the meager population grow if there is no economic accommodation for them? They cannot pay fantastic prices on leave and licence basis, hire-purchase or outright sale. The poor families do not have that kind of money or funds. To improve the community's future, we should concentrate on economic housing instead of building and selling posh and expensive flats to the well-off at exorbitant prices. The system of allotment on points (marks) basis is confusing, complicated and unconvincing to applicants who are never taken into confidence leading to prejudicial, unjust allotment.

Unfortunately we hardly bother about the suburban Parsis. We should establish a centrally located hospital and schools in the suburban section managed by Parsi trusts to save them time and money.

BAHADUR M. BHARUCHA

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi



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Events and Personalities

A windfall for priests

A munificent sum of seven crore rupees, the single largest donation to the Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP), was received from the estate of the late Maneckjee K. Sett of Poona on October 31, 1998. There is also a possibility of receiving further sums after the tax and other liabilities are settled, notes a communique from the BPP.

As per the wishes of the deceased and the three executors — Burjor Antia, Col Soli Pudumjee and Aderbad Hozdar — the BPP will allot 30 flats at Godrej Baug and five flats elsewhere in Bombay to the executors for use by poor mobeds, preferably of the Bhagaria clan. The fortunate residents will also be assured of subsidized rents to the extent of 75 percent of the regular rates and will be exempted from the burden of maintaining these flats, notes a press release issued by the chief executive Behram Dastur.

An additional 65 flats are to be allotted by the BPP to those currently on their waiting list as per their merit norms at new buildings to be constructed or acquired by the BPP, adds the release.

While 70 percent of Sett's estate devolved on the BPP, from the balance, 15 percent will go to the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and another 15 percent is earmarked for mobed amelioration, Antia gives the details. Altogether Rs 12 crores were generated from the sale of Sett's bungalow at Poona after paying the capital gain tax of two crores, mentions Antia. Once the other liabilities and taxes are paid off, there is a possibility of these causes receiving more funds.

As it is, it took nearly four years after Sett's demise at the age of 80 to clear all the formalities and proceed with the disbursements, states Antia who recalls

elior belonged to the same family which manages the Maneckjee Sett Dar-e-Meher at Fort, named after his predecessor.



(Above, from left) Rustom Tirandaz, Dinshaw Mehta, Hozdar, Pudumjee, Guzder, Antia, Silloo Kavarana, Minoo Shroff and Tamboly

Photo: C. C. Gandevia

Guzder felicitating Bharucha



A week after this windfall, on November 5, 1998 the BPP's education advisory committee chaired by Dinshaw Tamboly felicitated Khorshed Bharucha, principal of the J. B. Vachha High School, for receiving the Best Teacher Award at the hands of the President of India, K. R. Narayanan on September 5, 1998. The recognition earned by her (see "The worthy teacher," Events and Personalities, Parsiana, November 1998) is illustrative of the contribution our community has made towards the

getting involved with Sett's affairs when the man had already made four codicils to his will. Antia says he convinced Sett to use his moneys for the cause of the Bhagaria priests which appealed to the benefactor and thereafter the fifth codicil was made with Antia, a partner in the solicitor's firm of Mulla and Mulla and Craigie, Blunt and Caroe, being introduced as executor.

Maneckjee hailed from the same family as Jalbhai Kavasji Seth, and the benevolent broker Rustam Maneck who has been credited with establishing business relations with the Portuguese and British in the 19th and 20th century. Maneckjee was a businessman who was mainly involved in administering the family's assets and properties. The bach-

building of modern India, said Tamboly, acknowledging the efforts of dynamic Parsi lady principals of outstanding schools of Bombay. Felicitating Bharucha, BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder commented, "A school is known by its principal...may this be the beginning of greater heights..."

Assets are appreciating

When all their figures fluctuate between thousands and crores, a three-digit paltry amount of Rs 360 surely catches the eye. This sum was shown against the head of rent and income from land in the case of the Nariman Home, one of the many institutions run by The Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) Board whose total assets (not counting the liquid assets)

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were valued at Rs 143,752,711.42 as on March 31, 1998. The SPP itself earns Rs 5,59,318.15 as rent and income from land, according to the statement of accounts sent by chairman Dr Sam Bhacca.

Last year, Bhacca and his eight co-trustees were in charge of assets amounting to Rs 117,789,565.40, with investments accounting for Rs 86,264,459.38 and immovable property for Rs 24,025,468.65. This year the investments increased to Rs 110,417,447.38 and immovable property, Rs 25,214,431.65. These figures would cover the SPP as also the Parsi Surat Charity Fund, Surat Boys Orphanage, Nariman Girls Orphanage, Parsi General Hospital, Parsi Maternity Hospital, Nariman Home, Patel School, Polytechnic Institute, Alapaiwala Institute, Dastur Meherji Rana Trust, Dastur Darab Phalana Trust, Sorabji Burjorji Dastur Darab Pahalana Trust. The immovable properties for SPP singly stand at Rs 14,049,839.12 which is the highest, and for Parsi General Hospital at Rs 243,518.71 which is the lowest. Investments again were highest in the case of SPP standing at Rs 42,140,065 but lowest for the Alapaiwala Institute at Rs 410,229.

When comparing the corpus of their different institutions it appears that the SPP ranks the highest with Rs 48,421,398.48 and the Parsi Maternity Hospital the lowest with Rs 788,228.62.

In the case of both Depreciation Fund and Reserve, Development, Sinking Funds, the Surat Parsi Boys Orphanage continued to show the maximum among all their affiliates, and the Patel School the lowest. The Depreciation Fund of the Orphanage now stands at Rs 794,979.48 and the Reserve Development, Sinking Funds at Rs 1,636,916.63. The comparative figures for the Patel School are Rs 217,986.32 and Rs 85,241.31.

Active in Allahabad

From their total of 25, 16 members attended the last general body meeting of The Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman on October 10, 1998 indicating that 64 percent are actively involved in the Anjuman affairs. This count does not include the three Zoroastrians who are under the age of 18 years. During the year they lost one member Savak Nanavati who had served as the first vice president of the Anjuman when it was revived in 1969.

Since last April they have inducted

78-year-old Nariman Marshal as their new paramobed to look after their Jalejer Shapoorji Ghandhi Daremeher, notes a report sent by Capt Homi Dandiwalla who is serving his fifth consecutive term as president. His wife Shireen was re-elected trustee for another term of three years. Every month the Fravardin *roz* jashan as also the Bahram *roz* jashan is organized at the aramgah and Daremeher respectively.

The Anjuman's assets now stand at Rs 4,12,000, mentions the president. Against their maximum fixed income of Rs 48,995 projected for the ensuing year, they expect to spend Rs 44,975, leaving a surplus of Rs 4,020 which "is not a healthy sign," indicated Dandiwalla when commenting on the budget, the first ever presented to the members.

To augment funds there was a suggestion to introduce a cash box where members could contribute amounts of their choice. Alternately they were con-

templating starting a register with members being asked to pay a stipulated sum every month as is being done by other anjumans.

Vision and revision

"It is important that the agricultural foundation of the Indian economy is strengthened... The issue is how to reduce the gap between urban riches and rural poverty," declared former prime minister of India Deve Gowda. As chief guest at the celebration of Dadabhai Naoroji's 173rd birth anniversary at the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC) on December 7, 1998, Gowda examined a variant of Naoroji's famous wealth drain theory which had ascribed Indian poverty to Britain's systematic skimming of her wealth.

Hosted by the All India Dadabhai Naoroji Centenary Committee, the subject for the day, "Vision for the 21st Century" was also addressed by the evening's president Dr Homi Sethna, former chairman of the Atomic Energy

Below: Awardees (clockwise) Palia, Motashaw, Engineer and Mango. Alongside: Dadabhai and Taleyarkhan remembered. Bottom: Gowda releasing souvenir



Commission and IMC chairman Y. P. Trivedi with social worker Homai Modi, the Committee's general secretary, as the mistress of ceremony.

Thirteen persons received the Dadabhai Naoroji Awards for excellence and lifetime achievement instituted by Homi Taleyarkhan who had chaired the Committee until his demise last June. An award, posthumously dedicated to the late politician-diplomat-social worker of whom Gowda noted, "India lost a kindhearted soul who worked for India," was received by his wife Thrity. Four other Parsis were also conferred Awards: gynecologist Dr Nergish Motashaw, publisher Jerroo Mango, social activist Sheru Palia and solicitor Dadi Engineer. A souvenir titled *Dadabhai Naoroji: Britain's First Asian M. P.* containing several articles on Naoroji and Taleyarkhan was released by Gowda.

The Committee's secretary general Dr S. S. Mohapatra set the ball rolling by recalling how Naoroji had influenced Mahatma Gandhi as also Mohammed Ali Jinnah who had been his secretary. Referring to the famous phrase "Swaraj is my birthright" which has oftentimes been ascribed to Lokmanya Tilak, Mohapatra asserted, "It was Dadabhai who said (it)."

Modi read out a message from environmentalist Sohrab Godrej which referred to Naoroji's "extraordinary generosity of spirit," his faith in British values and his concerted work towards the education and upliftment of women. Like speakers before and after him, BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder harkened to Naoroji's patriotism which had led him to assert his Indianness above and beyond his communal and religious identity.

In his speech Sethna strove to place India's 1998 nuclear tests and the resulting western sanctions into historical perspective. "During the period 1970 to 1975 the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) organized five meetings extolling the virtues of peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs)... The USA pursued a program named 'plowshare' for developing peaceful uses of nuclear explosions... While all this was being talked about, we conducted a peaceful nuclear experiment at Pokhran in 1974. The effect was remarkable: the IAEA did not conduct any meeting on PNEs after 1975; the USA closed down its plowshare program. Though India did not violate any treaty, scientific coop-

eration with India was stopped." Sethna maintained that the US' current "hit list" includes Indian construction, transport services and estate management groups and institutes of mathematics and mathematical physics. "I wonder whether analysts in the USA have applied their minds before coming up with this list," said Sethna even as he argued that "all sanctions are good" as they spur scientific establishments to hasten technology development. Noting that the augmenting of electricity generation is India's main requirement today, Sethna pointed out that "large scale development of nuclear power is... inevitable," and advised the government and industry to effect the changes that would enable them to "make participation of the private sector possible in setting up of nuclear power plants" in the century ahead.

Trivedi deplored the usual Bombayite way of referring to Dadabhai Naoroji Road as D. N. Road: "(That's) not the way to appreciate a man's work!" Turning to Guzder, Trivedi noted, "This small community of 100,000 people — how many gems they have given us... If you had been 30 crores you would have been ruling the world!" According to Trivedi, "The criteria of the 21st century will be the economy, not military might," which will significantly depend on a national consensus on basic issues.

Noting that though "the common people want to live as brothers and sisters," one-third of the Indian people are below the poverty line and that half the population is illiterate, Gowda urged, "We must think where things went wrong and set them right... India is among the 10 most corrupt countries in the world." He exhorted "this audience of intellectuals" to stand united.

Whereas the audience had gathered at 4 p.m. as per the time declared in the invitation to the function, Gowda's flight had been delayed, landing just about then to the dismay of the organizers. This resulted in a long,

At the AIMZ AGM, Khurshid Narang, Amarsey and Meher Razaat
Photo: Arnava S. Mama

tedious wait until Gowda arrived more than an hour later, inciting Mohapatra to declare ruefully, "The chief guest has come late and wants to go early!"

Arnava S. Mama

AIMZ meet

The navjote registration form created by the Association of Inter-Married Zoroastrians includes the names and signatures of both parents, the name of the child, his/her place and date of birth, date of the ceremony and the name and signature of a witness to the ceremony. The form has been created at the instance of Soonu Godrej who had underscored the need for a census of navjotes, particularly of the children of intermarried couples at the 1997 annual general meeting.

At the AGM held on October 29, 1998 at the residence of the Association's president Meher Amersey the topic of prime interest was the agiary attendance of the outmarried ladies and their navjoted children.

What they are working towards is a formal acceptance by the concerned authorities of the presence of these ladies and their navjoted children in their midst. To this end they are seeking that the notice boards at the entrance to the fire-temples be amended to read, "Entry restricted to Zoroastrians only" by dropping the current double-barrelled "Parsi-Zoroastrian" definition.

A source of joy was the news of the honor accorded to Prof Kaikhosrov Irani by the establishment of a chair in his name at New York's City College where he has taught philosophy to generations of students.

On the other hand some members were agitated by the stench from the dokhma which they experienced in the course of their walks past doongerwadi on Gibbs Road and a general discussion followed on the strengths and weaknesses of the dokhma form of disposal of the dead.

A. S. M.





The Bombay Parsee Association office bearers with invitees (front row, from left) Umrigar, Bharucha, Lilawala, Dastur, Pooniwala, Peer, Dinshaw and Mody. (Rear row, from left) Shroff, Marfatia, Mehta, Patel, Arnavaz and Soli Mistry

activities and competitions are honorary general secretary Tehmina Peer, joint honorary secretary

Aloo Shroff, honorary treasurer Adele Patel and committee members Arnavaz and Soli Mistry. The function started with a jashan and ended with a contributory dinner. The singing of *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathoshti* and the national anthem reinforced the community and national spirit.

Portrait of a panther

All children delight in seeing animals — alive and on the move — especially from a safe distance. They can relate to the animal's antics, his curiosity, his innocence, his trust. And when mankind misuses its so-called superiority to destroy the animal, children are torn between their loyalty to their human comrades and animal mates.

These are the issues which come to the fore in Mickey Patel's *The Story of a Panther*, published almost four years after the artist's demise in 1994. As notes the introduction to the author on the front inside jacket, this was Patel's "last book for children and shows him at the height of his creative powers. The

many books that his talent embellished are cherished by young and old alike...Acclaimed both nationally and internationally, he won many awards, including the prestigious Noma Concours awarded by UNESCO for children's picture book illustrations."

The colorful birds in flight, the sniffing by the panther, the petrified man eyeing the panther with barely one eye open, the agitation of the mob, the pompous VIP who takes the law into his own hands and shoots the innocent panther, the glorifying of a cowardly act are all effectively portrayed in Patel's distinctive style which may be recognized by *Parsiana* readers who have seen Patel's many illustrations dealing with community topics on the covers and inside pages of the magazine.

This children's fiction, based on an episode related by Pulak Biswas, was brought out in 1998 by Ravi Dayal Publisher, 51 E Sujana Singh Park, New Delhi 110003 and distributed by Orient Longman Limited. The quality paper and the fine printing justify the Rs 160 price tag of this hardbound book.

For safety in Bombay

"Crime has increased, which is a fact despite the facts and figures on the screen," noted doughty advocate Freya Ponda who said she "took the easier way out" of her dilemma of an honest lawyer faced with the "rottenness (which has) seeped into the lower judiciary, police and the defense... by leaving criminal law practice."

Ponda was one of four speakers invited by the Consumer and Civic Affairs Committee (CCAC) of the Women Graduates Union (WGU) to contribute to a symposium: "Make life safe in Mumbai — bring back law and order." Sharing the dais with Ponda were Khushro Rustamji, retired director general of the Border Security Force, D. Sivanandan, Bombay's joint commissioner of police (crime) and retired Commodore Omprakash who is the convener of the Alert Citizens Initiative. Each speaker was introduced by CCAC honorary secretary Dolat Kotwal.

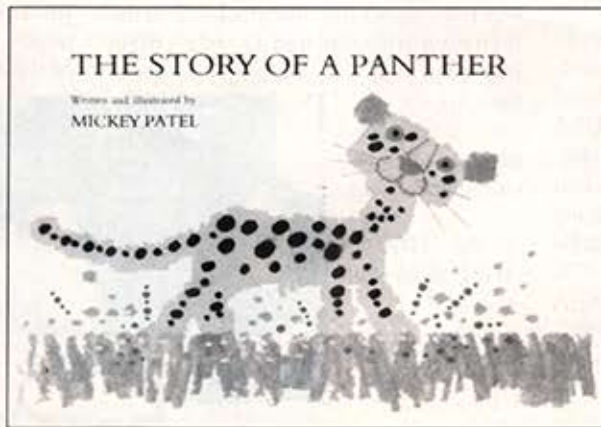
The program at the 83-year-old WGU Hostel for Working Women's Amy Rustomjee Hall on December 5, 1998 was flagged off by the Union president Swarn Kohli recalling

Ahead of competition

Distinction in academics, sports and social welfare were recognized by The Bombay Parsee Association (BPA) which felicitated six individuals at its annual meet at the Cama Baug on October 31, 1998. The elders as also the juniors in the different disciplines were recognized: Dr Nawaz Mody, Khorshed Bharucha and Percy Marfatia for their academic brilliance, Polly Umrigar and Shon Pooniwala for earning accolades in sport and social worker Nariman Mehta were each presented a plaque. Also felicitated on the occasion were the winners of the different BPA competitions, with the first prize winners in the senior contests being gifted a year's subscription to *Parsiana*, according to a communique from the Association.

As commented the guest of honor Ruby Lilaowala, with the size of the Parsi community dwindling, there is greater need for hard work and excellence to stay ahead of the severe competition. In appreciation of the yeoman services rendered by the BPA over the years, chief guest Cowasjee Dinshaw (grandson of BPA's founder patron Sir Hormusjee C. Dinshaw who is annually commemorated on his birth anniversary when the Association members garland his statue) presented the organization with a donation of Rs 5,001. He further commended the commitment of BPA president Vispi Dastur and presented him a shawl.

The others involved in steering the Association's various





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Ponda,
Rustamji and
Kotwal:
examining the
Bombay scene
Photo: Arnava S.
Mama

explaining
"the difference"

Bombay's history as "forerunner in social causes and public issues... This city has always been a safe city for women but since the last few years the situation (has become) scary."

Former Inspector General of Police (IGP) in Madhya Pradesh who has been decorated with the Padma Bhushan and the Padma Vibhushan, Rustamji laid the onus of the high crime rate on the economy of India — with its deficit financing and "unprecedented prices... It is amazing how onions have affected our life in India" — with the behavior of perfectly honest men brought down by the price rise, unable to pay for the upkeep and education of their children. Citing the example of the 93 ministers of the Uttar Pradesh government who consume two lakh rupees worth of tea and snacks a month, Rustamji noted, "The government did not appreciate the impact of the price rise until the Legislative Assembly elections." Referring to the "sleaze that is a part of national politics today," Rustamji said, "Criminals now think that all they need is a good lawyer to get them bail."

Responding to a question the former IGP noted that at the height of the anti-British movement in 1942, the British had refused individual protection, maintaining that everyone should protect himself. In contrast, police manpower today is diverted for individual security, resulting in failing discipline.

But the attitude of the general public also came in for censure. Rustamji cited the example of the four women in the running local who turned a blind eye as Jayabala Asher fought with a drug addict purse snatcher who threw her out of the moving train because she resisted. Asher lost her lower limbs to an oncoming train but "those women did not come forward even to give evidence," Rustamji pointed out. He urged the audience to "build up the feeling that the suffering of one is equal to the suffering of all."

Sivanandan began his address by

Rustamji and himself: "He joined in 1938 and I joined in 1976!" According to the joint commissioner, crime registration in the city was coming down with 3,000 less cases registered this year than last. A series of statistics presented visually bolstered Sivanandan's case. Nonetheless he admitted that there was increased "apprehension and insecurity," which he attributed to "the Press playing it up... Everyone ringing you up and asking for money is not a gangster. He may be a neighbor wanting to give you the fright of your life!"

Providing a guideline for a safer existence in the city Sivanandan advised a grill door at the entrance, verification of a servant's address with the help of the police (he suggested taking photographs of the servant in the course of family functions), the employment of known agencies to undertake repairs at home, adequate lighting around the home, etc. "Don't volunteer details of projected trips away from home," he advised and suggested that the receipt of blank telephone calls be reported to Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited. He also advised that the telephone number of the local police station be kept handy ("you can get the number by dialling 100," he said), a tape recorder and/or a caller identification system be installed into the telephone. Above all, he urged the gathering to avail of police help as even oral complaints are accepted.

According to Ponda the single most important factor in deterring crime is fear of capital punishment. There is "complete lack of fear of consequences in the hearts and minds of criminals (because there is) no adequate punishment." Life imprisonment means 14 years in prison which may be considerably curtailed by good behavior. Once "out on parole, strategies are devised and conspiracies hatched," Ponda said. The nexus between the politicians, criminals, police and lower judiciary

has resulted in the appointment of unsatisfactory prosecutors. "The successful conduct of a criminal case depends on a strong, fearless prosecutor. (There should be) a panel of clean, fearless, capable advocates (but they) belong to a disappearing tribe." When bail is easy, and matters are taken piecemeal with long adjournments so that eight to 10 years elapse before final disposal and the appeal may drag for another 10 to 12 years, witnesses become untraceable and the accused goes scot free, she explained.

Ponda suggested that a panel of retired persons be appointed to review cases where goondas are a threat to society which could proclaim its assessment through the media and demand a surrender in three weeks. "Under your leadership (let us) get concerned citizens, police, lawyers together to work to break the criminal-politician nexus," CCAC chairperson Dr Homai Shroff urged Ponda.

The Alert Citizens Initiative, Omprakash's brainchild, is based on a similar program in the US known as Crime Stopper, he noted. Its cornerstone is the anonymity of the reporter, he said, as fear of reprisal is, apart from apathy, one of the chief causes that prevent citizens from divulging the knowledge they possess. He urged Sivanandan to ensure that the police are receptive when citizens come forward with information. The Initiative is also in need of media support, especially from the vernacular Press. The Alert Citizens phone number is 2633333.

The WGU's other activities include a counseling and guidance center, a study center with qualified supervision and the Behramjee Lalkaka Nursery School for deprived children.

A. S. M.

Stress under duress

"It is because I love the people and the society that I write books. It may be that in the process I may hurt them, but the truth hurts where there is no intension (sic) as such to hurt, but to place reality before the people so that they are aware of their drawbacks to change towards the better." This is the kind of sentiment and language that permeates Dorab P. Patel's *Stress Management and Modern Life*, a 36-page booklet which according to the author "is written specially for students, families with young children, and persons working in offices so as to alleviate stress."

continued on page 30



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Zoroastrians who excel

Seven outstanding Zoroastrians bag the biennial awards at the 11th North American Congress

Arnavaz S. Mama

Seven Zarathushtis were honored at the 11th North American Zoroastrian Congress held at Rye, New York. Selected for outstanding achievement in their respective categories, the awardees were called by master of ceremonies Prof Farrokh Mistree and presented individual trophies and an award certificate plus three rotating trophies donated by Zarathushtis. The awards ceremony has been an intrinsic part of the biennial North American congresses since 1988.

In the limelight on July 3, 1998 were Farangis Shahrokh, winner of the 1998 Rohinton Rivetna Outstanding Zarathushti Award; Dr Yasmin Thanavala for the Excellence in Business or Profession Award; Dr Yasmin and Jamshed Ghadiali who jointly received the Jamshed Pavri Humanitarian Service Award; Orang Demehry and Dr Parastu Dubash as Outstanding Young Zarathushti awardees; and Phiroz Tarapore who received the Outstanding Zarathushti Student Award.

Iran born, California based Shahrokh, who holds a master's degree in social work and occupational therapy from the US, has been instrumental in founding several institutions in Iran including the Zoroastrian Women's Organization, Women's Organization of Iran, Ancient Iranian Cultural Society and the Iranian Handicraft Organization, notes the citation. She had also organized the first Iranian Women's Congress in Tehran and founded the Ardeshir Yeganegi Library there. Migrating to the US, she founded the California Zoroastrian Center and was instrumental in establishing the Rustam Guiv Dar-e-Mehr in that state with the Kaikhsorov Shahrokh Library therein. Author of the Persian book *In Search of Truths*,

Shahrokh has been a frequent speaker at North American Zoroastrian congresses. She was however unable to attend the ceremony due to ill health and the award presented by FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Association of North America) founder president Rohinton Rivetna was received on her behalf by Shida



(From left) Standing: Demehry, Dubash, Thanavala, J. Ghadiali and Tarapore
Sitting: Anoushiravani, Joshi and Y. Ghadiali

Anoushiravani, wife of the newly elected FEZANA vice president Dr Ardeshir Anoushiravani.

Thanavala, whose work towards a genetically engineered edible vaccine for Hepatitis B and other infectious diseases has been covered by the international media, received the award — which included a revolving trophy donated by Bombay Parsi Punchayet chairman Jamshed Guzder and his wife Shirin — from outgoing FEZANA president Dolly Dastoor. Thanavala holds three US patents in conjunction with her husband Dr Arvind Thakur and two other scientists, notes the citation. Bombay-born Thanavala completed her master of science from Bombay University

before proceeding to London University to work on a World Health Organization funded project to develop a vaccine for fertility control for which she received her doctorate in immunology in 1979.

Incumbent FEZANA president Framroze Patel presented the rotating trophy donated by Roda Pavri to the Ghadialis who "over a period of 10 years (have) given immeasurably of themselves, their sentiments, time and money in service of the Zarathushti community." In addition to hosting Zarathushti patients from India and their families for long periods of time, the Ghadialis have provided emotional support to other Zarathushti families in their own homes or in hospital. Besides, they have organized social and religious functions to collect donations for needy families and institutions. Regular recipients of the Ghadialis' unremitting efforts have been Bombay's B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital and the Orphanage and Parsi Infirmary in Navsari.

A CPA (certified public accountant) from Virginia who is currently completing a project analysing the US Department of Defense's non-appropriated activities while concurrently doing market research and developing best business practices in some areas for the House of Representatives, Demehry's interests lie in the area of corporate law, as per the citation. Involved in community activities since 1994, Demehry was the founder president of the youth group in the metropolitan Washington area. In 1997 he was awarded the Outstanding Contributor Award by the Zoroastrian Youth of North America. A member of the board of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington (ZAMWI), Demehry

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hry "was instrumental in getting ZAMWI recognized by the Interfaith Council," notes the citation.

Currently in her second term as president of the Zoroastrian Association of Greater Boston, Tehran-born Dubash received her PhD in psychology in 1993. Having taught the subject at a number of universities, Dubash is currently adjunct faculty member in the Social Sciences and Policy Studies Department at Massachusetts' Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She was co-chairperson of the local conference committee of the First International Avesta Conference in Boston in 1997 and is a very active member of the Boston Youth Group.

The co-chairs of the 11th North American Zarathushti Congress, Gev Nentin and Noshir Langrana, presented the award to Demehry and Dubash respectively.

"A straight grade-A student since fourth grade," California's Tarapore received the rotating trophy donated by Faridoon and Mehraban Zartoshty from FEZANA secretary Dr Mehran Sepehri. Scoring 99 percent in a variety of North American tests, Tarapore was a member of his school team which tied for gold

and won seven individual medals including three gold at the US National Academic Decathlon. Designated International Advance Placement Scholar and National Merit Scholarship awardee, Tarapore won the Bank of America scholarship for combined achievement in academics and fine arts, notes the citation. Selected as a "showcase artist," Tarapore has performed at several prestigious concerts. Actively involved in Zarathushti youth activities in California, Tarapore assisted in the planning of the San Francisco Youth Conference in 1996 and presented a highly acclaimed piano recital at the 1996 North American Zoroastrian Congress there.

In recognition of his "significant contribution to the structuring of the FEZANA North American Zarathushti Awards" FEZANA awards committee chair Dinshaw Joshi was presented a special plaque by Dastoor in recognition of his service in that capacity over four years.

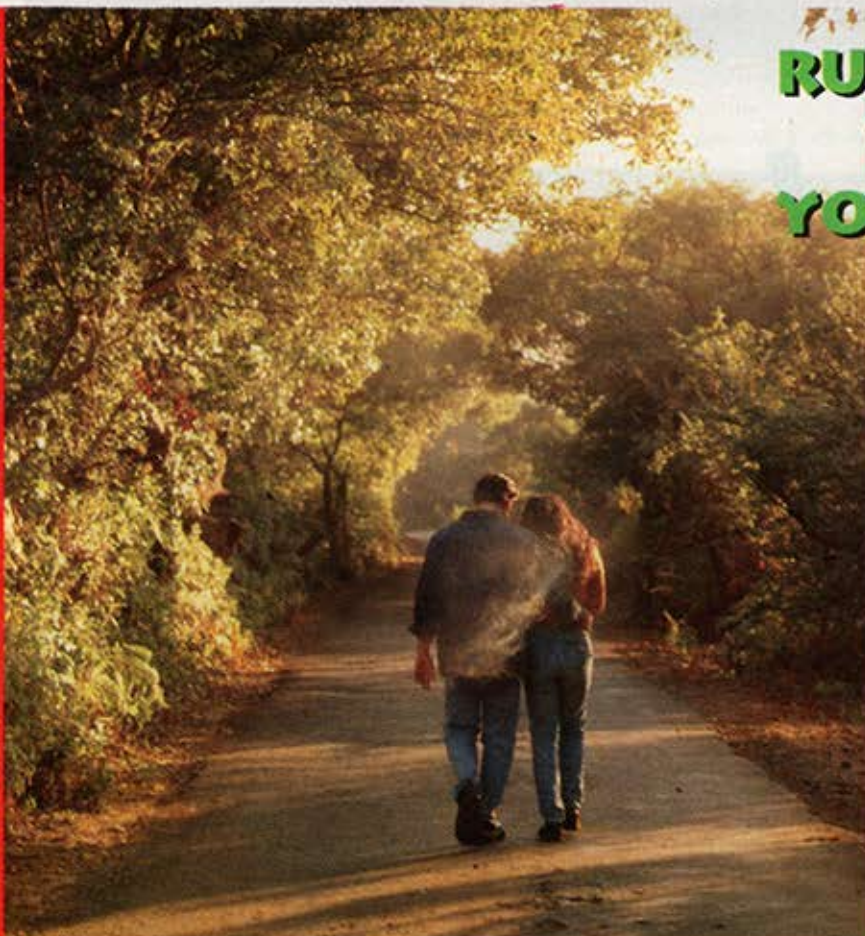
Until 1994 the awards process was the responsibility of the FEZANA member association hosting the congress. This led to a lack of consistency and regularity as each congress organizing

committee adopted its own criteria and procedures, notes the brochure published on the occasion of the 1998 awards.

Dastoor institutionalized the process by setting up an awards committee as one of the standing committees of FEZANA, with Joshi in the chair. Procedures for inviting nominations were formalized and specific evaluation criteria established for judges in each award category. Independent panels of five respected Zarathushtis now evaluate nominees in each category with respective members of the awards committee as chairpersons to coordinate the results and determine the winner.

In addition to the five awards distributed is the Lifetime Achievement Award which is presented to an individual for meritorious service to the Zarathushti community worldwide, notes the brochure. Only two men have been so honored to date — conductor Zubin Mehta in 1990 and philosopher Kaikhosrov Irani in 1996.

As is the case with the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India's Awards for Excellence, nominations for the North American awards were slow in coming, requiring the committee to ex-



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tend the nomination deadline as appears from Joshi's report at the FEZANA annual general meeting. This was also the first time that the awards were presented over lunch on the first day of the Congress instead of the hitherto practice of distributing them at the dinner banquet.

North American mobeds

Ervad Jal Birdy continues as president of the North American Mobeds Council (NAMC). The rest of the executive committee elected at the 11th annual general meeting of the NAMC in Quebec in April 1998 includes vice president Behram Panthaki, secretary Nozer Kotwal, treasurer Gev Karkaria and executive officer Xerxes Bamji.

This was the third time that the Zoroastrian Association of Quebec (ZAQ) hosted the mobeds where 18 members attended and 19 members sent proxies.

On the agenda was a letter from FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) asking for the Council's stand on issues like euthanasia, organ donation, spiritual solace for families facing AIDS, what can mobeds do to discourage mixed marriages, etc. While members were asked to come prepared for further discussion on euthanasia at the next AGM, the discussion on organ donation established that it was "strictly a personal decision and therefore should be left to the choice of each individual," as per the minutes of the AGM forwarded to *Parsiana* by Kotwal. On the question of mixed marriages the resolution tabled by Cawas Desai and approved by a majority vote declared that "NAMC is a body that has the mandate to administer to the spirituality and religiosity of the community... Questions regarding social issues are not NAMC's mandate and the community needs to take responsibility for them." The discussion on AIDS resolved that the need for spiritual solace in such cases was akin to that required in the case of any other terminal illness and should be dealt with accordingly.

In a letter to FEZANA, Malinda Fletcher, a healthcare worker from Texas, had requested "a complete survey of religious elements impacting patient care" for inclusion in a proposed "Informed Guide" which would enable healthcare professionals understand how the patient's faith impacts his/her reception of care. Kotwal was delegated the responsibility of completing the survey with the help of some colleagues and

forwarding it to Fletcher.

In the course of his annual report as president Birdy referred to the correspondence exchanged between Dr Pallan Ichhaporia, Sarosh Manekshaw and himself "with regard to the credentials claimed by Dr Ali Jafarey," founder of the California based Zarathushtrian Assembly. Birdy "stated that the community is looking for a leadership role and that we would be failing in our duty if we do not rise to the challenge and exert our influence in a positive way," note the AGM minutes. However, "after some discussion it was the majority decision that the NAMC did not have the mandate to question anybody's credentials including Ali Jafarey's and that care should be taken not to get the Council involved in similar matters where someone might try to use the Council to serve their personal cause."

The NAMC will keep a record of all trained mobedyars. It was decided that a formal certificate from the NAMC, to be designed by Kobad Zarolia, will be presented to the mobedyar who will be recognized and ordained in front of the community in which he lives, preferably by the mobed who conducted the training. While a mobedyar can assist a fully ordained mobed in performing weddings and navjotes he cannot officiate himself at such ceremonies. Panthaki of Washington DC provided details of the methodology and syllabus he had used for the training of Jamsheed Mistry. The mobedyar committee was asked to draft procedures for ordaining a mobed.

A two-day religion camp for young mobeds was to be hosted by ZAMWI (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington). It was scheduled to feature the jashan and navjote ceremonies which the young mobeds would be able to enact in their entirety.

While a directory of mobeds was incomplete due to poor response as noted Zarolia, Jal Panthaky advised that the nirangdin ceremony video had reached the editing stage and should be ready for the next AGM scheduled for April 2 and 3, 1999. The venue was undecided.

Birdy's letter of protest to the producer of the movie *Wishmaster*, "which portrayed Ahura Mazda as evil," was returned unopened to the sender, note the AGM minutes. NAMC majority opinion voted in favor of ignoring the "very bad B-rated movie" rather than being drawn into a controversy. Instead, Desai suggested that the Council promote Zoroastrianism through some repu-

table media like the National Geographic Society.

In his welcome address ZAQ president Karkaria noted the frustration of some NAMC members at the want of agreement on contentious issues. He prescribed patient endurance, continued dialogue and mutual respect for each other's views. He also emphasized the need to motivate, train and educate the young mobeds, instilling in them a sense of pride and commitment towards the religion.

Zarolia suggested that the executive committee select one religious topic for research, study and discussion each year so that the knowledge of the members could increase. He also suggested the compilation of a comprehensive list of religious books available with the Zoroastrian associations in North America.

Fourteen mobeds conducted a jashan ceremony before the gala banquet hosted by ZAQ in honor of the visiting priests.

An honor well earned

The K. D. Irani Chair of Philosophy has been established at City College, New York. An alumnus of Prof Kaikhosrov Irani's 1955 class donated two million dollars to the College to endow a chair for yearly appointments of visiting professors, ZAGNY (Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York) committee member Lovji Cama informed *Parsiana* on e-mail.

The announcement was made by Tara R. Tamny on behalf of her father Dr Martin Tamny, Dean of Humanities at City College, on October 8, 1998:

"For thousands of students who graduated (from) the College during the more than 40 years that Prof Irani has taught here, he has been the most memorable teacher they have known," said Tamny. "The rigor of his thought, the provocativeness of his ideas, his dedication to the life of the mind, and his profound humanity has stayed with his students throughout the years. All of those students would join me in thanking the donor for honoring Prof Irani in this wonderful way. Through his generosity the Philosophy Department will be able to bring the most renowned philosophers of the day to the College. The presence of these visiting scholars will for ever make City College one of the centers of the philosophical world, and help continue the traditions of excellent teaching and philosophical research that has characterized Prof K. D. Irani's tenure at this institution."



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"A country apart"

President of the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, Homee Wadia describes life in and around Perth

Arnavaz S. Mama

Homee Wadia and his wife Khurshid "fell in love" with Perth, Australia so they filed their papers and waited three-and-a-half years to emigrate. Currently the second president of the year-old Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia (ZAWA), Wadia describes the city of his abode as "a retirement village which has all the conveniences and facilities of major cities." On a visit to Bombay, Wadia spoke to *Parsiana* on December 5, 1998.

The agriculturally and mineral rich Western Australia contributes nearly 80 percent to the Australian national income, says Wadia, though it is lagging in industrialization. "Western Australia was never a convict colony. This was a Spanish missionary outpost. That's why we consider ourselves a country apart from the rest of Australia," he adds.

Noting that most of the 170 strong Zarathushti community live in beautiful homes with gardens to match, in Perth one has "no need to exert (oneself)." With "share trading on the computer, banking through the phone, with 'Bpay' to pay your bills, sometimes we have to wake up and ask, 'Is this all real?'"

The state provides free education up to 12th standard which Wadia says is very good though a bit insular. At the university level the established system enables the student to borrow funds from the university to pay the subsidized fees. The loan repayment begins when he/she starts earning. The defrayed amount is deducted from his/her tax packet, explains Wadia. While private medicare is available ("flashy, five-star hospitals... for which you pay through your nose"), government facilities are free and its hospitals "streets ahead of Breach Candy

or Jaslok," though one is often made to wait for non-priority operations, he notes.

The Zoroastrian community — one-third Iranian, two-thirds Parsi — is led by Ervad Darius Pavri, who performs all the required ceremonies and was ZAWA's first president. The son of playwright Eruch Pavri, Darius is a high-ranking officer in the income tax department, says Wadia.



Wadia: "invigorating to get different views"

Photo: Arnavaz Mama

Originally hailing from Nagpur is senior orthopedic surgeon Dr Ratan Edeban who, with his wife Meher, has lived in England and Malaysia before settling in Perth. Their son Cyrus is also a doctor here while their daughter Firoozeh, a barrister, has settled in London, informs Wadia.

Ervad Minochehr Shahzadi whose father had a panthak at the Dadiseth Agiary in Bombay's Flora Fountain area is "very big in the petroleum industry," but refuses to undertake ceremonies for fear that his Kadmi rituals would not synthesize with Pavri's Shahenshahi concepts and create rifts, according to Wadia.

"The community is not too conservative but of the view 'let's not cause waves,'" says Wadia who is personally "very fanatical about my religion but very modernistic since I believe (that for) any thought process to (be) projected (it is) always invigorating to get different views." For the four years of its existence, Wadia's Spenta Oriental, an Indian grocery store and curry take-away, doubled as a club on Saturday afternoons where Zoroastrians met and argued, he recalls.

"Before ZAWA (there were) a lot of mixed marriage couples in Perth (who were) unwilling to put their hand up and

be counted... All these people from Burma (who have) culturally acquired (Burmese) names under duress... Some Parsis are so rabidly orthodox, they want to kick them (out)... I put my foot down to the community that we have to target these people... I would be very proud if I could get their (children's) navjotes done," Wadia says.

Brett Walker, a white Australian teenager "who felt spiritually lost" until he landed upon Zoroastrianism in the course of his library research, has become a member of ZAWA. "He calls himself a Zarathushti but (is) disillusioned that his navjote won't be done and that an undercurrent (of the community) won't religiously accept him," says Wadia.

"(There's) a huge crowd of Iranian Bahais and Muslims wanting to come back into the fold, have a fervent desire to become Zoroastrians... Even practising Muslims wear the asho-farohar inside. (They) find Zoroastrian scriptures from the Internet. Pavri however refuses to accept them."

Some community activities and behavior is both a source of joy and grief to Wadia. For example, he was all praise for Farah Mehta's prize winning thesis on the Persians of Ancient Iran. "Porus Havewalla makes me feel proud by what he writes about the community. But (he is) so vehement that it becomes a barrier."

Dinshaw Toddywalla (locally known as Dean Todd) is a Bahai with a fund of knowledge about Zoroastrianism who wanted to give lectures on Zoroastrianism "but certain people objected so strongly that the committee decided to avoid controversy." In the upshot, Wadia says, Todd took offence and didn't come to the Pateti function.

It took a year to frame the ZAWA constitution, informs Wadia, adding that the moot objective was to preserve their identity. The ZAWA team includes

continued on page 48

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The Zoroastrians of Serendip

Enterprise and ethics characterize the success of the minuscule Sri Lankan Zoroastrian community

The first thought that came to mind when one read the name "Aban Tours" on the gleaming white taxi outside Colombo's Galadhari Hotel was that it was also a Sri Lankan name. But Aban Tours as it turned out was owned by a Parsi, and a very enterprising one at that!

Welcome to the world of the Sri Lanka Parsis. A truly microscopic community of around 60 in a country of 18.5 million, they have made a mark beyond imagination. Aside from highly successful and reputed business families, the community also boasts of a Queen's Counsel who served as a minister in the cabinet of the previous United National Party government. The other members of the community too are well settled and the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman Trust boasts of a hall, Navroz Baug, a Parsi Sports Club and a large cemetery ground.

From a community of around 350 in their heyday, the Zoroastrian community here started declining in numbers after independence from Britain in 1947, explains Kairshasp Choksy, a trustee of the Anjuman and a leading constitutional lawyer. "The citizenship laws changed," he relates. To qualify for citizenship a person and his father had to be both born in Sri Lanka: Choksy's grandfather Kaikhushroo Dadabhoy had come to Ceylon in 1884. An exception could be made for a distinguished citizen, but few would meet the criteria.

About half the Zoroastrians residing in the Indian Ocean island returned to India after independence, says Choksy. The next exodus came when Sinhalese was made the state language in 1956, he recalls. Knowledge of the language was compulsory for public exams and entry

to the civil services. "Many went to Australia," says Choksy. Their qualifications and knowledge of English opened up employment opportunities there.



The modern Colombo skyline

According to Choksy, approximately 40 percent of the community in Sri Lanka have married out either to Sri Lankans or Burghers (of Dutch descent).

"Girls who are married out are permitted to attend religious ceremonies so long as they continue to be Parsi Zoroastrians and are not married in church, etc," says Choksy. He believes the Parsis in Sri Lanka are "conservative" on the whole. A jashan ceremony is performed every month and a former Bombay priest, Aspi Daruwalla, has served the local community for 17 years.

Daruwalla says the trustees of the Anjuman are "cooperative." The community manages to maintain traditions and customs. The last rites and prayers are offered to the deceased and "Parsi boys and girls come to help for funerals."

Daruwalla's wife Daisy works, and their two school going children Naushad and Anita are happy here. But he com-

plains about the "moghwari (inflation)." An egg costs five rupees, he notes. His child's delivery in 1990 cost between Rs 30,000 to Rs 40,000 Sri Lanka rupees (SL Re 1 = IRe 0.64).

Navroz Baug, where the Daruwallas reside, is a one-storey building donated by the Kapadia family in 1927 with a prayer hall, rooms and a garden. The Parsi Sports Club or Parasmani Hall is also a one-storey structure with a large hall where badminton can be played. The compound is also spacious.

Pesi Pestonjee, a trustee of the Anjuman, mentioned that plans were afoot to extend Navroz Baug premises and increase usage.

The Jawatte Burial Grounds, the Colombo Parsi aramgh, is an unusual combination of a burial ground and dokhma. The old dokhma has been converted into a circular burial ground adjacent to which is the present cemetery. The graves here date back to 1894. Pestonjee Dinshawjee Khan "a most influential and popular figure...very thoughtfully acquired for the Parsis of Ceylon a permanent burial ground at Jawatte Road... in Colombo city in extent over two acres both for the burial of the dead of the Parsis and for their religious purposes connected therewith. The said land was conveyed by the (British) Crown in the year 1885," according to a historical compilation, *The Parsees in Ceylon*, written about nine years ago by Behram Kaikhushroo Billimoria, a former trustee of the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman who was a solicitor and cinema owner.

The Sinhalese caretaker's residence at the burial ground was donated in memory of Dinshawjee and Framji Bhikhajee Khan by their sons on Octo-



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7 Chairs in bungli
 8 Prayer hall at Jawatte Burial Grounds
 9 Wall and garden of cemetery
 10 Graves in old dokhma structure
 11 Well on Grounds
 12 Outer wall of dokhma converted into a cemetery

- 1 Kairhasp and Freny Choksy
 2 Pesi and Aban Pestonjee
 3 Azad and Zarin Ghandy
 4 Navroz Baug hall
 5 Navroz Baug
 6 Aspi and Daisy Daruwalla



12



5



11



10



6



9



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ber 2, 1905. The reputed family firm Framjee Bhikhajee and Company donated the carriage for carrying corpses, a *gehan* (bier) and the building in which they are stored at Jawatte, according to Billimoria. They also donated a ward at the Colombo Public Hospital, notes Choksy.

Both the main buildings at Jawatte were donated by Jamshedjee Rustomjee and his wife Veerbaijee, according to Billimoria's history.

The Ceylon Parsi Social Centre or Club House known as Parasmani Hall was donated by Framroze Rustomjee (who had written several books on Zoroastrianism) in memory of his seven-year-old son Jamshed who died after being "struck by the buffer of a lorry" while alighting from his car. The land "a large square block... in extent one rood and nine perches at No 11 Palm Grove Avenue, Colpetty, in Colombo" has a pavilion built by Ruttonshah Rustomjee, a successful businessman.

Like the Choksys, the Pestonjee family are also long-time residents of Sri Lanka. Pesi's grandfather Ruttonjee having landed here "towards the close of the 19th century," notes Billimoria. The family fortunes generated as general merchants and commission agents received another fillip when Pesi's wife Aban decided to start her own small business. Realizing that there was a dearth of electronic household gadgets in Sri Lanka due to import restrictions, Aban would attend auctions of second-hand household items, sometimes getting up at five in the morning to reach early. She would then recondition the electrical appliances and sell them. The gadgets helped "to make life easier for the housewife," recalls Aban.

Choksy's Guinness Record

At the conclusion of the 1988 Presidential Election, S. Bandaranaike, the former Prime Minister, who lost, filed a petition in the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka challenging the election of the successful candidate, President Ranasinghe Premadasa, on the ground of general intimidation of voters and other legal grounds.

When the markets opened up and imports started arriving, foreign companies "did not know the market," Aban narrates. Capitalizing on her knowledge of the Sinhalese consumer Aban took agencies of reputed companies including L. G., Motorola, Hoover Electronics, etc. She then ventured into real estate development, started a duty-free outlet, "Aban's Duty-Free," and a tourist taxi service with its office at the Galadhari Hotel, one of Colombo's leading establishments.

"I used to sort of go for it," says Aban modestly. She attributes her business success to a "determination to do better... being honest in your business means people will trust you." The Pestonjees' three children Rusi, Behman and Saroshi are also in the family business.

Another Sri Lankan success story is that of the Captain family, said to be the largest manufacturers of paints in the country. Edulji Sorabji Captain arrived in Colombo in 1914 as the

general manager of the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills, according to the *The Parsees in Ceylon*. He was married to Dhunmai Elavia and they had four children, Diana, Rusi, Soli and Perin.

"Soli, the third child, after his education went into business and with the guidance of his father during his early years, has today become one of Ceylon's best known businessmen with interests in various undertakings. He is a keen golfer and has won many trophies in Ceylon golfing. He takes interest in all matters relating to the community and is a trustee of the Ceylon Parsi Social Centre.

"Perin, the fourth child, is a well-

Kairshasp Choksy successfully defended Premadasa as his senior counsel. The case is entered in the *The Guinness Book of World Records* as the longest trial in history. The hearing in Court lasted 525 working days at which 910 witnesses testified and the Court's recorded proceedings ran into 26,000 pages.



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good social record of the Parsis in Sri Lanka has made the community acceptable to the major communities of the country," she notes. Of the Choksyes' three sons, two, Khursheed and Vishtasp, live in Colombo. Vishtasp is a lawyer and Khursheed is a research manager with the United States Agency for International Development. Their third son Jamsheed is an associate professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Indiana University and has authored two books on Zoroastrianism titled *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism* and *Conflict and Cooperation: Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society*.

The community is "recognized and respected," says Kairshasp. "We have opportunities in the professions and business. If the younger generation marries (within), the community will survive." As regards the management of community assets, Choksy notes, "we are able to generate our own funds."

Pesi Pestonjee feels that though the numbers are small, "there will still be a community" in the future. "We are bound to be successful if we follow our religion." His wife Aban adds that the community "seems to be okay so far," though the future is difficult to predict — "we are trying to hold on to what we have."



known social worker in Colombo. She has been the secretary of the Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) Cancer Society for many years and is the live wire behind all the activities of this Society. She is also an active member of the Parsi Sports Club and has the unique distinction of having been president for three consecutive years," notes Billimoria. Other families include that of Azad K. Ghandy, also a trustee of the Anjuman and the Jillas, Rustumjees, Markers, Lakdawallas and Dadabhoys. They are all respected families in Colombo, notes Choksy. The community meets once a month at the Parsi Sports Club.

Choksy's wife Freny sees "a good future" for the Parsis in Sri Lanka. "The

Interior and exterior of the Parsi Sports Club and past presidents Framroz Rustumjee (top, in suit) and Ruttonshah Rustumjee Bhoory



Caretaker's bungalow at Jawatte and Sinhalese caretakers (inset)

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EVENTS & PERSONALITIES

continued from page 12

The preface to the book is followed by 31 sub-sections, starting with etiology of stress and life cure, and ending with a pledge to the society. The need to be understanding, to change, to manage time, to be objective, to develop a positive attitude, to learn to say no, to take the right course and awaken one's spiritual force with the help of a good guru are the salient points covered in the booklet.

The abstract language used by the author is for the benefit of young children, claims the author, but it is difficult to digest this statement when it is a known fact that real examples help to simplify concepts for youngsters. Patel also believes that he has "excelled in content and technique," though the treatment of his subject matter is very mundane and there are innumerable typographical errors. The constant refrain in the book is the need to have moral values like Dr Jekyll and not have a dubious character like his split personality Mr Hyde. Patel's sweeping generalization at the end could irk some readers, "I understand your feelings. You all have made the wrong move and have levelled

into the mass..."

The author who was working with the Western Railway has been introduced as a psychologist-homeopath-radio artiste-management consultant who "has come across many motivational killers who created barriers for him...(and as) a highly motivated individual..." This booklet is dedicated to his parents Phirozshaw and Coover. Priced at Rs 25 it was published in 1998 by Himalaya Publishing House, Ramdoot, Dr Bhalerao Marg, Girgaum, Bombay 400004.

SPOTLIGHT

The following members were elected to the new executive committee of the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India on October 24, 1998: president Porus Karanjawalla, vice president Sarosh Palkhiwala, honorary secretary Yasmin Charna (all from west zone), honorary treasurer Porus Debara (north zone), committee members Nauzer Batliwala (east zone), Nauzer Kasad (west zone), Jamshed Panthaki (south zone).

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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When Sam came to Sanjan

The Sanjan Memorial Column Local Committee felicitated Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw and hosted 2,000 Zoroastrians from all over India

Arnavaz S. Mama

The rainbow hues of the shamiana reflected the brilliance of the Sanjan Stambh on the sparkling morning of November 21, 1998. And light and color were refracted through the genial words of India's first and only surviving Field Marshal, Sam Manekshaw, the day's chief guest.

"Aapko Sam" — the nomenclature he most prefers as this darling of the community confided to his appreciative audience — regaled the 2,000-strong gathering, that had converged to celebrate the annual thanksgiving of Zoroastrian asylum on Indian shores, with anecdotes of his service career and asides about his wife and family.

"I am fully conscious of the honor and privilege that is mine to be invited as your guest," said the venerable soldier sporting a Russian furcap over his sparse hair, his eyes a-sparkle at the sight of all the lovely ladies as he smiled and demurely complimented each one who came his way on the beautiful border on her sari! And paid the price of popularity by signing autographs for well over an hour after the conclusion of the function.

The Russian cap had a history. Recalling an official visit to the USSR, as General Officer Commanding the Indian Army, to obtain much-needed ammunition for the Soviet guns that had been sold by Russia to his predecessors, Manekshaw said his Soviet counterpart offered him a wad of roubles. Manekshaw said he declined the offer, noting that he "came from a capitalist community and had a lot of money of (his) own." He told them it was ammunition he wanted. They "found they didn't have enough ammunition. If we had it wouldn't we give it to our friends?" they asked with feigned innocence. Though everyone was scared stiff of the Marshal who was a member of the Politburo and Manekshaw had been counseled to watch his step, Manekshaw

said he confronted the Russian head on. "Was so much talk about outstripping America so much mythology? Or do you not want to give it to us?" he spelt out. At that they agreed that if the Indian prime minister wrote to Comrade Kosygin (the USSR prime minister), "you'll get enough ammunition." At which Manekshaw presented the letter from Indira Gandhi which he had been carrying, noting with some asperity that he hadn't thought "we'd have to depend on a woman!"

The mission completed, he was invited to a big dinner with a Slav girl pouring vodka into their glasses. They drank so many toasts, they were "eventually drinking to each other's eyes!"

The next morning on a ceremonial salute at the tomb of the unknown soldier, the "bear-like" marshals could barely keep up with Manekshaw's pace and his interpreter kept requesting him to walk slower. After the ceremony his counterpart offered Manekshaw his cap saying, "You did not accept my roubles. Will you accept this cap from me?" Since then Manekshaw has sported that cap on a zillion occasions, including that Sanjan felicitation.

Just before the 13-day 1971 conflict with Pakistan that won independence for Bangladesh (and crowned Manekshaw with undying admiration) Manekshaw had been visited by General Westmoreland, the US joint chief of defense and had "got into trouble with politicians and babus" for having shown Westmoreland everything. On returning to the US, Westmoreland had told President Richard Nixon and his secretary of state Henry Kissinger that East Pakistan was the size of France, that the Pak soldiers are good and that an Indo-Pak war would drag for one-and-a-half to two months. Noting that after the brief war and India's decisive victory Nixon and Kissinger had given him "a bad time," Westmoreland wrote to

Manekshaw asking, "What is it, Sam, that you didn't show me?"

Rohinton Davierwalla, president of the Sanjan Memorial Column Local Committee (prominent among whom are Dossabhai Oliaji, Nariman Balsara, Gustasp Jassawalla and Dara Varvade-wala), welcomed Manekshaw presenting him with a replica of the Sanjan Stambh while Bombay Parsi Panchayet (BPP) chairman Jamshed Guzder read out the scroll of honor presented to him in a silver casket to commemorate the old soldier's many achievements.

Surat Parsi Panchayat president Dr Sam Bhacca referred to Manekshaw's visit to Lahore after the 1971 war when an old man had publicly lauded his charismatic leadership when he had maintained the Pakistani prisoners of war at a higher level of comfort than his own Indian soldiers enjoyed, without any protest from the latter.

"Sorry my wife isn't here to hear all the kind words you said. She would have treated me with greater respect than she does!" quipped Manekshaw in response.

Then, more solemnly, Manekshaw noted, "We produced Aspy Engineer, the air force chief, Jal Cursetji, the naval chief. No doubt, you, your children, will produce excellent people in India."

After the Field Marshal had presented the awards for excellence instituted by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (see "Achievers All," page 35) Marazban Patrawala, member of the National Minorities Commission welcomed the recognition of young Parsi achievers, noting that the quality of the community had never declined.

"Oh my dear Zoroastrians, never forsake your religion, the basic principle of righteousness. Follow the principle and you will always go ahead," counseled noted solicitor Burjor Antia. Noting how "our forefathers had come with zeros and become heros," Antia urged the



1 (From left): Tirandaz, Davierwalla, Manekshaw, Guzder and B. Dastur

2 Pilgrims at the Sanjan Stambh

Stambh photo: Amavaz S. Mama

3 (From left): Bhacca, Antia, Patrawala, Tirandaz, Davierwalla, Manekshaw, Guzder, K. Dastoor and Tamboly

4 Davierwalla; 5 Balsara;

6 K. Dastoor; 7 B. Dastur

Other photos by Mukesh Panchal

community to forget *jhagdas* (disputes) and remain united.

"Not will we survive, but how long will we survive?" should be the ques-

tion according to BPP trustee and WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Trust Funds managing trustee Dinshaw Tam-

boly. Noting that "material comforts have blunted our edge; decadence has replaced our spirit of enterprise; from a community of givers we have become a community of seekers," Tamboly singled out the largest affliction today as "the bankruptcy of values" and urged community trusts to redefine their priorities.

According to BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz God threw away the mold in which he made Manekshaw. He extolled in-breeding as an essential ingredient in the production of outstanding personalities. Dastur Kaikobad Dastoor of Udvada similarly asked if a mixed marriage could have produced a Sam Manekshaw. He was also concerned that no facilities had been extended to

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Udvada despite the Government's an-
nouncement proclaiming it a religious
pilgrim spot.

BPP chief executive Behram Dastur
urged the community to hearken to the
Gathas "to redefine our moorings...
Reinvent the *Gathas* for ourselves and
follow the teachings" of Zarathushtra.

His Gujarati eloquence undimmed
by advancing years, his scholarship ever
a source of inspiration, Surat's Dr Ratan
Marshall marked an impassioned recall
of the community's consciousness to
what the function was all about. "This
land gave us shelter when we came
fearful and scared," Marshall revived
the scenario of the 10th century Zoroas-
trian boat people. "What would have
happened if Jodi Rana had not given us
shelter? Therefore, on behalf of all of us,
I remember him with love and grati-
tude," said Marshall.

Sarosh Bana, president of the WZO's
youth wing referred to their "Save
Udvada" project and Meher Master
Moos, founder of the Mazdayasnie
Monasterie, took the opportunity to in-
vite everyone to her Zoroastrian Col-
lege for a tea party. After a vote of
thanks by Nariman Balsara the day's
compere Rati Wadia gave a call for the
singing of *Chhaiyyé Hamé Zarathoshti*
but was overruled by Dastur Kaikobad
who insisted that the meeting conclude
with the singing of the national anthem
instead.

The day's function had begun with a
two-minute silence in remembrance of
the late politician diplomat Homi Tale-
yarkhan and Parsi Dairy Farm partner
Naval Nariman. Even while the speeches
were proceeding the crowds had begun
to drift towards the lunch tables laid
with patrawal where a substantial veg-
etarian meal, prepared under the super-
vision of Udvada's Manek Todiwalla,
was served.

Always remember



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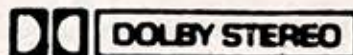
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The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India acknowledged the success of 12 outstanding Zoroastrians

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India acclaimed 12 outstanding Zoroastrian achievers, gifting them with a shield and a citation and the ultimate feather in their cap, congratulations from community and India's doyen, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw.

Of the 12 awardees, five received kudos for exceptional achievement in sports, three for professional competence, two in the military field and one each for community service and education. Moreover, the awards crowned achievements over a wide range of time, from 1986 to 1997.

The first to be honored that bright morning of November 21, 1998 in Sanjan was the late Col Yazdi Ilavia of the 7th Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment. When he assumed command in 1996 of the Regiment to which he had been commissioned at the inception of his army career, it was committed to the dual tasks of ensuring the sanctity of the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and simultaneously undertaking counterinsurgency operations. Ilavia "infused his command with controlled aggression and confidence," notes the citation. "His reorganization of the counter (insurgency) posture and selective engagement of the enemy on the Line of Control manifested itself in excellent results... Under the gallant and fearless command of Col Ilavia, the Battalion displayed outstanding operational efficiency by remaining steadfast and undeterred despite seemingly unsurmountable odds of adverse weather and enemy threats." Though the Battalion was awarded the Unit Citation of the Chief of Army Staff for its gallant achievements on Army Day 1998, Ilavia had succumbed to cardiac arrest earlier in the year. The Col Adi Tarapore Memorial Award for 1997 was received by his youthful widow Dinaz.

The Col Adi Tarapore Memorial Award for 1996 was presented to Lt Col

Firoze Patel of the Grenadier Regiment. Aide-de-camp to two Presidents of India, Patel too won his laurels in the Kashmir Valley. "In a long period of low intensity warfare which the army has had to conduct in the glare of publicity, Patel, then holding the rank of major, worked inconspicuously but with determination, courage and professionalism," reads the citation. His unit launched approximately 600 operations against militants, killing 140 of them including foreign mercenaries, apprehending 150 and recovering 300 weapons, further adds the citation.

The Shiavax Nargolwala Memorial Award for social and community service in 1996 was awarded to Meher Banaji who has headed Bombay's Happy Home and School for the Blind since 1969. The recipient of the Government of India's National Award for Teachers for 1996, Banaji "has been instrumental in pioneering and initiating various training programs including Montessori training and early intervention programs for preschool visually impaired children," notes the citation. In addition Banaji has been involved in visual efficiency training for children with residual vision, and pottery and ceramics training for those visually impaired. She simultaneously conducts remedial education classes for maladjusted and educationally sub-normal children, organizes short-term training courses and in-service programs for parents and volunteers plus counselling and guidance services, services for parents and students, adds the citation.

The professional competence of two members of Delhi's outstanding Shroff family was recognized that November morning. Third generation ophthalmologists and brothers, Drs Noshir and Cyrus Shroff continue as active directors of Dr Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital founded by their grandfather in Delhi even as they serve as honorary ophthalmologists to the President of India K. R.

Narayanan since 1997.

Awarded the Nargis Adi Gandhi Memorial Award for 1997 for "medical and surgical work of the highest caliber," Noshir Shroff was extolled for having designed the widely used special co-axial irrigation cannula used for cataract extraction and intra-ocular lens implant surgery, informs the citation. Optikon of Italy, Mid Labs and Mentor of USA are among the organizations that have implemented his suggestions for development and improvement in the design of phaco-emulsification machines, adds the citation. Noshir has played an active role in instructing younger doctors in the complexity of these techniques in India as well as in other parts of the world. Among other professional preoccupations, Noshir has been secretary general of the Second International Congress of Intra-ocular Implant Society in 1993 and vice president of the 10th international meeting on cataract implant microsurgery.

The G. K. Panthaki Award for professional competence in 1997 was awarded to Cyrus Shroff, one of the foremost vitreo-retinal surgeons of Delhi. With an award winning career behind him, Cyrus has been joint secretary of the Delhi Ophthalmological Society and joint treasurer of the 50th All India Ophthalmological Conference held in New Delhi in 1992, has participated in over 45 national and international symposia and workshops in his field and conducted study tours in UK, USA, Belgium and France. He has also evaluated the performance of several vitrectomy machines at the request of the manufacturers, states the citation.

Dr Farokh Umrigar's internationally recognized expertise in the sphere of urban public transport won him the Nargis Adi Gandhi Memorial Award for professional competence in 1988. Over the years Umrigar has participated in professional meetings with papers pre-



*The awardees
felicitated by
Manekshaw (L to R)
1st row:
Taraporewalla,
Banaji, Doongaji
and Ilavia
2nd row: Engineer,
Umrigar, Dotiwalla
and Reporter*

*Alongside
(L to R)
Awardees N.
Shroff, Patel,
C. Shroff and
Palia*

All photographs by
Mukesh Panchal



pared in collaboration with other individuals accepted for presentation at national and international conferences and for publication in professional journals. During 1988 Umrigar's papers on various aspects of urban bus transit in India were presented at the annual transport and planning meet of the University of Bath in the UK followed by similar meets in France and Indonesia, notes the citation. Umrigar's award was accepted by his father.

The 1993 edition of the Mazda Education Foundation Award, presented to outstanding achievers in the spheres of education, research, science and technology was conferred on Khurshid Taraporewalla. Honorary treasurer of the Montessori Training and Research Trust established by the Holland-based Association of Montessori International, the octogenarian Taraporewalla has dedicated her life to propagating the movement, notes the citation. Educated directly under Dr Maria Montessori, Taraporewalla received the National Integration Award 1993 from the Gramee-

na Vidoyadaya Pathakam, a voluntary organization for mobilizing rural education which has been sponsored by the National Integration Council. The award recognized her unstinted, sincere and long-standing contribution to Montessori education.

Umpire, paper setter, disciplinarian and administrator over the last 50 years, Dara Dotiwalla was conferred the Jiji D. Irani Memorial Award for sports in 1986. A member of the managing committee of the Mumbai Cricket Association and honorary secretary of its Board of Umpires, "1986 was the golden year of Dotiwalla's umpiring days," reads his citation. During that year he officiated at the Ranji Trophy and Duleep Trophy finals as well as the tied test match between India and Australia in Madras. Dotiwalla's wealth of cricket anecdotes made him a hot favorite of the gathering over the weekend.

Contending for party popularity was cricket umpire Piloo Reporter who received the Dr Dadi Balsara Award for sports in 1992. The only Indian umpire

selected to officiate in World Cup matches in Australia and New Zealand in 1992, as notes the citation, Reporter had officiated in the first one-day international match in New Delhi between India and Pakistan in 1983, the first test match between England and India in 1984 and when neutral umpires were appointed for the first time during the Pakistan versus West Indies test matches held in 1986 in Lahore and Karachi, states the citation.

Having received the Government of India Sports Talent Search Scholarship Awards for three consecutive years from 1993-94 to 1995-96, Feroza Engineer of Bombay's Gorton High School holds the Maharashtra State Pentathlon Record for 1996 which is yet to be surpassed, notes the citation accompanying the Jiji D. Irani Memorial Award for sports in 1996. In the approximately 30 recognized athletic meets in which she has participated Engineer secured first place in 25 and established seven new meet records, adds the citation. The sports captain of her school in 1997 the sprinter



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is a 70 percent scorer in academic subjects and has completed several examinations in elocution and chorus speech from Trinity College, London.

Dr Dadi Balsara Award for sports in 1997 was bagged by Yohann Doongaji in absentia, as he was then participating in the Maharashtra State Roller Skating Championship in Bombay. The Nagpur lad had raced to fourth place in all India placements within a year of starting to skate, states the citation. In October 1997 Doongaji stood first in speed in the Nagpur District Roller Skating Championships, captured two gold plus one silver medal in the Maharashtra State Roller Skating Championship in Bombay. Two months later he competed against 800 participants in the 25th National Roller Skating Championship in Poona and bagged a silver medal in the road race. After more wins in Nagpur in 1998 Doongaji was declared joint district champion in the boys group aged six to nine. Doongaji's award was accepted by his mother.

Captain of the Bombay swim team for 1997 Riyad Palia represented Maharashtra at the National Championships

in Poona that year, winning one gold and five silver medals. Earlier that year, in the Maharashtra State Championship Palia had bagged five gold and two silver medals. In the course of the year he also broke 15 records. The citation accompanying the Jiji D. Irani Memorial Award for sports in 1997 also notes that Palia's academic scores range in the 70s in class X at St Andrews High School, Bandra and that Internet surfing is a pleasant pastime for the computer buff.

The time range covered by the Federation awards was perhaps the widest so far and is attributed to a time lag in nominations reaching the Federation secretariat. While this award ceremony had the largest audience to date, with perhaps the most prestigious member of the community giving away some of the awards, the function lacked the precision and sparkle that Rustom Anklesaria normally brings to the event. The former IAS officer and ex Bombay Parsi Punchayet chief executive now heads the Federation's awards committee and functions as its treasurer, but illness had not spared him for the 1998 event.

"The pyramid is very steep" "Army life is a one-way ticket," says Lt Col Firoze Patel. "If you're not made for it or your expectations are too high, it's difficult for you and the organization," he amplifies.

The officer, whose bravery and zeal in counterinsurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir won him the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of India's Col Adi Tarapore Award for excellence in the military field, spoke to *Parsiana* on the pros and cons of life in the services. While the services provide varied exposure and experience, a healthy way of life and the opportunity to travel, the accent is on conformity: "You are slotted in," says Patel. Nor is it always possible to reach the top slot because "the pyramid is very steep and the promotions slightly slow." It's the ideal way of life however if you are not unduly ambitious, implied the reticent bachelor who is "quite happy" reading literature on psychology to help youths develop personalities in relation to the services. He is currently involved in psychologically assessing candidates desirous of joining the army as officers.

The product of a services-oriented family with his father, brother and maternal uncle pledged to the defence of the nation, Patel says his "interaction

with Parsis has been limited" having had several postings in forward and field areas. Hence he is unable to explain the dearth of Parsi officers now as compared to the earlier decades of this century. "Perhaps they don't want to leave the cities," he hazards. "There may not be enough exposure of the community to the army unless they live in cantonment areas." Army life is not as comfortable as civilian life, nor is it as lucrative as it was 20 years ago, he adds. Moreover, there is a "shortfall of officers in the services (and) more so in the army. (We're) not getting enough officers from society at large," Patel puts the community shortfall within the larger context. The officers who are coming in are the children of jawans. For them it's an achievement that their fathers couldn't attain, he explains.

Scion of a Hyderabad-based family, Patel graduated from Poona's Fergusson College before joining the army in 1980. His penchant for parajumps, rock climbing and handling a rifle (he won the gold medal and Chatewode trophy in rifle firing) served Patel well during his hush-hush stint in Kashmir. Prior to that he had held the glamorous job of ADC to two Presidents of India where his economy with words must have been a major asset!



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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 21 and 42 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 22 and 46 years, averaging at 29 years.

For the month of December there were 73 people who breathed their last as compared to 30 newborns. Heart disease took a toll of 23 lives of whom nine were above the age of 80. Fourteen victims succumbed to pneumonia/lung related diseases, eight to diabetes and five each to kidney failure and hypertension. Old age/general debility and cancer claimed four Zoroastrians each, whereas three patients fell prey to brain disease and two to septicemia. Cerebral malaria, bronchitis, cerebral dementia, liver disease, thrombocytopenia (a reduction in the number of platelets in the blood), hemiplegia, hyperkalaemia (excessive potassium in the blood), Alzheimer's disease and malarial fever were the isolated cases registered for the last month of the year. The age range fluctuated between 19 and 100 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at

birth for the month of December, in Bombay, was 82 years.

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: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. 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 to *Kamalrukh* and *Farhad Colah* on November 29, 1998
A boy to *Avan* and *Cyrus Mistry*; December 3
A boy to *Dhun* and *Kersi Toddywalla*; December 3
A girl to *Sonali* and *Yazd Goiporia*; December 4
A boy to *Anjana* and *Farhad Taraporwala*; December 4
A girl, *Kaizarine*, to *Julie* and *Mehernosh Mistry*, sister to *Anahita*; December 5
A boy to *Farah* and *Firdaus Bakhshay*; December 6
A boy, *Karzan*, to *Meher* and *Farhad Engineer*, brother to *Meherab*; December 6
A boy to *Farzana* and *Viraf Master*; December 7
A boy, *Dinshaw*, to *Yasmin* and *Karl Divecha*, brother to *Ariza*; December 10
A girl, *Pashmin*, to *Parinaz* and *Manecksha Dee* (*Dotiwala*); December 11

A boy to *Behroz* and *Rustam Mullar*; December 11
A boy to *Farida* and *Ranjan Munshi*; December 11
A girl to *Ava* and *Neville Poonawalla*; December 12
A girl to *Rukshana* and *Feroze Titina*; December 12
A boy to *Farah* and *Percy Amroli*; December 14
A boy, *Rayaan*, to *Parizad* and *Mahrenosh Bhagat*; December 14
A girl to *Veera* and *Joy Patel*, sister to *Anaisha*; December 15
A boy to *Yvonne* and *Ardeshir Billimoria*; December 16
A girl to *Mehroze* and *Firdosh Gardin*; December 19
A boy to *Simeen* and *Burgess Colabawalla*; December 20
A girl to *Kashmira* and *Rustom Talati*; December 21
A boy, *Zeus*, to *Mahtab* and *Daravus Chhapkhanawala*, brother to *Shaleen*; December 22
A girl to *Zinnia* and *Hormuz Aderianwalla*; December 23

A boy to *Ruby* and *Rayomand Bhatena*; December 23
A boy to *Tanya* and *Arvind Dubash*; December 24
A girl to *Farida* and *Rustom Hirananeck*; December 24
A girl to *Nancy* and *Burzin Aga*; December 25
A boy, *Sharukh*, to *Tanaz* and *Adil Bhesania*, brother to *Aarish*; December 25
A boy to *Zenobia* and *Farhad Unwalla*, brother to *Rushad*; December 30
A boy, *Varzan*, to *Zenobia* and *Viraf Jhaveri*; December 31

MARRIED

Rozy Pervaz Kakalia and *Kaayumars Burjor Contractor*; November 22
Franak Nariman Pavri and *Rohinton Shavak Fitter*; November 22
Shahenaz Naushir Mogrelia and *Nekzan Noshier Wadia*; November 22
Samanaz Shahrukh Nariman and *Rukshad Noshir Billimoria*; November 26
Aashish Eruch Cama and *Adil Minoo Dhallal*; November 26
Denaz Eruch Khambatta and *Zubin Farrokh Chichgar*; November 27
Khushnam Nariman Palia and *Furrokh Soli Irani*; November 27
Tenaz Rustom Variava and *Hormuzdiar Rustom Irani*; November 29
Firoza Keki Engineer and *Murzbani Fali Shroff*; November 29
Percis Aspi Pastakia and *Vispi Noshir Driver*; November 30
Dilshad Ardeshir Limki and *Farzad Bomi Mistry*; November 30
Navaz Ratan Cooper and *Rustom Dinshaw Batlivala*; December 1
Nazneen Keki Khambatta and *Dinsha Jolly Munshi*; December 3
Anahita Jamshed Sunavala and *Firoze Dinshaw Patel*; December 3
Jasmine Nozer Irani of *Dahanu Rd* and *Parheez Shiraz Gimi*; December 4
Pervin Percy Bhavicha and *Jimmy Maneck Mithaiwalla*; December 4
Farahnaz Jimmy Vania and *Adil Dinshaw Doctor*; December 5

Shernaaz Ratan Todiwalla and *Zubin Kersi Patel*; December 5
Armin Farhang Farzadi and *Fareed Boman Irani*; December 6
Nilufer Minoo Engineer and *Shazad Eric Gandevia*; December 7
Khushnaz Behram Laskari and *Rohinton Adi Kanga* of *Thana*; December 7
Franuck Baji Patel and *Hufriid Jehangirshaw Patel*; December 7
Benaifer Minoo Mehta and *Cyrus Hosi Khajotia*; December 8
Maki Phiroze Elavia and *Khurshid Kekhushru Mehta* of *Nagpur*; December 8
Sherna Dinyar Wadia and *Rustom Khurshed Jamaji* of *Singapore*; December 10
Parizad Minoo Mistry and *Zubin Minoo Sanjana*; December 10
Bakhtawar Homi Golwalla and *Adil Jimmy Toty*; December 10
Shenaz Rezashah Chothia of *Vapi* and *Vistas Sorabji Mewawalla*; December 11
Armaity Viraf Bharucha of *Austin, Texas* and *Viraf Dinshaw Patel*; December 11
Scheherazade Farokh Daver and *Daravus Parvez Sarkari*; December 11
Tanaz Daravus Master and *Cyrus Maneck Golimar*; December 12
Freny Kersi Mistry and *Kaezad Hector Karanjwala*; December 13
Nancy Farokh Todiwalla and *Percy Cawas Marfatia*; December 14
Rukhnaz Homi Bookbinder and *Rohinton Rustom Wadia* of *Poona*; December 14
Roshni Soli Magra and *Keki Hoshang Bapuna*; December 15
Delnaz Nadar Baria and *Eddy Daravus Batty*; December 15
Denaz Behram Bharucha of *Ahmedabad* and *Sherzad Marazban Irani*; December 15
Kashmira Dara Fitter and *Kaiwan Savak Balsara*; December 16
Dilnavaz Daravus Irani of *Vasai* and *Porus Shapoor Fitter*; December 20
Beroz Pesi Bhojpi of *Navsari* and *Mehernoz Jal Astin*;

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December 22
Maharukh Behram Surty and Rohinton Jal Bhangara;
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Meher Behram Khajotia and Murazban Firoz Patel;
 December 24
Goolnaz Ronny Dick and Cyrus Pesi Debara;
 December 25
Vahbiz Burjor Thanawalla and Sam Shiavax Gandhi;
 December 25
Firoza Khurshed Jamaji and Zubin Dara Irani;
 December 25
Naazneen Pervaz Dalal and Firdosh Khushroo Wadia;
 December 26
Diana Pourousasp Khajautia of Alexandria, Virginia and Cyrus Viraf Bharucha of Burke, Virginia; December 27
Navaaz Jehanbux Dastoor and Malcolm Dinshaw Mistry;
 December 27
Armaity Noshir Mistry of Poona and Farrokh Behramji Shroff; December 28
Meher Jamshed Tatna and Jimmy Kaikhushru Colabavala; December 30

DIED
Putla Nadirsha Anklesaria (78), residing at Sushila Bhavan Co-op Hsg Soc, Station Rd, Vasai (W), 401201; November 30
Coomi Rustamji Bajan (77), 14, Manekji Petit Block, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, Tardeo, 400008; November 30
Erach Sorabji Kapadia (94), Queens Chmbs, 89, M. Karve Rd, 400020; November 30
Perin Cawas Mullan (82), A/42, Meherzin, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; November 30
Nergish Jamshedji Dumasia (70), C/o H. Y. Munsif, A/27, Godrej Bldg, Napean Sea Rd, 400026; December 1
Coomie Phiroze Mervanji (89), Pallonji Mans, 43, Cuffe Parade, 400005; December 1
Dhunjishaw Burjorji Jijthra (89), Banaji Bldg, Forjett St Cross Lane, Gowalia Tank, 400036; December 2
Adi Rustomji Mistry (63), C/29, Bhagat Ngr, Grant Rd, 400007; December 2
Phirozeshah Nawrojee Patel (70), 10, Sunita, Firozeshah St, Santacruz (W), 400054; December 3
Aloo Ratan Ghadiali (76),

189, Hirabai Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; December 4
Mary Nusserwanji Cassinath (84), Laxmi Nivas, 26-26/D, Napean Sea Rd, 400036; December 5
Rustom Jehangir Karkaria (90), 384/A, Kapadia Mans, Grant Rd, 400007; December 5
Hira Ramyar Tata (79), 50, Hill Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; December 5
Ketty Hoshang Sarkari (64), 26/11, Navjivan Soc, Lamington Rd, 400008; December 6
Dinshaw Cawasji Tengra (74), 32/F-21, Dubash Bldg, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; December 6
Perin Kavas Vazifdar (80), Krishna Niwas, 790, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 6
Homai Minocher Bana (80), Dhun Mhl, Garden Rd, Colaba, 400039; December 7
Dilber Sorab Irani (74), 54, Hirabai Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; December 7
Soli Shapurji Kalvachwalla (76), C/o Dr B. Y. Khambatta, Shushrut No 1, B. P. T. Hosp Qrts, Wadala (E), 400037; December 7
Jiloo Soli Framroze (80), 205, Marine Drive, 400020; December 8
Najanmai Pestonji Karadia (80), 19/7, Panthaky Bldg, Andheri (E), 400069; December 8
Goolbai Jamshedji Panthaky (79), 8, Raj Mhl, 84, Veer Nariman Rd, 400020; December 8
Khorshed Noshir Dastoor (93), M/43, Cusrow Bldg, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 9
Goolbai Savaksha Karanjia (88), 9, The Crescett, Alexius Rd, Bandra, 400050; December 9
Mani Eruchshaw Mandviwala (82), 194, Wilson Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014; December 9
Kaikhushroo Hormusji Billimoria (76), Bakhtawar, 703, S. B. Rd, Colaba, 400005; December 10
Aloo Rustom Ghadiali (79), Ava Mans, 230, Tardeo Rd, 400007; December 10
Mino Ardeshtir Irani (65), 19, Mahalaxmiwala Bldg, Sleater Rd, 400007; December 10
Coomie Dorabji Oomrigar (78), 406, Dholakia Apts,

Mahakali Caves Rd, Andheri (E), 400093; December 10
Banoo Nanabhoy Banaji (75), 7, Soona Mhl, 143, Marine Drive, 400020; December 11
Jal Dorabji Banatwalla (93), 19, Ravindra Mans, Sir Dinshaw Vatcha Rd, Churchgate Recl, 400020; December 11
Phiroze Manchershaw Bharucha (74), 4, Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; December 11
Boman Pestonji Bodhanwala (86), Homi Hall, Lawrence Rd, Devlali, 422401; December 11
Aloo Meherwan Merchant (71), B-11/101, Florentine, Hiranandani Gardens, Powai, 400076; December 11
Dara Eruchshaw Mukadam (87), B, The Reward, 220, Tardeo Rd, 400007; December 11
Khorshed Ardeshtir Rabadi (90), 8 (16), Daruwalla Bldg, 145, Alibhai Premji Marg, Grant Rd, 400007; December 11
Dinshaw Maneckshaw Batliwala (89), Batliwala Villa, Sleater Rd, Grant Rd, 400007; December 12
Freny Savak Daruwalla (77), Zaverbanu Ter, 670, Rd no 13, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 12
Goolbai Minocher Hansotia (86), S/A, Balmoral Hall, Mount Mary Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; December 12
Rati Dhunjishaw Bhesania (74), 611, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 13
Rustomji Dhinshawji Chiniwala (93), 5/B, Rawal Pindiwalla Bldg, Tribhavan Rd, 400004; December 13
Dalezad Rohinton Jalgamwalla (19), B57/551, M. I. G. Clny, Bandra (E), 400051; December 13
Dolly Rustomji Merchant (77), 7, Razak Haven, Darabsha Lane, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400026; December 13
Zenobia Pirosha Mistry (95), Reay Hse, BEST Marg, 400039; December 13
Sorabji Dinshawji Fitter (88), 25, Asha Kunj, 2nd Parsee Wada, V. P. Rd, 400004; December 14
Soonoo Noshir Grant (77), 1/36, A. H. Wadia Bldg, Parel Tank Rd, 400033;

December 14
Dara Bhimjibhoy Patel (75), 2/7, Panthaki Clny, Andheri (E), 400069; December 14
Jal Manchersha Khambata (85), 181, Surti Chmbs, 2nd Dhobitalao Lane, 400002; December 16
Mani Bapoo Mama (79), C/o Keki S. Mama, Hardinge Hse, Gowalia Tank Rd, 400036; December 16
Dorab Dosabhai Bajan (76), Avan Mans, 230, Tardeo Rd, 400007; December 18
Dhun Maneckshaw Unwalla (71), 327, Bhagatsingh Rd, Fort, 400038; December 18
Rattansha Merwanji Batiwala (70), Vevai Villa, 686, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 19
Hilla Phiroze Framroze (72), Dhun Villa, 615, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 20
Nelly Vispi Spencer (62), 8/2, Tata Clny, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034; December 20
Dhun Sohrabji Mistry (73), B, Banoo Mans, Cumballa Hill, 400036; December 21
Naval Pirojshaw Writer (86), P/32, Cusrow Bldg, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 21
Jal Noshirwan Billimoria (88), C, Imperial Mhl, Khodadad Circle, Dadar, 400014; December 22
Khorshed Ardeshtir Irani (73), C, Vacha Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; December 22
Daulat Hormusji Kaka (73), B/10, Tardeo Chmbs, Kashinath St, Tardeo, 400034; December 22
Dali Pestonji Sukheshwala (58), 5, Karai Villa, Sri Ram Kripa Hsg Soc, Bhardawadi, Andheri (W), 400058; December 22
Kety Bomansha Mehta (83), 64, Tardeo Court, Javji Dadaji Rd, 400007; December 23
Aimai Maneckji Patel (94), New Khan Bldg, Chikalwadi, Tardeo Rd, 400007; December 23
Rustom Framroz Workingboxwalla (80), Bode Bldg, Marzban Clny, Gilder Lane, 400008; December 23
Goola Jamshedji Bilal (90), 654, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; December 24
Homai Piroshaw Karani (100), Fiaona, 176, Juhu Tara Rd, Juhu, 400049; December 24
Roshan Jal Patel (77), 207,



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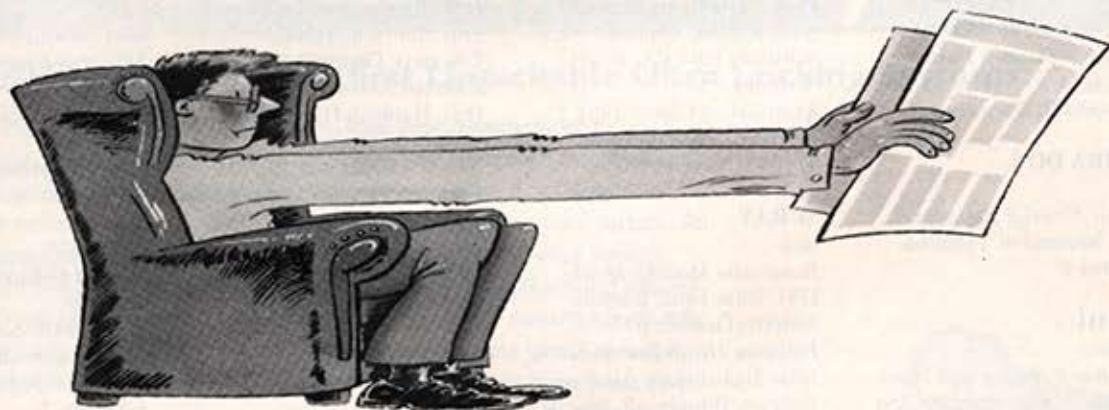
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OPTOMETRISTS

Pradyu Sadan, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Matunga, 400019; December 24
Homi Faramroze Pavri (69), 194, Talati Bldg, 194, Khetwadi Back Rd, Girgaum, 400004; December 24
Meheroo Naval Cooper (69), B/45, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; December 25
Phiroze Viraf Ankleswaria (60), 24/25, Asha Mhl, N. Gamadia Rd, 400026; December 26
Najamai Nariman Chinoy (92), A/14, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 26
Freny Hormusji Dadrawalla (85), 3/11, Atur Apts, Opp Fariyas Hotel, Minoo Desai Marg, Colaba, 400005; December 26
Faramroze Dhunjishaw Fitter (81), G/5, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; December 26
Hoshi Jehangir Lelinwala (61), B, The Reward, 220, Tardeo Rd, 400007; December 27
Mani Ardeshir Driver (83), C/15, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 29
Shirinbai Ardeshir Motawara (86), 12, Khareghat Clny, N. S. Patkar Marg, 400007; December 29
Rustam Ratansha Naoraji (84), G/22, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; December 29
Minocher Burjorji Pastakia (78), 4, M. P. Agiary St, Grant Rd, 400007; December 29

DEHRA DUN

DIED
Noshir Nowroji Kapadia (92), husband of Tehmina; October 8

DELHI

MARRIED
Tooshna F. Major and Homi Gandhi, son of Margaret and Keki; December 26

NAVSARI

DIED
Pirozsha Manekji Asundaria, husband of Nargis and father of Villie, Minoo and Firdosh; July 31

POONA

DIED
Freny Rustomji Byramji (86), 74, Wanowrie Garden, 411040; November 10
Jamshed Eruch Sanjana (70),

2/20, Guruprasad Soc, 24, Bund Garden Rd, 411001; November 15
Roshan Feroze Dajee (52), 585, Sachapir St, Camp, 411001; November 17
Pestonji Ardeshir Batha (85), 3/10, Konark Abhishek, New Salisbury Park Rd, 411037; November 24
Kersi Eruch Chinoy (46), 7, Serene Est, Kondhwa Rd, 411040; November 29

SURAT

DIED
Bamansha Manekji Mehta (79), Sutar Falia, Bardoli, 394601; October 9
Hillamai Hiraji Parabha (89), Near Shahenshahi Atash Behram, Bibiniwadi, Sayed-pura, 395003; October 15
Minoo Pestonji Turel (63), Popat St, Nanpura, 395001; October 26
Sam Eruchsha Bhathena (61), Samrath Park, Adajan Rd, 395003; November 11
Fali Jahangirji Battiwala (64), Nasarvanji File, Bhusawal, 425201; November 14
Shavaksha Burjorji Jijina (74), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; November 23
Jehanbux Kavasji Dalal (49),

Malesar St, Rustompura, 395002; November 27
Eruchasha Nasarvanji Hillwala (90), Dahla Moholo, Rustompura, 395002; November 27
Dolat Dhanjisha Hatariya (90), Sumvali, Taluka Choyarsi; December 5
Ratamai Jamshedji Doctor (83), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; December 10
Dhanmai Dhanjishaw Chacha (85), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; December 16
Nariman Khurshedji Madanwala (70), Allahi Baug, Rustompura, 395002; December 30

VADODARA

BORN
A girl, *Natasha*, to Dinaz and Yezdi Umrigar; August 2

MARRIED
Hutoxi Tehmus Anklesaria and Farokh Madon; October 5
Hutokshi Bavaadam and Homyar Wadia; November 5
Alice Sigamporia and Cyrus Palsetia; November 15
Hufrish Dinyar Tadiwalla and Nariman Mirza; December 11
Nancy Bahadur Patel and

Vispi Nariman Patva; December 27
Armaity Hiraji Wadia and Cyrus Dali Patel; December 31

DIED
Aspi Cawasji Gai (56); July 11
Shirinbai Eruch Jal (85); July 15
Pilloo Gustadji Kavina (55); July 30
Phiroze Kekhashru Talati (52); September 30

CANADA

British Columbia
MARRIED
Jean MacRae and Farahad Dastoor, son of Dolly and Phiroze at Robert's Creek; February 7
Armaity Namiranian and Parviz Javanmardi; June 27

DIED
Banoo Poulad-Noshirvan (Rokhwa) (82), mother of Parvin Zartoshty, Rostam and Poulad at North Vancouver; August 18

Ontario

MARRIED
Soona Kothawala, daughter of Aban and Noshir, and *Christopher Cardin*; May 17

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	1998*	This issue	1998*	This issue	1998*
BIRTHS						
Boys	20	115	—	1	5	45
Girls	11	91	1	5	1	32
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	50	253	7	14	4	18
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	37	—	1	1	2
Females married out	—	36	—	1	2	9
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	31	479	15	116	10	48
Females	46	513	8	92	5	44
CREMATED						
Males	—	7	—	—	—	—
Females	—	4	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1998 (January 1998-January 1999 issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as Parsiana does not have a breakup of those cremated.

*These figures pertain to information provided to or collected by Parsiana. They do not represent the total number of births, marriages and deaths in the Zoroastrian community in India and abroad.



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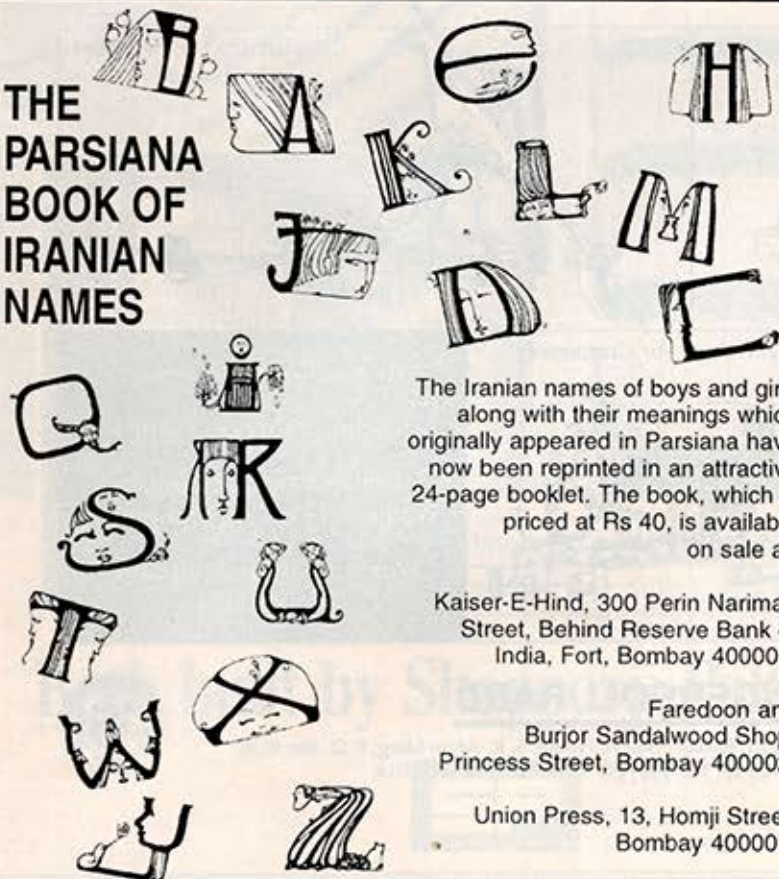
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Quebec

BORN

A boy, *Zachary*, to *Leena* and *Aurelio Useche* at Quebec; July 18

IRAN

Tehran

DIED

Simidokt Siabakshi Torky (62), mother of *Mehry Farzaneh*; March 31

IRELAND

Dublin

BORN

A boy to *Anuradha* and *Fali Langdana*, brother to *Rehyan*; December 1

PAKISTAN

Karachi

MARRIED

Freny Wadiwalla, daughter of *Zarin* and *Nariman*, and *Meheroz Rabadi* of Indiana, USA, son of *Roda* and *Hoshang*; June 17

DIED

Freny Dhunjishaw Patel (65);

September 27

Shirin Nausharwan Bastani

(76); September 29

Aspy Hormazd Irani (Vithal)

(73); October 2

Ratan Dinshaw Aga (75);

October 7

Aloo Byramjee Collector (77);

October 12

Jamshed Dosabhoj Umirigar

(73); October 13

Minocher K. Katrak (66);

November 9

THAILAND

Bangkok

DIED

Manek Dhunjisha Daver (65), husband of *Dilnavaz* and father of *Roxana Peter Masscon* and *Tannaz*; December 6

USA

California

MARRIED

Pearl Shroff, daughter of *Vera* and *Pesi* of Ottawa, Canada and *Sharukh Alamshaw*, son of *Dhun* and *Burjor* of Costa Mesa, California at Los Angeles; July 4

DIED

Zomorrood Kasravi at

Huntington Beach; August 15

Khodayar Ashoojahanian (77),

father of *Homa Bouzarhomehr*

Bidabadi and *Daruish* at San

Jose; September 8

Colorado

DIED

Jehangir Pocha (63), son of

Gerty and late *Dhun* and

brother of *Mike* at Denver;

August 4

Kentucky

BORN

A boy, *Kaizad*, to *Neena* and *Cyrus Joshi*; July 29

Massachusetts

MARRIED

Rashna Khariwalla, daughter of *Armaity* and *Rumy*, and *Paul Staid* at Boston; August 1

DIED

Maneck Dastur, father of *Zarine Dumasia* at Boston; July 12

New Jersey

MARRIED

Kamal Kapadia and *Adil Heera-manek* of Long Beach, New York at Paramus; October 17

Pennsylvania

BORN

A boy, *Jamshed*, to *Shireen* and *Hormuzshaw Wania* at Lebanon; May 22

Texas

BORN

A girl, *Olivia Zarine*, to *Tami* and *Jamshed Rivetna*; November 19

Washington

BORN

A boy, *Daraius*, to *Sia* and *Alex Boston*; November 19

Wisconsin

DIED

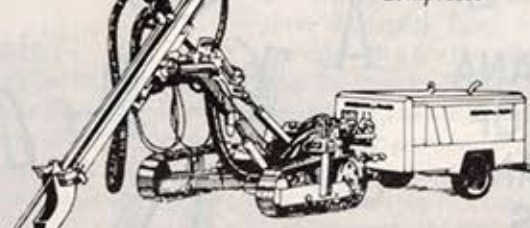
Goshtasp Espanma (83), husband of *Nakhostin* and father of *Abtin* and *Azin* at Madison; September 27

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

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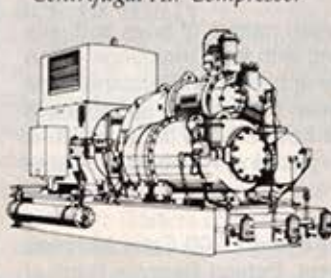
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Aga's architectural acumen

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Jamshed Burjor Aga, 82, president of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA) and former president of The Indian Institute of Architects on August 8, 1998 in Bombay following cardiac arrest.

One of the seniormost Fellows of The Indian Institute of Architects (IIA), Aga was considered "a source of inspiration" by the members of the fraternity, acknowledged a condolence letter from the Institute. As was recalled in another condolence letter: "The Nagpur Centre of the IIA was inaugurated on August 26, 1973 at the hands of Jamshed B. Aga, then president, IIA. The Nagpur Centre is celebrating its silver jubilee this year and we had hoped to invite Architect Aga to Nagpur on this occasion."

A fourth generation architect who took pride in being proprietor of the family's 130-year-old firm Shapoorjee N. Chandabhoj and Company, the oldest firm of architects in Maharashtra, for the last over 10 years Aga had opted to dissociate his company from construction activities. Disillusioned with the prevailing culture of bribes, delays and deterioration of labor and material, his rationale as explained to *Parsiana* in 1994 (see "Yet another landmark," *Parsiana*, February-March) was he would "neither be able to cure the system nor endure."

He was an architect who liked to build enduring structures keeping in mind the climatic conditions and financial resources of the client. Insisting on personal supervision, he would even climb the 30 storeys of the Union Bank building at Nariman Point when it was under construction. Among the other monuments built by their firm in Bombay were the Cama Athornan Institute at Andheri, the Petit Sanatorium at Cumballa Hill, the mosque and St Mary's Church at Bandra. The agiaries in Bombay built by their firm were Sethna,

Batliwala, Mithaiwala, Motlibai Wadia, Fasli... Among other community institutions they had erected were the Sardar Dastur Boys' and Girls' Schools at Poona, the orphanage and clocktower in memory of Peshotan Marker in Yazd, Iran. Notable were their palaces too, at Gwalior, Rajpipla...

After opting to halt their construction activities Aga chose to officiate as an arbitrator, being a member of the Indian Council of Arbitrators, and advisor on important architectural matters brought before him. Earlier he had also functioned as a fire loss assessor as also estate duty and wealth tax valuer. Commending his seniority and experience, the condolence letter from Sharad Ranadive, partner of Gregson Batley and King, acknowledged that he had learnt a lot from Aga.

One of the avant garde projects that he wanted to undertake was an under-the-sea restaurant near Nariman Point at Bombay. Want of promoters or sponsors made him abandon his dream plan, remarking, "Aavtaa bhaave aavsu tare karsu (we'll take it up in our next life)."

Most of the condolence letters received by the family refer to Aga's wit, his jovial and friendly nature making him popular among his varied friends' circle of architects, Freemasons and Lions. Yet, when the need arose, "he expressed his views without reservation," noted a write-up in *The Times of India* of August 18. Critical of developments at Nariman Point and a proposed multi-storey car park at Horniman Circle, one of his colleagues recalls Aga making his point in the presence of the then urban development minister Rafiq Zakaria who eventually dropped the proposal. Besides serving as chairman of the expert committee appointed by the Government of India under the Architects Registration Bill, he was a member of the panel of economy in construction appointed by the Planning Commission of

the Government of India, of the advisory committee of the Bombay Municipal Corporation regarding the development plan of Greater Bombay, of the Bombay Building Repairs and Reconstruction Board.

Early 1997 Aga had been featured on the cover of the *Journal of the Indian Institute of Architects* for being "a pillar of strength and respect for the architect..." While the write-up attributed his success to "wit, wisdom and worth," Aga who had studied architecture at the J. J. School of Art, before qualifying as a registered, incorporated and finally chartered architect, laughed it off, preferring to give credit to "work, wine and women."

"Nothing pleased him more than to give and make others happy," mentions his son Naozer, adding, "This was the project...that he completely dedicated himself to for many years before his passing away." Echoing these sentiments Lion Dr Jehangir Major noted, "The goodness of his nature, the sweetness of his smile and his zest to do things for others were some of the excellent qualities he possessed." The Parsee Engineers' and Architects' Union, where Aga was president, commended his "various accomplishments...and particularly his acts of benevolence..." "He had dedicated his meaningful life to the good of humanity with lofty thoughts and actions," acknowledged Dr Feroze and Aban Duggan of London, adding, "We will never forget the courage and foresight with which he guided us in his usual splendid manner."

Among the many community charitable institutions where Aga served as trustee were the Framjee Cawasjee Institute, Maneckji Cooper Education Trust, Navajbai Mulla Education Trust, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Charity Fund, The Zoroastrian Building Fund... "A great source of help and inspiration to the Anjuman," he was associated with the IZA since the 1930s when his father Burjor was the president. During Jamshed Aga's 13-year stint as IZA president until his demise, he oversaw



Aga: a pillar of strength

Photo: Ratan R. Mody

the Anjuman's assets valued at Rs 50 lakhs in securities with the 1,500 acres of land in Palghar serving as the financial backbone to conduct the Anjuman's many activities. Besides offering financial assistance to the needy, the IZA is also involved in promoting educational, vocational and religious causes (see "The assisting anjuman," *Parsiana*, March 1986). "Despite his professional and social vocations (Aga) devoted his valuable time for the affairs of the trusts and in matters relating to the properties of the trusts," noted a condolence resolution passed by the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Charity Fund.

In honor of the "encyclopaedia of Lionism...who breathed Lionism," a joint condolence meeting was convened by the governors of three districts at Bombay's Cama Hall on August 18, 1998. It was recalled that his letterhead bore the message: "Live every day the Lions way: 'Service pure, unselfish service, all through life's allotted span, nurtures, strengthens, widens and lengthens man's affinity with man.'"

In September 1998 Aga was to receive the 60-year jewel for as many years of association with Freemasonry. But that was not to be for Aga breathed his last in August. Hence on October 29, 1998, it was a funeral lodge service held jointly by three lodges where he was a member to bid farewell to "a perfect ritualist and our guiding inspiration. He brought our Lodge from the abyss of darkness to light," noted the condolence letter from The Lodge Star of India.

His association with different causes seemed endless: he was founder chairman of The Maharashtra State Anti Tuberculosis Association, former chairman of the Bombay Mothers and Children Welfare Society...

Yet, according to his sons Naozer and Vistasp, "He fully met the test of fatherhood...He was always there for us, fully dependable with tremendous intelligence, foresight and wisdom." The systematic and perfectionist architect who was cremated is known to have taken care to "taperecord his own obituary" which was played at the condolence meeting organized at the J. J. College of Architecture. In his own words, reported earlier in *Parsiana*, "I want to be remembered on this earth as an architect who lived respected and died regretted."

The dedicated architect is survived by his sons Naozer and Vistasp.

"A COUNTRY APART"

continued from page 20

marine valuer and surveyor Behram Cooper as vice president, taxi fleet owner Firoz Pestonji as secretary, and accountant and computer expert Mehrnosh Buhariwalla as treasurer. They conduct picnics, outings and BBQs "just to keep together." The ZAWA *Chronicle*, a bi-monthly newsletter has been launched and is self-financing through advertisements. Within ZAWA's short lifespan it has chalked up a balance of Aust \$5,000 from membership fees and functions and they collected another \$350 to help Zoroastrians affected in an accident in Tehran that they learnt about on Internet.

Wadia's aim during his year-long tenure is to have a place of their own, as almost every other community has one. They have identified a beautiful plot thanks to an Iranian Zoroastrian lady working in the department of land acquisition, he says.

A section of the community wants some land to be demarcated for Zoroastrians only at the local cemetery grounds. Wadia has told his committee members to pursue the objective if they're so inclined. Wadia himself favors the electric crematorium where there is "no *apmaan* (insult) to the atash" with the ashes being scattered in the "beautiful King's Park where certain avenues are nominated for ashes, grow a tree, put a plaque there." Wadia considers it an environmentally friendlier form of disposal and has nominated that form for himself. Hitherto there have been two deaths, both cremated, with the community rallying around and Pavri conducting the prayers, informs Wadia.

With the younger generation numbering around 35 and ranging in age from three months to 30 years, ZAWA is seeking to embark on religious education. "(We) don't know how to strike a balance. Either it's too ritualistic and rabid which puzzles children or very very general," Wadia describes the birth pangs. Humbandagi that he witnessed at Bombay's Banaji Atash Behram is an ideal that his heart is set on, "once we have a place of our own." His intention is to take a young mobed there "to live life like the rest of us" and discharge his religious duties in his spare time, welcome visiting children and, through conversation, "change their frame of mind." The two or three prayer meetings they have held so far have been disappoint-

ing, he admits. "Everyone has forgotten Navroze and Pateti for 20 to 25 years. The children of first generation immigrants stayed away because they knew nothing else."

Until ZAWA was born, about 50 like-minded individuals used to meet every year at someone's place with contributions of *lagan nu bhoju* (festive food). The fare had to be only Parsi dishes. Wadia extolled public servant turned taxi driver Persis Marfatia's *kaleji* and Vilee Khambatta's *sas-ni-machi*.

The community includes public servants and professionals like one doctor and several accountants. Five of them are taxi owners. Others are professional taxi and bus drivers. With gestures and expressions reminiscent of his humorist father Jimmy, Wadia charades the usual reception (raised eyebrows, dropped jaws) he gets from the community when they learn that the president of ZAWA is a bus driver! The air-conditioned and fully computerized taxis and buses provide a secure and decent living, he affirms, adding happily that there is "not a single Zoroastrian family on the dole queue" and no Zoroastrian works as a domestic.

The year-old ZAWA is too nascent to participate in the proposed Federation of Australian and Far East Associations which aims to incorporate Burma, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia and Hong Kong Zoroastrians, says Wadia. Dr Sam Kerr of Sydney had come to Perth to invite ZAWA to join but "we have written to him that at this stage we can't afford the contribution because we have other things on our agenda like a place of our own. From write-ups and visits we feel that the logistics might lead to misunderstandings...the distances are too great." Nor is ZAWA a member of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, Wadia clarifies.

While wife Khurshid works for the Australian Army's ordnance department, their elder son, Jamsheed (19), is studying environmental management. Firoze (16) will be going into his Tertiary Entrance Exam that will qualify him for the university. With basic education in commerce, Wadia had been minding the family's timber business in Bombay until he emigrated.

"Our duty is to assimilate and give loyalty," says Wadia of their new life in Australia. "People tend to compare notes with what they've left behind, but they do not want to go back..."

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