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Where movement is a science

Parsiana

May 1999
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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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"When Sam came to..."

Arnavaz S. Mama's heartwarming report "When Sam came to Sanjan," published in the January 1999 issue of *Parsiana* made one feel proud and happy to be a Zarathushti! While Marazban Patrawala's appeal to "dear Zoroastrians, never forsake your religion" came as a refreshing reminder, the note at the very end of the fine function was apparently soured when compere Rati Wadia's call to sing *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathoshti* was overruled.

As far as my knowledge and experience go, wherever, and in whichever country Parsis have settled in they have proved loyal, and learnt and lustily sung the national anthems, usually preceded by *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathoshti*'s inspiring words: "Goojeri jaffa o bhaori to pun na chhorio dharam (despite travails we have not forsaken our religion)." It made one very sad that this important tradition was blighted.

Could we, through the columns of your internationally read magazine, appeal to Zarathushtis settled in known and less known corners of the world, to make it a rule and a tradition not only to sing the national anthems (as is usually always done) but to always precede that by the inspiring chorus of *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathoshti...kool jehan sathé dosti* (friends with the whole world)? After all, usually our functions do commence with the recital of an *Ashem* and/or a *Yatha*!

B. RUSTOMJI

"The Zoroastrians of..."

Your issue of January 1999 carries an article entitled "The Zoroastrians of Serendip" to which I would like to add the following noteworthy features:

Sohli Captain was conferred the title 'Deshabandu' in the Presidential honours list of 1994 by the then President Mr D. B. Wijetunge.

He has also been responsible for building and equipping a hospice named 'Shantha Sevana' for the Sri Lanka Cancer Society, in memory of his parents — the first of its kind for the terminally ill. Furthermore, he has made annual donations in order to maintain this institution which has a bed strength of 34.

MS RATTY JILLA

Sri Lanka

Promote rich heritage

I was delighted to read about the "Adopt a heritage book" project (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, December 1998) undertaken by the Asiatic Society of Bombay under the guidance of its vice president, Dr Mani Kemerkar. I will happily send her a cheque.

I was even more delighted to learn of the recently established World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation with Dr Homi Dhalla as founder president, with

A rare artefact at the Alpaiwalla Museum Photo: Homiyar Mistry



Nadir Modi and Dinshaw Tamboly as trustees, others to be inducted from Zoroastrian associations abroad.

One institute is sadly neglected by the Parsis. I refer to the Alpaiwalla Museum at Khareghat Colony, Bombay. It contains some rare books and manuscripts, as well as the most beautiful artefacts. *Parsiana* carried a picture of one such on the cover of one of its issues when doing a cover story on the exhibition *Parasika*. May I suggest that the principals of all Parsi run schools in Bombay get together, visit the Museum and chalk out a program of visits by school children on a day-to-day basis? This would certainly encourage the forlorn curator.

Moreover, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts has compiled a bibliography on Zoroastrian studies with the help of Asha Gupta, Dr Shernaz Cama and myself. What is unique about this compilation is that it includes references to Zoroastrian literature in libraries and institutions in and around Delhi.

May our tiny community grow in awareness of its rich heritage.

PILOO N. JUNGALWALLA

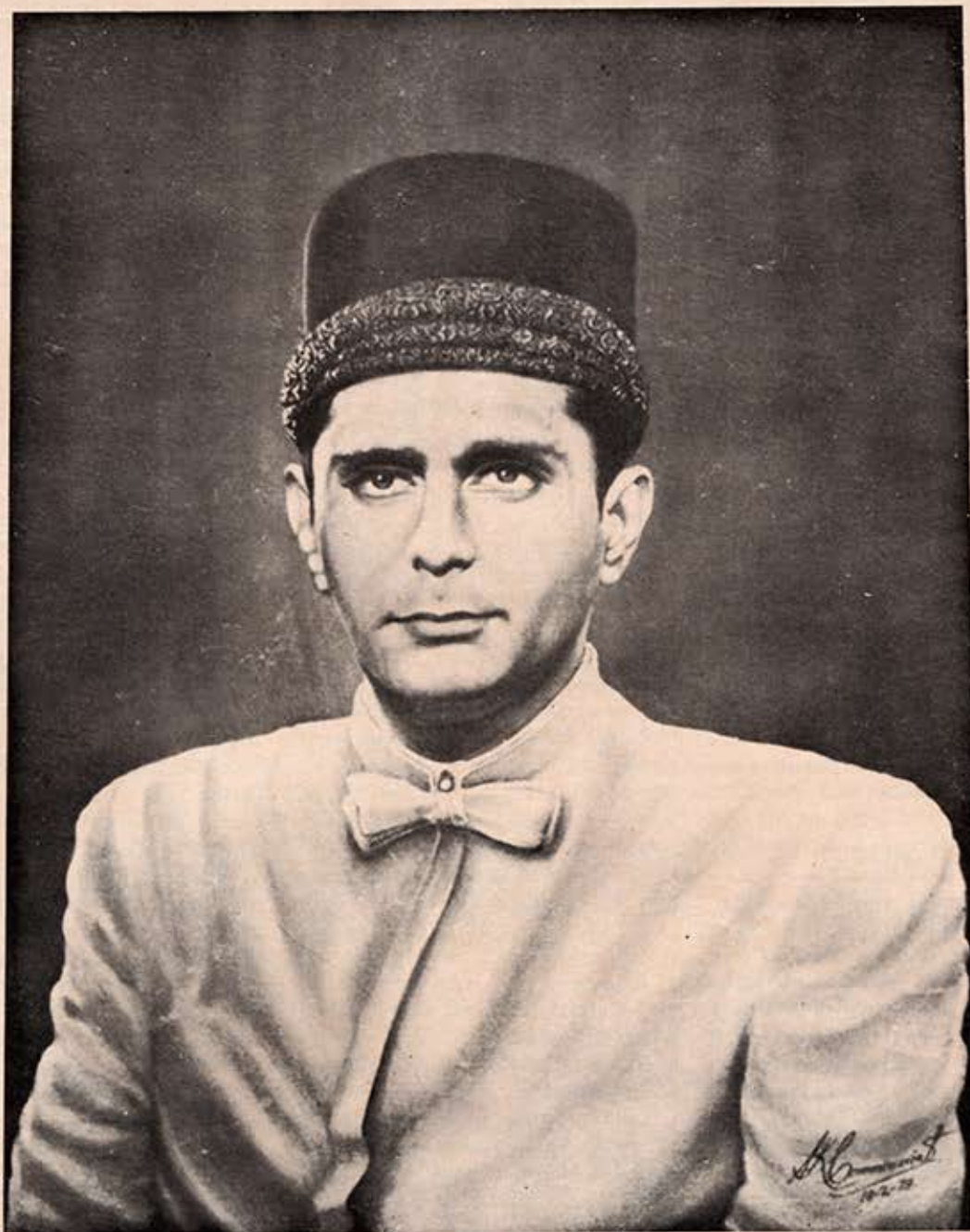
New Delhi

"Reach the inner fire"

This has reference to Ms Perin Divecha's letter "Reach the inner fire" (*Parsiana*, December 1998).

In the July-August 1998 issue of *Parsiana*, I had stated, "In my moment of prayer, the fire energies operating within myself, the spiritual energy of the consecrated fire and the divine energies operating within the universe, all become one." Divecha questions, "Where or in what do they become one?" There appears to be a hint of mockery and sarcasm in her query. However, ignoring the same, if I were to respond in one word (regarding what I experience in my moment of prayer), it is "attunement."

Divecha jests, "Let me say how fortunate he is to experience spiritual ecstasy — few human beings can say this with so much confidence." Good lady, may I say every spiritual experience is a very personal experience. I lay no claims to being a mystic or one who has realized the ultimate Truth. However, I do see myself as a seeker of Truth. My spiritual ecstasy is a very personal ex-



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perience. It matters little to me whether others believe it or not.

I do recognize that people seek Truth through different channels. Ultimately, it is a matter of choice and individual inclinations. Some attempt to seek Truth through the intellect. Others through faith. Personally, I prefer a modicum of both. In all spiritual quests, faith is important. Faith is not blind belief. It is, in fact, the aspiration of the spirit to gain wisdom. If faith is constant, it leads to the realization of wisdom. I have full faith in the *tarikats* (spiritual disciplines) of my religion, the *manthravani* (Avestan prayers) and spiritual institutions (i.e. the consecrated agiaries and atash behrams) and am convinced that these are important channels for realizing divinity. If Divecha chooses to ignore these channels, the choice is hers.

The lady questions, "Where do all these energies originate?" All these energies originate from that supreme reality we Zarathushtrians recognize as Ahura Mazda — the Creator of light and the Creator of life. Energy, in fact, may be defined as force, vigor or capacity for activity or action. Doctrinally, we believe that fire is the first of God's manifested forms. Ignited matter or any other form of physical fire is, therefore, not merely physical in nature, but also has divine fire. It is this which gives fire its purity and sacredness.

Fire is an energy with the capacity to animate. When the fire energies operating in our body are extinguished, we die and the body grows cold. When these energies are blocked or disturbed, we fall ill. According to the ancient science of yoga, there are seven occult centers of life and consciousness which enliven the physical and astral bodies of man. They are called *chakras* (wheels) because the concentrated energy in each one is like a hub from which radiate rays of life-giving light and energy. While Hindus activate these *chakras* with the aid of *manthras* (e.g. the chanting of the *Om*), *pranayam* ('prana' being life-breath or 'lifetrons' as Paramahansa Yogananda put it), yoga, etc., a Zoroastrian may activate these energy centers or *chakras* with the aid of spiritual *tarikats* like physical and mental purity and the aid of sudreh-kusti, agiary, atash behrams, *manthravani*, and following the path of Asha (Righteousness), as also living in harmony with his/her environment.

To the question, "Who created them

(i.e. the energies)?" Why, of course, Ahura Mazda! He is the source of all energies. He is the Creator supreme.

The good lady asks, "What does he mean by 'spiritual'?" *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines the term "spiritual" as "of or concerning the spirit as opposed to matter. Concerned with the soul or spirit, etc., not with external reality."

To the question, "Who is the creator of things 'spiritual'?" The answer, once again, is Ahura Mazda.

The good lady says, "Mr Dadrawala and I will never see eye to eye where Mazdayasni Zoroastrianism is concerned." I wonder why she says this with such an air of finality. A great master had once advised, "Choose your words with care. You may not know how many of them you may have to eat as time goes by." In the words of Einstein, "The deeper we search, the more we find there is much to know and as long as human life exists, it will always be so."

May I conclude with a verse from the *Atash Nyaesh*,

"*Yasnemcha, vahmemcha huberetimcha/ushta-beretimcha, vanta-beretimcha, afrinami/tava Atarsh puthra Ahurahe Mazdao, yesnyo/ahi vahmyo, yesnyo buyao vahmyo/nmanahu mash-yakanam ushta buyat/ahmai nare, yase-thwa badha/fracayazait, aesmo-zasto, baresmo-zasto/gao-zasto, havano-zasto*

"O fire, the purifier (of all things) pertaining to Ahura Mazda! I praise Thy worship, invocation, good health-giving and friendly gift. (O Fire), thou art worthy of worship and invocation, mayest thou be worthy of worship and invocation in the abodes of men! May there be greatness (or happiness) unto that man who shall always worship thee with fuel, baresman, milk and mortar in hand."

NOSHIR H. DADRAWALA

"Life saving mission"

"Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Only two things stand as solid as stone:
Kindness in other's trouble
And courage in your own."

The above lines indeed reflect the nobility and strength of character of the late Dr Minoo Framroze Wadia who met with an untimely death in a freak accident on New Year's day, this year.

One could never have imagined that a boy would fall from a height of three floors and would be saved with only minor injuries while causing the instant

death of a kindhearted doctor standing below. It was something unbelievably tragic, leaving the doctor's poor patients, his dear wife and children in severe shock (see "Life saving mission," Events and Personalities, *Parsiana*, February-March 1999).

Dr Minoo Wadia's kind nature, his ever obliging attitude and willingness to help at all times; and above all, his absolute sincerity and openness were well-known to all his poor patients and to those who came in contact with him.

Columnist Jehan Daruwalla in his column "Parsi Prakash" in *The Bombay Samachar* wrote under the heading "Sevabhavi Doctor Wadia": "Having



Wadia: saved lives

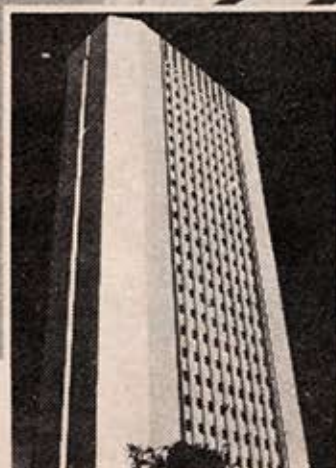
saved lives of many during his life, he saved the life of a child even at the time of his death. When life arises and when life's thread snaps is in the hands of Almighty God; but in his death his patients have lost a

noble and kind doctor. His family has lost a loving husband and a devoted father. Even when he used to be tired after a full day's hard work or even when he was unwell, if a patient called, he would invariably visit and help. Always smiling and radiating cheer to his patients, day and night he would willingly give his service. He had a soft corner in his heart for the poor which the following story indicates.

"Once a beggar was sitting near his dispensary with an infected wound on his leg. The noble doctor was aroused with pity and took the beggar into his clinic, gave the necessary treatment and dressed the wound. Not only that, but the kind doctor told the beggar to come again for follow-up treatment. The beggar got cured soon and the benevolent doctor went a step further — he got the beggar a job as a peon in one of his patient's offices. The man who was once a beggar, by dint of his hard work and night-study, soon got promoted as a clerk. The grateful man still remembers the noble doctor with utmost respect and love!" (Broad rendering from Gujarati)

Dr Wadia was associated with many charitable and public organizations. In 1975 he joined the Parsi Ambulance Division as divisional surgeon. There-

Reaching for the Sky



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after he was appointed district surgeon in St John Ambulance Brigade. He had been working as an honorary lecturer at the Civil Defence College since 1977. He had also served as honorary physician at the Bombay Native Dispensary, St John Brigade Medical Centre and Ozanam Medical Centre since that time. In June 1984, the Parsi Ambulance Division gave him an award for his notable services. In September of the same year, the Civil Defence Staff College also gave him the Invaluable Services Award. In January 1985 he was awarded the Dedicated and Outstanding Services Certificate by the St John Ambulance Brigade. In November 1986 St John Ambulance Brigade awarded him the Service Medal for his outstanding work. On January 26, 1994 he received the prestigious Civil Defence and Home Guards Medal from the President of India for his meritorious services. He was the first civilian to receive this award.

MEHER TEHMASP PAREKH

No cause for gloom

Much is written about the extinction of Parsis and Zoroastrians due to inter-marriages. There is no need for the gloom and doom expressed by the equa-

tion "Parsi girl and non-Parsi groom = extinction. The words of Annie Besant quoted here as also those of Rabindranath Tagore should assure any Zoroastrian that what has lasted over 5,000 years will not disappear. I am an Indian, a Parsi, but above all, I am a Zoroastrian and a time will come when my Prophet's glory and His religion will shine forth brighter than ever before.

To quote Annie Besant: "O my Parsi brothers! Your prophet is not dead. He is not perished: He is watching over the religion He founded, ever seeking to raise it from its present degradation, to give it back its lost knowledge, its lost powers. What nobler work for the Zoroastrian of today than to permeate his brethren with the ancient fire, to relight its blaze on the spiritual altar of their hearts. What nobler work than to study his own scriptures and to go forth and teach the ancient learning with the authority and power that can only be wielded by a man of the same faith, with those he addresses. The fire is not dead; it is only smoldering on its ancient altars: white-hot are the ashes ready to reburst into flames.

"And I dream of a day when the breath

of the Great Prophet Zarathushtra shall sweep again through His temples, fanning the ashes — making the Iranian religion once more what it ought to be, a beacon of light for the souls of men, one of the greatest religions of the world."

Tagore said, "Zoroaster was the greatest of all pioneer prophets who showed the path of freedom to man, the freedom of moral choice with the undoubted assurance and hope of one who has got a direct vision of truth. He speaks to the world — 'Hearken unto me ye who come from near and far! Listen for I shall speak forth now, ponder over all things, weigh my words with care and clear thoughts. Never shall the false teacher destroy the world for a second time for his tongue stands mute and His creed exposed' (Yasna 45.1). Zoroaster's voice is still a living voice, not a matter of academic interest for historical scholars, nor merely the guide of a small community of men in the daily details of their life. Rather of all teachers, Zarathushtra was the first who addressed His words to all humanity, regardless of distance of space or time."

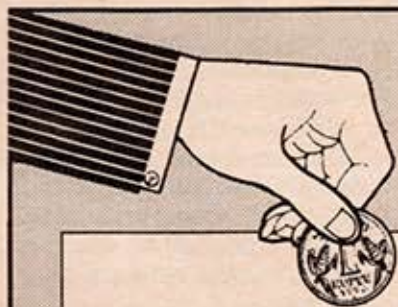
When such great souls have shown us their faith in this sublime religion, who are a few petty creatures to predict its end and extinction! Parsis do not

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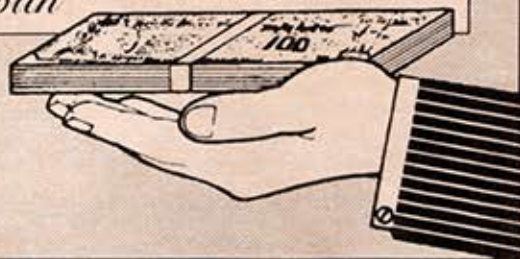
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have a monopoly on Zoroastrianism, it's a universal religion. There are Zoroastrians in every continent and every corner of the world, and I know for certain that "the breath of the great prophet Zarathushtra shall sweep again through His temples... and Zarathushtra will be again a beacon of light for the souls of men!"

DHUN (CAMBATA) NARGOLWALA

Soften your stand

I am an upcountry Parsi settled in Kota, Rajasthan where there are only two families in permanent residence. In olden times we used to get people in the Western Railway and in the army on temporary postings. My dad came here way back in the '30s in Kota state and had liquor contracts and other interests.

My aunt, Ms Khurshid A. Lakde-walla, residing in Agra died at the age of 80. A postgraduate in English from Holker College, Indore, she also held a diploma from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay. During the Partition she was working in the ministry of rehabilitation and social welfare with stalwarts from the Sarabhai family. She later joined the Scindia School, a public school in Gwalior and retired as the

principal of their boys' section.

It is high time that our religious strictures are softened and we live like other communities of the world if we and our seniors want to increase our community. Forty years ago we were in every field of endeavor in India. Now we are just on the periphery.

Dr C. ANKLESARIA

Ceremonial conduct

The idea of a navjote is to make the child feel that he has become a follower of the Zoroastrian religion and it should be performed in a solemn manner, and not as a meeting for friends and relations, with the hosting of costly dinners.

To begin with, a child of seven and nine years should be taught the prayers and their meaning by an elderly priest for about one to two hours every Sunday for two months. The navjote ceremony should be between 9 and 10 a.m. when the sun is shining and not setting. As far as possible it should be on a Sunday or holiday.

It should be performed in a fire-temple with an attached dining hall like the Sethna Agiary, Fanaswadi Atash Behram, Colaba Agiary. After the navjote, lunch could be served at home to

close relatives and the child's friends. All my five children's navjotes (now they are between 43 and 54 years of age) were performed thus. In the evening they were taken to Apollo Bunder, given a boat ride followed by ice-cream and cakes in an Irani hotel and brought home by 8.00 p.m. I did not have to borrow any money to pay for the costly band and decoration. All my five children continue to observe their religion as they should.

Nowadays it has become a fashion even for middle-class families to have the navjote at 5.00 p.m., when only a few relatives are present. Others all come at dinnertime, give a present to the child and rush for dinner.

The child has a very poor impression of the navjote and in a very short time forgets the prayers and very rarely visits an agiary. That is why we find agiary and atash behram halls empty even on important *rozs*.

Now there is also the added risk of being looted in the night by goondas and taxi drivers. As for marriages, hotel halls are safer than any baugs and it could be carried out during the day time or after sunset depending on the conve-

continued on page 52



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Events and Personalities

Raised its masthead

After a hiatus of nearly 10 years, *The BPP Review*, the bulletin of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), has raised its masthead in a new avatar with its spring 1999 issue. "In this the information age, good communications is fundamental to success," notes the front page editorial pointing out that "with changing times the BPP too must undergo a metamorphosis...but old institutions can at best change slowly..."

"With the first issue of *The BPP Review*, we intend to keep you better informed about your Punchayet, its activities, its performance and its main achievements. The emphasis will now be on open truthful communications and an objective analysis of how we are faring, our goals and values...It is the fond hope of the BPP that members of the community will interact in a positive and meaningful manner, and will not only realize but also appreciate the limitations within which your Punchayet has to function," continues the editorial.

The 12-page newsletter introduces the Punchayet as probably one of the oldest surviving and functioning public charitable trusts anywhere in the world with a history of over 300 years. They have opted to give an overview of the Punchayet's performance in the financial year that ended on March 31, 1998 with some salient features of their ongoing activities in the field of welfare, education, housing, illustrated with 10 color photos.

The largesse of the two sisters — the late Hirabai Bhagat and Putlamai Mody

— is cited under "Noble gestures; noble sentiments" to express the Punchayet's gratitude for their munificence wherefrom the Punchayet will be richer by nearly seven crore rupees.

"The BPP are the largest private landlords in Bombay by virtue of their being owners of 480 buildings comprising 5,500 flats," states the *Review*.

Considering that this publication is delivered to the doorstep of all the Punchayet-owned flats, the trustees have also chosen to include here "A note of caution" for the aged Zoroastrians residing alone in the light of the increasing spate of murders in the city. A warning is also sounded for those who in their keenness to occupy Punchayet flats liaise with people who depose as agents or brokers of the Punchayet.

Those serving on the editorial committee of the *Review* are trustees Minoo Shroff, Dadi Engineer, Rustom Tirandaz and Dinshaw Tamboly with administrative assistance from Behram Dastur, Mehli Colah, Sheroo Master, Nergish Irani and Bakhtawar Tarapore. The news items are interspersed with thought provoking quotations on different pages and an appeal for donations on the last page listing 23 projects for which the sums would be welcome.

Nirangdin in Nagpur

The last nirangdin kriya in Nagpur was 22 years ago. Not surprisingly, the one held in 1999, for only the second time in the 104-year-old history of the Bai Hirabai Mulla Dar-e-Meher in Nagpur, evoked great enthusiasm from the approximately 600-strong Nagpur Zoro-

astrian community as also those who had come from Bombay, Poona, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Coonoor and even Dubai to witness the ceremony. Considered the ultimate in the religious rituals of Zoroastrianism, the nirangdin kriya is said to benefit and bless not only the person in whose name it is performed but the hallowed precincts of the agiary in which it takes place and all the congregation who absorb the vibrations created by it.

The nirangdin which culminated on March 13, 1999 in Nagpur was in memory of the late Khushroo Edulji Doongaji, past president of the Nagpur Parsi Gymkhana. It was made possible through the piety and generosity of his wife Naju, sons Jehangir and Shiraz, and daughter Shernaz Sethna. The holding of the kriya is a daunting task for the sheer money and logistics involved and an even greater factor which is the paucity of priests with the scholarship and stamina required to undergo 18 rigorous days of prayer and ritual.

While the rituals leading to the nirangdin lasted 18 days, the planning of it started 180 days earlier. A *paavi* (furrow) had to be made by chipping the recently laid marble floor of the agiary. Kitchens and quarters had to be made ready for the priests. The most daunting task was bringing the sacred *varasiji* (albino bull) from Nargol.

A car driven by Shahrugh Cassad and Hoshi Karbhari went to Bombay to bring back Ervads Adil Bhesania, Dinyar Vazifdar and Godrej Panthaki along with the *alat* (nirangdin requisites). Ervad Aspandiar Dadachanji who was once the popular panthaky of the Nagpur agiary flew in the next day. In the meanwhile, a white milk-yielding goat and four other uncastrated bulls had been found from in and around Nagpur.



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Priests who participated in the jashan with members of the Doongaji family at whose behest the nirangdin was performed; Tester (right) was brought from Nargol

On February 24, Dadachanji and Bhesania had the *nahn* (bath) and went into nine days' retreat during which time they make no physical contact with anyone, sleep on the hard ground and do not permit their outer body to contact water. The entire nine days are meant to be spent in prayer, meditation and religious discourse to cleanse the soul.

Thereafter both priests had another purifying bath, donned new clothes and started eight days of *ijashne* prayers within the *paavi* when the area is consecrated, as also the *hoama* or water and the utensils in which the *gaomez* or bull's urine would be collected during the final nirangdin ritual. Essential in the *ijashne* ceremony is *jeevam* or goat's milk, pomegranate leaves and fronds of the date palm, all symbolic of fertility and prosperity.

The eagerly awaited *varasiji* arrived by truck on March 8. It had taken a great deal of patience and perseverance on the part of Homi Acidwalla, his keeper, and Muraribhai, his personal driver to get the irritable *varasiji*, Tester, to alight from the truck.

The starlit hours of March 13, around 1 a.m. saw a surge of traditionally clad Parsis make their way to the agiary for the culmination of the nirangdin. The silence of the night, the sonorous sound of Dadachanji's prayers, the fragrance

of *sukhad* and *loban*, many days of people attending prayers and lectures by Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal and Khojeste Mistree combined to create the beautiful vibrations that reverberated within the agiary. Kotwal presided over the nirangdin prayers which went on for a marathon nine hours while the congregation came and went. The *gaomez*, mixed with that of the four other bulls, was now consecrated and could be used in the coming years for different religious rituals.

Soon after the completion of the nirangdin, at 10 a.m. a thanksgiving jashan was performed by 13 mobeds including Kotwal, the panthaky of the Nagpur agiary Ervad Bamansha Vazifdar, Ervad Hormuzdiar Pavri and others.

The nirangdin kriya was not without its detractors who said that the money and time could have been more effectively utilized to help deserving Parsis. But it needs to be remembered that man does not live by bread alone, the individual and collective spirituality of our community needs sustenance too. The 18 days of prayer and piety, dialog and debate led to a much needed religious

awakening.

In the course of the following month the community in Nagpur has been coming together on different occasions. To celebrate Navroz they had a talent contest followed by a contributory dinner at the Dharamshala when the traditional falooda was greatly relished. On the *Avan mah* parav on March 29 they had a jashan followed by humbandagi on the verandah of the agiary overlooking Gandhi Sagar Lake after which some of the Zoroastrians went to offer *dar ni poris*, flowers and coconuts to the waters of the Lake in obeisance to *Avan Yazad*.

More than 40 people lined up in queue for the Hepatitis-B vaccine which was administered by Dr Feroze Bharda on April 11. Three doses of Hepatitis-B give effective protection against the disease which primarily affects the liver and can be fatal. Accepting Nergish Desai's invitation, Bharda agreed to administer the injections. Making it a community project brought down the price through simple economy of scale to Rs 250 per person per dose whilst providing an occasion to share camaraderie. To spice up the otherwise mundane business

of queuing up for injections, tasty kebabs were on sale! Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar



Musical memories

Performing in Bombay after a spell of 45 years, Vistasp Balsara enthralled the audience with his command of different musical instruments at the Youths' Own Union (YOU) program conducted on the night of February 6, 1999. This being the golden jubilee show of YOU-On-Parade and YOU Music Circle (Balsara was the founder of the YOU Music Circle), the 77-year-old Indian classical music maestro was motivated to make the trip from Calcutta with his talented troupe to present "Musical Memories of 20th Century."

The music director for 30 Bengali, five Hindi, four Nepalese and two Oriya films, Balsara, who has been playing the harmonium since the age of six and by the age of 16 was playing the piano for the film industry, demonstrated his prowess at these two instruments as also the bugle, clarinet and mellophone, mentions a press release. For 16 years he was associated with the Bombay film industry as musician, arranger, as-



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Balsara (at the mike) with (from left) Jal Tata, Kalyanji, Coomie Tata and Chaina
Photo: C. C. Gandevia

sistant and music director and thereafter for 40 years with the Bengal film industry. Even today he continues to work for films, Doordarshan, All India Radio and stage programs, entertaining his listeners and educating particularly the amateurs, adds the write-up. Through his experimentation with music, presenting Indian classical on the piano, he has carved a niche for himself. In his book, *Western Chords in Indian Ragas*, he explained the possibility of using chords without disturbing a raga.

Among those who added charm to Balsara's performance in Bombay were the musicians accompanying him from Calcutta, some of whom were second generation artistes, their fathers too having shared the stage with Balsara. The presence of famous singers Nitin Mukesh and Mahendra Kapoor also took the audience by surprise especially since both of them revered Balsara like a legend in their introductory words before singing popular compositions under his direction. Music director Kalyanji recalled the time when during recordings, the absence of a singer was overlooked, but Balsara's absence meant the recording came to a halt. Well established tabla and bongo player Homi Mulla had also taken time off his busy schedule to accompany Balsara. The experimental number composed specially for the golden jubilee event and sung by Farzana Indorewala, the niece of the late Dhannawaz Indorewala, was well received by the audience too.

The YOU, which has completed 54 years of existence, "is perhaps the only Parsi organization which has some activity or the other every week during the entire year," pointed out its president Jal Tata in his remarks in the souvenir brought out on the occasion. Lectures by prominent speakers on religious,

economic and cultural topics, debates, elocution competitions, symposia, film shows, whist drive, etc have been some of their regular activities undertaken since their early days under the guidance of the late Burjorji Bharucha and the late Jal Heerjibehedin, editor of *Kaiser-E-Hind*. Among the managing committee members of YOU for the year 1998-1999 are member-in-charge You-On-Parade Jehangir Chaina, member-in-charge YOU Music Circle Aloo Shroff, both of whom were felicitated for their 45 years of service to the organization. The other members are Aban Minbattiwala, Adi Mulla, Rati Peer, Tehmina Peer, Adi Tavadia, Rati Nilgiriwala and Banoo Dudha.

Flying honors

For distinguished service of a high order Air Vice Marshal Manek Boman-shaw Madon was conferred the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal by the President of India on January 26, 1999, notes a press release issued by Capt Homi Dandiwalla, president of The Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman.

Presently on his second posting in Allahabad as senior officer-administration, central air command headquarters of the Indian Air Force, 54-year-old Madon and his wife Yasmin are very active members of the Allahabad Anjuman, mentions Dandiwalla.

With 5,000 hours of flying to his credit Madon is also the recipient of the Vayu Sena Medal from the President of India for displaying courage in the face of enemy in 1971 and the Bar in 1985 for distinguished service and successful command of a fighter squadron, according to the write-up.

Madon was commissioned in the Indian Air Force as a pilot in the fighter



Madon: displaying courage

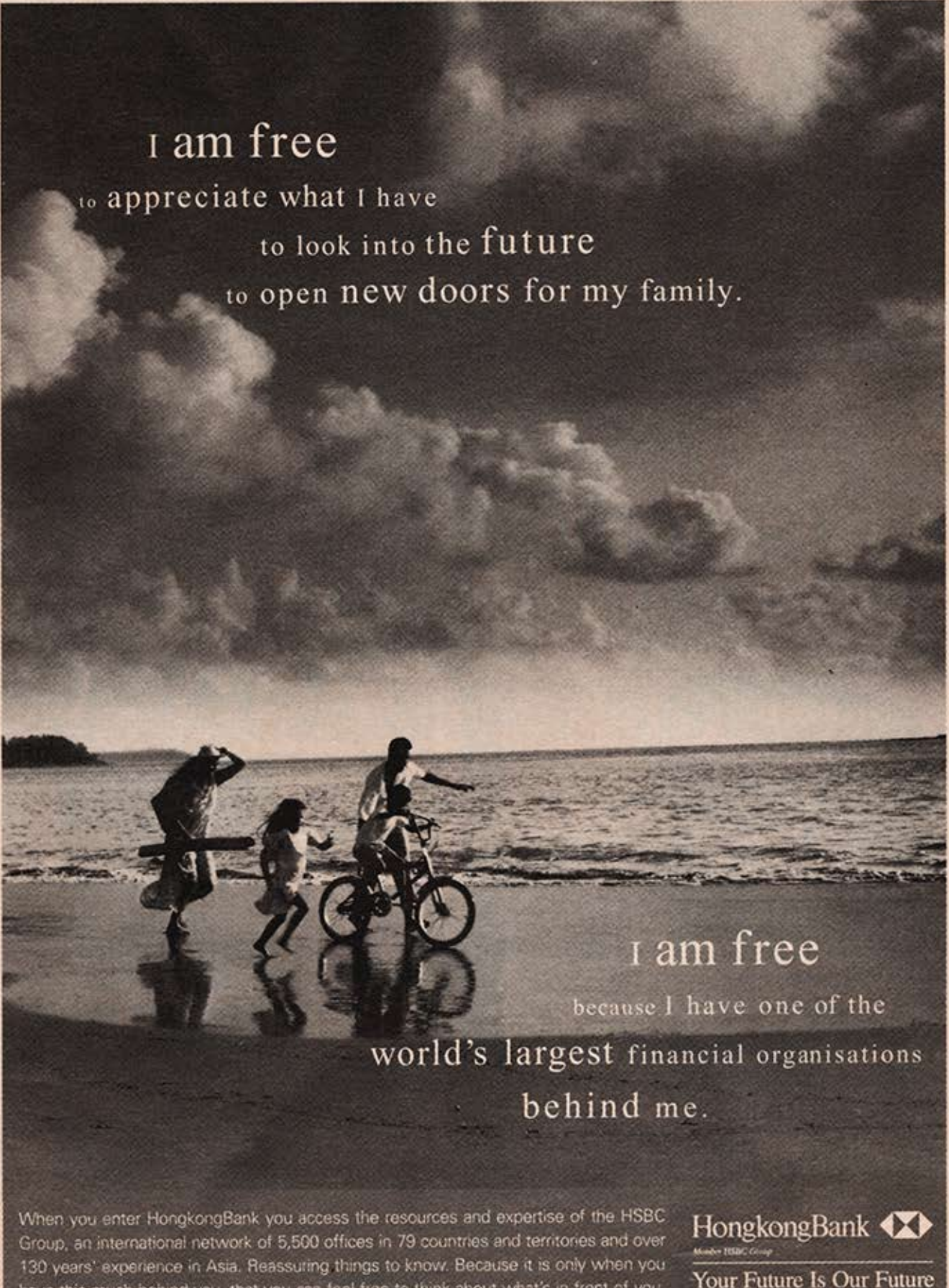
stream and has since held a number of coveted field, instructional and staff appointments. He is a graduate from the Osmania University as also the College of Defence Management, Hyderabad, the National Defence College, New Delhi, and the Administrative Staff College of India. His experience includes two years of deputation to a foreign country and participation in the Indo-Pakistan conflicts of 1965 and 1971, notes his bio data.

Textile trainer

"Today's function is of special significance to me," declared Prof Rustam K. Mody when delivering his valedictory address at a function on March 19, 1999 held under the joint auspices of the VJTI (former Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute since renamed Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute) and the VJTI Textile Past Students Association to commemorate the golden jubilee of the introduction of their textile degree program. Having been principal and secretary of the VJTI for a record 15 years (1959-74), the only Zoroastrian to hold the post of principal in the 112-year history of the Institute, and also serving as head of its textile department for 25 years, 80-year-old Mody announced that he had completed 50 years of service to the cause of technical cum textile education in India. Teaching and developing facilities for higher textile studies, fostering the spirit of enquiry through development of scientific research and methodology, exposure to textile production, planning, layout, organization and costing have been of prime concern to him, noted Mody, whilst commending the dedication and commitment of scholarship and academic excellence by generations of the VJTI textile teaching staff and students.

Credit for VJTI's establishment and growth in its formative years should go to several stalwarts of the Parsi community, stated Mody in his note on the Institute. He lauded the "vision and foresight and the spirit of philanthropy and secularism which characterized the driving force and motivation of the likes of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, president of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and vice chancellor of the Bombay University who was on the board of management of VJTI for 18 years," Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, first baronet, Sir Dinshaw Petit and Sir Dinshaw Vachha who all rendered yeoman service.

Mody claims he was drawn in the



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direction of textiles by his father's elder brother Sir Homi Mody, a doyen amongst the chairmen of the Bombay Millowners' Association, whom he describes as "a close and caring relative." His father was Lt Commander Dr Kai-khushroo Mody and his mother Meherbai was the niece of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. After completing his matriculation from Bombay's St Xavier's School, Mody proceeded for higher studies to the Victoria University of Manchester, UK from where he obtained his BSc Tech and MSc Tech in textile industries.



Mody: teaching and developing facilities

Besides his involvement with the VJTI, this alumnus of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology had served as chairman of the All India Board of Studies in Textile Technology. Mody was additionally member of the senate, academic council and dean of the Bombay University's faculty of technology for different terms, notes his curriculum vitae. He was also associated with the universities of Madras, Baroda, IIT Delhi, the Birla Institute of Technology...where he was referee, paper setter and examiner. At the Universities of Leeds and Bradford too he has served as visiting professor and senior Fellow. As honorary adviser, state and central ministry of education and sports, and as member of the Khadi and Cottage Industries Commission, Mody had served the government of India for a long term, according to the press release. Presently Mody is director and chief executive officer of the Patuck Polytechnic Trust where he has been trustee since 1958.

Ill-fated end

Yet another aged Parsi lady, the third since February 1999, met an ill-fated end at her residence at Diamond Court on Napean Sea Road. Seventy-five-year-old Mehroo Sanga's murder came to light on the evening of Monday, April 12, 1999. Her neighbor, Sheroo Keshwala, concerned that there was no response to the repeated ringing of the doorbell and telephone, accessed the flat with the duplicate key which had

been in her possession for years, according to a news report in *The Indian Express* of April 14.

Sanga's body lay in the kitchen, with a pool of coagulated blood in the neck region. As per *The Times of India* report of the same day, the assailant had strangled her with a nylon rope before slitting the neck with a kitchen knife. The cupboard had been ransacked.

Two days later came the news that the Malabar Hill police had nabbed 18-year-old Umesh Mandal who had been in Sanga's employment for barely 24 hours. He is reported to have told the police that he strangled Sanga because she abused him for breaking a dish during a party she had hosted on Saturday evening. Valuables, mostly silver crockery, stashed in a large green Samsonite suitcase were recovered from him, stated the *Express Newslines* of April 16.

Formerly a public relations officer with the Bank of India, Sanga had retained her joie de vivre. Weekend parties were regular at her residence just as visiting the Cricket Club of India was an established Sunday ritual, one of her neighbors was quoted in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of April 15. Following her husband's demise Sanga had been living alone in her 10th storey apartment as her only daughter Shenaz Rumi Shroff stayed at Dadar with her husband.

Remarking on Sanga's murder, Shobha Dé commented in her column *Savoir Faire* in the *Sunday Mid-Day* of April 18, "I have lost count of the number of aged Parsi victims who have suffered a similar fate. It saddens and amazes me that a community that is as small, as close-knit and as prosperous, is somehow helpless when it comes to protecting its own...What can we do to save these vulnerable lives? Most times it's an 'internal' crime, committed by domestics and these days, increasingly by watchmen. The police say, we ourselves open the doors to criminals without verifying their antecedents. But the elderly are often at the mercy of hired help, without whom their physical existence becomes untenable. What happens if a 'faithful' servant suddenly quits? Chances are you grab the first person who rings the doorbell... 'After all it's such a relief,' you tell yourself. 'I'll worry about verifications later.' Often, that's too late."

Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi

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World Congress 2000

"Creating a blueprint for the next 100 years" is one of the many ambitious targets of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (WZC) as per version one of the Program Development Guide e-mailed to *Parsiana* by Congress co-chair Homi Davier.

The five-day Congress, to be held at the J. W. Marriott Hotel in Houston, USA, officially begins on December 28, 2000 and ends on January 1, 2001. Festivities however are due to be kicked off on December 25, 2000 which will witness world Zarathushti sports and a general swinging into the theme of the Congress — "A Zarathushti Odyssey 2000."

Starting with a jashan performed by the older generation of mobeds at 8.30 a.m. the theme for day one is "Welcoming the Zarathushti World." The opening ceremony is due to last from 10.30 to noon when they are hoping to have someone of the caliber of United Nations secretary general Kofi Annan or former US president George Bush as chief guest. After lunch is a Zarathushti convivium/mela/fair.

The theme for the second day is a recapitulation of the first and second millennia of the Zarathushti world. After about a one-and-a-half-hour plenary session followed by a half-hour break, the congregation is expected to split into eight parallel sessions. The subject of each session is yet to be spelt out but arguably they will deal with the day's theme. After lunch two batches of parallel sessions — eight and 10, separated by a half-hour break would take the Congress working day to 5 p.m.

Day three of the Congress, December 30, has the overriding theme of "anchoring religion in a Zarathushti's life" while day four deals with "preparing for the third millennium" and is followed by similar numbers of parallel sessions throughout both days. On the last day the "passing of the torch" to the younger generation is followed by a jashan conducted by the second generation mobeds and the closing ceremony.

Lunch each day is a special occasion, one of the five being covered by the registration fees, the last being borne by the host anjuman and the other three being ticketed events which entail addi-

tional cost.

Getting to know you is the lunch theme on the first day with the focus on overseas guests. On the second day the focus is on Zarathushti women through the ages which is a ticketed event. Awards and honors follow at lunchtime on day three with international celebrities in the community picked to receive communal appreciation for their achievements as also winners of the World Zarathushti Sports which precede the Congress. Lunch on day four, December 31 is envisaged as a splitting of the gathering into professional interest groups like mobeds, educationists, the business community, etc.

Similar to the gala lunches are two dinner specials on the first two days: the Zarathushti meets Zarathushti bonhomie climaxed with a musical extravaganza and dinner. The second night the dinner is preceded by a country and western musical review which is billed as the "Go Texan Night." Both these dinners are included in the cost of the registration. After a fallow Saturday night the December 31, 2000 event is billed as the Millennium Gala Ball and involves the buying of tickets separately.

The mission statement of A Zarathushti Odyssey 2000 "is to learn about our religion, heritage and culture, and to celebrate together as we launch our Zarathushti odyssey into the new millennium." The guiding philosophy of the WZC 2000 executive envisages an "immersion on each day on five programmatic themes namely, welcoming the Zarathushti world; culture and history through the millennia; anchoring religion in a Zarathushti's life; preparing for the third millennium; passing the torch to the next generation..."

The executive now comprises co-chairs Dolly Dastoor and Homi Davier, FEZANA (Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America) president Framroze Patel, FEZANA Congress liaison Jamshed Mistry and co-vice chairs Sarosh Manekshaw and Farrokh Mistree who are the overall program coordinators. Also on the committee is Yasmin Pavri who is the Zoroastrian Association of Houston's (ZAH) president's nominee on the board and WZC 2000 treasurer Sarosh Collector. The committee has also programmed

pre and post Congress tours in the neighborhood of Houston for international participants.

A steering committee consists of the chairs of the various committees, viz Rohinton Rivetna for international relations; Cyrus Mehta as general counsel; Yasmin Ghadiali for fund-raising; Dinshaw Joshi for awards; program track leaders Kaemerz Dotiwala and Pallan Ichaporla; international advisor Khojeste Mistree; Fereshteh Khatibi and Gordafriid Aresh for entertainment; Katie Irani in charge of medical care; Aban Rustomji and Roshan Rivetna for public relations; Roshan Sethna and Pervin Sagar in charge of operations; hospitality, Rustom Engineer and Dariush Vafadari; sports, Rustom Khosravi and Niaz Kasravi; and secretaries Arnavaz Sethna and Behroze Daruwalla.

The opening "getting to know you" envisages an exchange of gifts and short talks on happenings in the various communities while the convivium is a curtain raiser on a variety of exhibits and table top displays, the chief among which is a unity quilt composed of the logos of Zarathushti organizations around the world, that is currently being crafted by Khurshid Bamboat in England under the supervision of Dastoor. A major draw is expected to be the legacy projects which are scheduled to include a time capsule, the establishment of the International Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, the world body, etc. Other attractions are skits and panel discussions on youth related issues like education, marriage and parenting. An international Zarathushti orchestra being mobilized by Cyrus Mehta and Piroozi Cooper is of major interest. The Atash Dance Group of Vancouver is choreographing an event. A number of books are expected to be launched including a book co-edited by Pheroza Godrej and Firoza Punthakey-Mistree, *Zoroastrianism — Its Religion, History and Culture*, and Farrokh Mistree's *A Zarathushti's Guide to the Gathas*. At work on a *World Zarathushti Directory* and on Zarathushti demography is New York's Noshir Langrana. Other highlights may include choir on Gatha by Meher Jansen Madan, Gujarati garbas courtesy Homi Dhalla, president of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, and other videos/films on and



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about the community.

One of the objectives is to create an atmosphere in the hotel reminiscent of Zarathushti mohallas, presumably with tableaux of a village in Yazd, the Sanjan landfall, arrivals in New York/Toronto, a map of the world showing concentrations of Zarathushti populations, etc. A video docudrama on our Parsi heroes is also said to be underway. Simultaneous events may include a Zarathushti field service program and jashans around the world.

While a bureaucratic setup is already functioning with a strict code of ethics as per the lines of the development program with monthly updates and the introduction of new themes and proposals up to January 2000, no names of speakers or other participants have yet been announced. The Congress has its own website: <http://www.fezana.org/WZC2000>.

At the J. W. Marriott Hotel, the organizers have obtained a concessional room rate for delegates at \$ 79 a night with sharing of up to four persons per room. Through their various fund raisers, aimed at raising \$ 600,000 the organizers also hope to keep the registration costs low but these have not been announced in the current literature.

The WZC 2000 executive, mandated by FEZANA and ZAH to host the Congress has the overall finance, organization and program responsibility. The program coordinators function at their request to coordinate the track chairs who are involved in the development, management and implementation of the various events. Each track has its own team referred to as task force. The team members have been appointed in consultation with the program coordinators. The responsibilities and duties at all levels have been spelt out in substantial detail as also the program of "milestones" by which dates certain events are expected to fall into the pattern e.g. May 31, 1999 is the cutoff date for the first review of the opening and closing ceremonies, of the plenary speakers, luncheons, dinners, international participation and "macro program updated based on input from the tracks and placed on internal web." At each milestone the calendar of events is expected to be updated. The monthly meetings which began in February 1999 will continue until December 31, 2000 when "we have welcomed the world."

Conflict on the Internet

Our habitually controverting community has created its first open furor on the Internet, confounding its American operators. Currently at the receiving end is Mehrdad Khosraviani, an engineer in the Sun Computer Corporation who had designed and floated the Zoroastrian Mailing List (whose Internet address was zoroastrians@least.eng.sun.com). The address facilitated an exchange of views from the full spectrum of Zoroastrian theological concepts in a spirit of "agreed to disagree" from the extremely radical to the conservative for about six years, according to an e-mail missive from Yezdi Rustomji of Houston, USA.

The main antagonist in the affair is Porus Havewalla of Sydney, Australia who runs his own Traditional Zarathushthri Mailing List (TZML) on the Internet. He has been aided by Zenobia Patel who calls herself a "distressed Zoroastrian lady from India" and is a member of Havewalla's mailing list. The Sun Corporation has asked Khosraviani to take the List off the Internet.

Rustomji's anger is centered on the fact that while Khosraviani allowed all shades of opinion on the Zoroastrian net including Havewalla's ultra conservative viewpoint, Havewalla's TZML is a restricted site where only the traditionalists can have their say. Rustomji portends Havewalla as "the mulla among Zarathushtris," and has reproduced Havewalla's letter to the Sun Corporation which almost reads like a litany.

Addressed to Sun Microcomputers' public relations officer Loraine Golden, Havewalla begins by noting "formal protest on behalf of 559 of my coreligionists and 30 ladies in two separate signed petitions against a mailing list named after our ancient religion of Zoroastrianism, started on one of your company computers by Mr Mehrdad K, one of your Sun engineers in the USA. The mailing list is called the 'Zoroastrians mailing list' and the Internet address is zoroastrians@least.eng.sun.com where 'Zoroastrians' stands for our religion, 'eng' stands for Engineering, and 'sun.com' stands for your company."

"Mehrdad's 'Zoroastrians' mailing list carries 750+ members and has been in operation on your company computer for over six years. During that

time, it has been used as a medium of attack on our ancient religion, Zoroastrianism, one of the world's earliest and loftiest religions. Such attacks have seriously upset the religious feelings of a large number of Zoroastrians who are resident in India, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, England, and the USA itself."

Havewalla's litany of Khosraviani's misdemeanors claims that Ali Jafarey (the scholar founder of the Los Angeles based Zarathushthrian Assembly) has had access to the List. Havewalla has alleged that Jafarey made irreverent comments on Meher Yazad, the *Hormuzd Yasht* and the *Vendidad*. He has also alleged that there have been references to prostitutes in fire-temples in ancient times and that a Zoroastrian homosexual club has been formed on the Zoroastrian Mailing List.

Havewalla quotes a petition from Bombay "signed by more than 30 Parsi Zoroastrians... 'We Parsi Zoroastrian ladies of Bandra, feel after reading your article in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* of October 8 about the Jewish lady and her Muslim mentor, desecrating our holy *Vendidad*. It is blasphemy and we condemn such utterances.'

"We the most peace loving and most venerated community are deeply hurt and grieved by such utterances."

"Before interfering in other religions, to look into their own faith and be guided rightly is our advice to them."

Another petition of protest reads: "As religious Parsi-Irani Zoroastrians from Bombay, we the undersigned protest the heretical views and blasphemous writings often to be found on the Internet's Zoroastrian Mailing List. Some misguided Zoroastrians and meddling outsiders roam unchecked on this Mailing List and slander our lofty prayers, scriptures, principles and practises through ignorance, self interest or design."

"Almost nothing that is sacred to us, including our holy fires and temples, has been spared from cheap attack and ridicule. Even the hallowed name of our Prophet has been desecrated for the endorsement of homosexuality, lesbianism and bisexuality. If such sacrilegious continue, this Mailing List should be closed down or at least the noble term 'Zoroastrian' should be struck out from its name."

"As the Internet becomes more disciplined, and controlled, we may have

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to take all this up with the authorities concerned. Insulting a great living religion and wounding the feelings of its thousands of faithful followers worldwide is a very grave matter indeed." Havewalla also quotes the covering letter addressed to him: "We, the undersigned, very much appreciate the single-handed crusade you have been carrying on since some time past against the vicious and blasphemous attacks being made against our exalted daena and its principles and practises on the Internet's Zoroastrian Mailing List by some of our misguided coreligionists and meddling outsiders residing in the western countries led by the self-styled 'Ratu!'"

Further down the line Havewalla notes: "Fellow Zarathushtris, this is a tremendous demonstration of solidarity by the Parsi/Irani/Zarathushtris of Bombay, who have stood up as one for the religion. I humbly bow my head to these people, on whose shoulders the religion is supported. While there are men and women such as these in our motherland India, with so much faith and pride in their religion, our religion will successfully oppose and defeat all that modern liberalism has to throw against it. This is the stock of the Kayani Kings — and love for our religion beats in our breasts, and will never die down, passing on to our sons and daughters down the ages."

"I salute these people, who have dared to stand up to the forces of moneyed liberalism afoot in the West, for the sake of their precious mother — the Mazdayasni Zarathushtri daena. I salute these stalwarts. Let their voice make the religion-baiting liberals tremble in their ivory towers, for it is the voice of Righteousness."

What seemed to clinch the matter where the Sun Corporation was concerned is said to be a letter addressed by Patel to the chief executive officer of Sun Microsystems:

"I write to you, because in spite of us having repeatedly requested the closure of the notorious mailing list maintained by your employee Mr Mehrdad Khosraviani, our request has gone unheeded. Sir, our religion has been sufficiently abused and our priests verbally attacked by non-Zoroastrians who play an active role on that Mailing List. I have also been victimized by their harassment. I am certain your company which is held in high esteem and has a market name will never support unsociable antics of

its employees. As a respectable lady, I request you to step forward and ensure this mailing list is shut at the earliest. Our plea is genuine as you will only understand it after reading the thrash that has been flying around there."

Patel's letter has three self-righteous postscripts: "There is only one path — righteousness! All other paths are false! Follow the path of righteousness only!"

Writing from California Mehran Sephri, secretary of the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) notes, "The emotions, anger and sorrow can wait, but we need to find a solution not to let our alias (the composite address of a number of individuals) expire, for the sake of youth. Letting this communication medium go down is like letting an agiary — atash behram die."

"As the new home from Vohuman.org may be weeks away, knowing Mr Varza is in Iran now, a few of us are working on a temporary home for a replica of Mehrdad's alias for the interim."

Kurosh Kamkar (from kamkar@pacbell.net) remarks of Havewalla: "He seems to think he has a mission which is not clear to me. I tried to see where he is coming from when I first read him (a few years back). Somehow it never aligned with my take on Zarthusht teachings. He certainly has convinced a few followers (can we verify that?); I think we should consult with a few mobeds first; because he feels he is close to the teachings we need to do our homework and verify that. He seems to have a lot of time and resources on his hand and certainly a mission which makes for a very powerful person."

"I think it is an excellent idea to move the alias to Vohuman's site. It may remedy the situation for long to come. Also consider that he may have had something against Mehrdad K. and this was the last of him. Or we can choose to continue clearing our name and start a big mess in the western world since he has no shame and sense of name of Zarthusht and its place in the world... Has anyone ever met this person? Talked to him or any of his followers?"

In her e-mail to Khosraviani former FEZANA president Dolly Dastoor writes, "It was (with) great sorrow that I learnt of the new home for the Alias, and the sorrow got deeper when I read your second letter giving the reason why. However this should not take away the fact that what a super job you

have done since 1988 in bringing the Zarathushti community in North America and later the world in touch with each other."

"Through the alias you have sensitized us to each other's views and ideologies, you have helped us to reach out to the community, in good times and in times of need, you have helped us to realize the potential of the community, you have helped bring young couples together which have resulted in marriages."

"Mehrdad, you opened up a whole new world for Zarathushtis via the alias and you did it with grace and humility. The community applauds you for this."

"Yes the alias will go on, in another form, a changed form, an evolved form, as all life must go on. But we have you to thank for being the catalyst to bring this alias to life in the first place."

In an e-mail from Tehran, Jamshid Varza notes: "During the month of February 1999 I had several conversations with Mehrdad and agreed that Vohuman.org will become the new home... Vohu Team and Mehrdad agreed to continue with Mehrdad's tradition of openness and fairness for all..."

"I hired a new ISP (Internet service provider) which offered extensive services needed for our expansion — programmability, server side scripting, performance enhancement tools and database nodes were all acquired Vohuman.org has ample financial sponsorship and development tools to deliver on its promises. The development efforts started right after. Our plan was to enter a test period by April 30 and full operation by May 30. We are on schedule."

"Per my communication with Mehrdad, I wrote a letter to Sun (via Mehrdad) and explained our efforts and the schedule. I also explained our full assumption of responsibilities during the transition period. It all looked fine till Zenobia's letter showed up."

He also writes of his visits and is excited with some historical material he has unearthed.

While negotiations with Vohuman.org are still underway, Khosraviani informed *Parsiana* that the Zoroastrian Alias has been temporarily moved to listbot.com. Those interested in being part of it may contact zoroastrians.subscribe@listbot.com.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

More power to the people

The trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet propose reforms in the archaic electoral scheme

Taking a leaf from the British House of Lords, six of the seven trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) are considering reducing the voting strength of the donors as versus the elected representatives.

Addressing a gathering of around 60 selected invitees brainstorming the archaic election scheme laid down by the Bombay High Court in 1909, BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder spoke about "a need for change." Rather than be asked to call a meeting, the trustees decided "to call for one ourselves."

Guzder told the gathering at the Indian Merchants Chamber's Walchand Hirachand Hall on April 22, 1999 that there was a section of the community that was in favor of adult franchise and others who wanted less drastic changes. As the Anjuman Committee (AC) elections were to be held in March 2000, this was the "right time to debate the reforms," said Guzder.

The AC, which consists of an equal number of donors and elected representatives, elects trustees to the BPP board as and when vacancies arise. Since 1909 several amendments have been made to the scheme but the end result has been an unwieldy AC consisting of around 1,600 members, around half of whom show up to vote at an election of a trustee.

"Twenty years ago some of us got together to look at the scheme," stated BPP trustee Mino Shroff. "I was not even a voter" at the time. Only around 7,000 of the 40,000 eligible members of the community had registered. The efforts of the CER (which then stood for the Committee for Electoral Rights and subsequently for the Committee for Economic Revival) coupled with those of the CUZ (Committee of United Zoroastrians) pushed up the registration figures to 16,500, noted Shroff. Since then the number of registered voters has increased to 19,600, an increase of around 3,000 in the last 19 years!

With around 1,038 voters on the

donors' list (the F Register) and an equal number to be elected in March 2000 from the E Register, the AC numbers would swell to around 2,100, said Shroff. This means a voter would have to vote for around 1,050 elected representatives!

Voter turnout at trusteeship elections varies from 22 percent as when Shroff contested for his second term to around 50 to 70 percent in the more keenly contested elections. "The participation has not been what is required," moaned Shroff. The present scheme allows for a seven-year term for trustees with no limit on the number of terms they can serve or the age of the candidates. "There must be some upper limit," said Shroff, "we must apply a certain ceiling on ourselves... 75 appears to be a right kind of age... a person should be effective within a time span... serve your time and go."

BPP trustee Dadi Engineer, along with erstwhile BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga, had been part of a Punchayet election reform committee in the late 1970s when, disillusioned with the obstinacy of the then autocratic president of the BPP B. K. Boman-Behram, he had formed the CER. Engineer stated the salient features of the present scheme and the proposed amendments. Any Parsi Zoroastrian male or female over the age of 21 has to give five rupees and register as a voter. Any registered voter of 30 years of age and above whose nomination form is signed by two other voters can stand for election to the AC. Any person who gives a donation of Rs 15,000 or more is entitled to be registered on the donors' list of the AC and can vote directly for a trustee depending on when he or she gave the donation and the time lapse till the next election. This clause was inserted in the scheme to prevent any candidate packing the donors' register and upsetting the parity between the donors and the elected representatives. The present scheme "recognizes parity," explained Engineer.

Engineer noted that one of the six trustees Rustom Tirandaz firmly believed that trustees should be elected by universal adult franchise. Engineer reminded the audience that they were talking about election to a trust and that a Bombay High Court Judge H. Suresh had noted when the scheme was put before him for amendment in 1991 that universal franchise "may not be a suitable" approach for a trust.

Six of the seven trustees were inclined to agree with the judge, said Engineer. "Donors are essential to a trust... the life of a trust depends on donations," the six trustees believed. They were therefore not in favor of eliminating donors from the AC. They preferred instead giving weightage to the elected members over the donors in the ratio of one to two. Thus the elected representatives would have double the number of votes compared to the donors. Engineer noted that even in the British Parliament steps were being initiated to reduce the voting strength of hereditary seats.

"It's not a perfect solution to all problems," admitted Engineer. He foresaw administrative problems in implementing the reforms. Either the AC would have to be expanded to 3,000 or the donors would have to elect from amongst themselves a certain number and then the elected representatives would be double that number.

The six trustees also favored restricting the number of terms a trustee can serve to three and putting an upper age limit of 75. If a trustee were to cross the age of 75 once in office he or she could serve out his/her term but would not be eligible to seek reelection.

Engineer said the trustees wanted to gauge the thoughts of "a cross section of the leading members of the community... a think tank," so to speak. The gathering therefore had to state their preference for one of the following three options: leaving the scheme as it is, universal adult franchise or the sys-

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TELCO's indigenous Indica

TELCO received none of the protection HM (Hindustan Motors) and PAL (Premier Automobiles Limited) enjoyed in their early days, nor the favors and preferential treatment Maruti was earlier privy to. And with the economy in a slump and TELCO's bread-and-butter commercial vehicle segment in the doldrums, it has been a tough ride for the company. To come out with the Indica in these conditions is a remarkable achievement and incredibly gutsy," wrote Sorabjee in his editorial.

With a 98 percent indigenous component, only the styling of the car has been done at the design studio I.D.E.A in Italy, considered to be the Mecca of automobile designing. "I am not for a moment trying to tell you that everything is fine," Tata is reported to have told the magazine. "Until you enter the market you do not know what problems you will face."

TCI's tally

Achieving the distinction for a record 13th time, Travel Corporation (India) Ltd (TCI) has won the Government of India national tourism award for "excellence in the travel industry" and for maximum foreign exchange earnings in category I for '97-'98, states a press release. Accepting the award from India's Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on January 25, '99, TCI director Jehangir Katgara said: "Winning the national tourism award year after year makes TCI the undisputed leader in the tourism industry in India."

With 27 offices in India and 11 sales



India's first indigenously built car at the end of December 1998, with the first Indicas rolling out of the factory in February. The 1.4 litre engine, five-door hatchback, competitively priced at Rs 2,63,300 (ex showroom Bombay) for the petrol model, Rs 2,90,400 for the standard diesel, Rs 3,00,800 for the diesel with air conditioning and Rs 3,99,800 for the fully-loaded diesel, has triggered off a price war, with market leader Maruti Suzuki slashing prices for the first time in its 15-year history, reports *Auto India* (January 1999).

"We musn't forget that the Indica was developed in an environment that has been traditionally hostile to the auto industry... Passenger car makers in India have been kicked, beaten and strangled by the policy makers..."

Creating a car

"TELCO (Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company Limited) would not have undertaken this if I did not have the confidence that we could do it... We spurned a lot of suitors for joint ventures and I'm the one who put our name on the line..." TELCO chairman Ratan Tata told Hormazd Sorabjee, editor of *Auto India* at the TELCO guest house in Poona during a press preview of Tata's new Indica, reports *Business India* (December 28, '98 — January 10, '99). The driving force behind the Rs 1,700 crore project, Tata had promised the Indian people a small car that would be the size of a Maruti Zen, have the internal dimensions of an Ambassador and the price of a Maruti 800 (sub three lakh rupees).

Traversing a bumpy road from the drawing board to the production line in a scant 31 months, TELCO launched

Vajpayee (second from left) presenting award to Katgara





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At the inauguration: (from left) Mantri, S. Doongaji, Irani and J. Doongaji

offices abroad, the privately-owned TCI handles the tour arrangements in India for over 1,000 tour operators worldwide. It is also the GSA (general sales agent) for Eurail, Greyhound, Amtrak, etc and is the preferred agent in India for Star Cruises, P&O, Carnival and Royal Olympic Cruises, states the release.

Emerging enterprise

Undeterred by day temperatures of 95°F, a large and enthusiastic gathering of invitees turned up for the inaugural of Handy Wires Private Limited at the hands of Dr Jamshed J. Irani, managing director of the Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO) in the morning of February 26, '99. Situated at the Uppalwadi Industrial Estate in Nagpur, Handy Wires is a sister concern of the already established Stewols and Company and Spick 'N Span Steelwools Private Limited owned and managed by the Doongaji brothers, Jehangir and Shiraz. After going through an exhaustive list of Irani's degrees and achievements, Monica Bhagwagar, who ably compered the func-

tion said, "As far as we are concerned, Dr Irani's best qualification is that he is a Nagpur boy, *aapro JJ!*"

In giving a brief background of the company that was started by their father Khushroo and uncle Byram, Jehangir Doongaji said that Stewols and Spick 'N Span Steelwools made steel wool and steel wool powder, used both in the domestic and industrial sector. He noted with pride that 90 percent of all automobiles manufactured in India used that product for making brake liners and brake pads. They also regularly export corrugated wire pins, used in developed countries for reinforcement of cement concrete.

Jehangir Doongaji stated that the new plant was a step in upstream diversification. With raw material purchased from TISCO, it would draw the wire to make the steel wool and also supply wire products to the wire nail and welding electrode industry. The new plant would enable them to meet the high quality of steel required at a reduced cost.

In his address, Irani said it was always a pleasure for him to visit his hometown, Nagpur. The pleasure was

enhanced when he saw the great strides in progress being made by young Parsis. Lauding the work of the Doongajis, Irani said, "When things prosper and go well, people call it luck. According to me, when good planning and hard work meet with opportunity, that is luck." Irani assured the Doongaji brothers of TISCO's full cooperation in material availability, quality and price. "We value old customers and long-term partnerships," said Irani, recalling the long supplier-purchaser relationship with Stewols and Company. Hemant Nerulkar, TISCO's general manager, marketing, asserted that there was a misconception among industry that TISCO was too big a company to be interested in smalltime purchasers. "This is not at all true. Even a customer buying 100 tons is our valued customer," he stressed. Ramesh Mantri, the chairman of Nagpur Nagrik Sahakari Bank said he was happy to be associated with this project and would be available in the future for any further.

The inauguration ceremony of Handy Wires began with a prayer by Ervad Hormuzdiar Pavri and Ervad Dinyar Vazifdar, invoking Ahura Mazda's blessings upon the new venture. Seated on stage with Irani was Naju Khushroo Doongaji, the mother whose sons and family had done her proud, not just in terms of the money they earned but more importantly by the respect and affection they commanded in the community and outside of it. A gesture that touched every person in the gathering that morning was the introduction and recognition of Ratan Salve, Jehangir and Shiraz Doongaji's old school-teacher. Unable now to see clearly, hear well or walk without assistance, Salve

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Jehangir R. J. Cama (right) chairman and managing director of Ahmedabad's Cama Hotels Limited with Anil Madhok, managing director of Sarovar Park Plaza Hotels and Resorts and Mehroo Cama, director of Cama Hotels, at a signing ceremony held at the Cama Hotel recently. The hotel, currently undergoing renovation and upgradation, is to be managed and marketed by the Sarovar Park Plaza Hotels (SPPH) as the Cama Park Plaza and will be the SPPH's 10th operational hotel.



The challenging port-folio

Developing India's first private container terminal has been a rewarding experience for Capt Jimmy Sarbh

Parinaz M. Gandhi

On the steps leading to the Gateway of India many passengers are patiently awaiting their boat ride. Down walks a well groomed gentleman, engrossed in conversation on his Mobile, makes his way through the boat which is alongside the steps, hands over his folders to the attendant on the speedboat, climbs into it himself, and already the eight-seater *NSICT 1*, reportedly the fastest in the Bombay harbor, is heading for the Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal (NSICT), India's first private terminal which is being developed at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNP) across the Bombay harbor.

"For the first time in India shipping lines will have a choice of calling at a privately managed terminal," announces Capt Jimmy Sarbh, NSICT managing director, happy that the US \$ 200 million project is moving over 15 months ahead of schedule, "a record for India," resulting in a cost saving of US \$ 35 million. The first 300 m quay length was opened for operation on March 21, 1999. The first mainline vessel *Sealand Motivator* was given a warm welcome on the night of April 4 although a fog in Dubai had delayed her much awaited arrival. Efforts are on to complete and commission the 600 m terminal by January 21, 2000 making NSICT "the most modern container terminal in South Asia and India with state of the art equipment for efficient cargo handling, computerized ship planning and yard management systems," notes a press release.

Sarbh, who is also the regional director, South Asia and Middle East of P&O Australia Ports, says he came from Australia to India "with the specific purpose of getting the tender floated for the JNP, working on the bid, winning it, constructing it and starting operations. Five major consortiums bid for it," he specifies. The P&O Ports-led consortium won the project in 1997. The other

joint venture partners were Konsortium Perkapalan Berhad (KPB), Malaysia and DBC Group, Bombay. P&O Ports' original equity holding of 49 percent is now increased to 95, mentions Sarbh, the balance three percent being held by Jakari Holdings Private Limited whose director Khushroo Byramjee is also a director of NSICT, and two percent by CMM Limited (a Mauritius based company). P&O Australia Ports is a division of The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, a British company founded in 1837 which has grown from its origins in shipping to become a major, diversified, international company with more than 250 subsidiaries involved in cruises and ferries, service businesses, construction and house building, property investment and development, employing over 45,000 people in some 40 countries, as per their company profile.

As managing director of NSICT 45-year-old Sarbh says it was Capt Richard Setchell, the ex-chairman and managing director of P&O Australia Ports, who convinced him to accept the Bombay posting while he was yet a project manager in Australia. It was Sarbh's responsibility as regional representative to start an office which he did with just one secretary and a peon at Nariman Point. Subsequently, as regional manager and then regional director, his assignments increased and so did his work force. Today he has more than 200 working at the NSICT terminal and around 15 at P&O Ports' Darabshaw House office at Ballard Estate, the regional headquarters for South Asia and Middle East. Are there Zoroastrians in his employment? "Where have any Parsis applied?" he counters. "They only want jobs at the Central Bank... Khushroo Kiash who is engineering manager was brought from Australia" on Sarbh's recommendation.

"India teaches you persistence and

patience," states Sarbh referring to his major breakthrough in convincing the port authorities to accept private operators who were viewed as competitors. For them, "it is a major paradigm shift; they have to slowly let go of their controls. It's difficult for them, so they make it difficult for you," he analyzes. "Dealing with the government is difficult," he puts it mildly. "It is a process which requires understanding issues culturally, putting them in the correct perspective and working through them. One has to be very focussed. You have to set yourself specific goals within time frames and achieve them."

While NSICT is viewed by Sarbh as his "first baby which I have worked on since its inception and will always be very dear to me," he has the additional onus of other projects too. P&O Ports has also won their second project in India: at the Kandla port in Gujarat which will be financed at a cost of US \$ 50 million on a build-operate-transfer (BOT) agreement. (At NSICT too the understanding is that after 30 years, when all the infrastructure is laid out such that the exchequer of the government would not be burdened, P&O will surrender their hold to the government.) In Madras, P&O Ports are waiting for the financial bids to be opened but are quite confident of winning the large project. They are one of the seven companies shortlisted by the Cochin Port Trust to operate the Rajiv Gandhi Container Terminal and develop the Vallarpadanam Load Center.

Outside India, in April they bid for the Jeddah Container Terminal in Saudi Arabia and were declared second. At Sri Lanka they are in the process of taking over the South Asia Gateway Terminal. They are also evaluating the privatization of container terminals in Mauritius and in Bunder Abbas in Iran. The Qasim International Container Ter-

continued on page 40



(Top) Quay cranes installed at the wharf Photo: Parinaz Gandhi

(Middle row) Sarbh (left)

Photo: Worldwide

At the opening of the first 300 m quay length Sarbh cuts the ribbon with D. Ravn and Kiash to his left

(Below) The Sarbh family (from left): Jimmy, Simoneil, Lalé and Jim

A seeker and a survivor

The success of the movie *Bombay Boys* has reinforced Kaizad Gustad's need to continue his quest

Shernaaz Engineer

Some irony this! Kaizad Gustad is himself not a 'Bombay boy.' Not a bona fide one at any rate, what with his varied jaunts across the world. And yet, he seems to have done fairly well making the eponymous *Bombay Boys*, a quirky, individualistic, unusual film that generated quite some interest when it was released in the Indian market a few months ago.

The film received mixed responses. The critics almost unanimously ripped it. The audiences, almost down to the last hip yuppie, unilaterally relished it. Either way, reactions to the film were extreme.

Much of the same can be said for its maker. Gustad is regarded by some as a major new talent, by others as a madcap maverick.

Those who root for him do so in the belief that he has what it takes to translate his wildest dreams into fruition, and since this takes quite some doing, his vision, gumption and grit are unarguably admirable. But those who ridicule him assert that he is quite mediocre, really, so what's the fuss about anyway?

I belong to neither camp. When I went to meet him, I was neither gunning for him, nor interested in gushing over him. I was merely curious about a colleague of sorts in the media with long, unkempt hair and enough energy to fire an atomic explosion with his 'I can' attitude and high voltage verve for life!

We met one evening before the film's release at his production office on Warden Road. *Bombay Boys* was having trouble finding buyers, and he was more or less reconciled to a long and frustrating wait. But that didn't seem to dampen his spirits very much. He was upbeat,

supremely self-confident, almost bullish and a little brash about his future prospects which he believed were pretty splendid, give or take a little time. Seriously, there was none of the nail-biting nervousness of a newcomer who was charting a relatively risky trail in commercial cinema with virtually no backing.

As we spoke, it became clear that he was intrinsically and unequivocally his own person, unhinged, unafraid, and uninhibited in the pursuit of his life's only mission: doing things his way.

This is his mission statement, and every thing in his life appears to center around it. At 18, he left home. "I had to," he says. Whatever for? "Well, I had to make

a man of myself at some stage, and that seemed the best time to make a start. There was this great restlessness inside me. I wanted to travel around the world, I wanted to see where I fitted in."

His folks had migrated to Australia when he was 16. Before that, they all lived in Wadi, a small district in Karnataka where his grandfather ran a cinema hall. He schooled at St. Paul's, Darjeeling, and had a natural precociousness that he thought was precious. So he went full throttle after pranks of all kinds. "When I was 14, and in Bombay for a brief stay, I started selling tickets in black outside Liberty cinema. No jokes, my friend Bugs and I were hustling tickets in black when the cops caught us and gave us a thrashing. The reason, we subsequently discovered, was because we were undercutting the established black marketeers and this was just not on!" he recalled. The episode is enshrined in the closing scenes

of *Bombay Boys*, where Gustad himself puts in a cameo appearance as a black marketeer outside a theater.

Several other such bizarre escapades followed. In fact, all of his life up to this point has been a montage of images so incredulous to people with less adventurous sensibilities, that you could forgive his critics for thinking he's over-the-top.

After he left home at 18, he spent 10 years wandering the world. He has lived in countless countries, and has done all manner of odd jobs in order to eke out a living and buy his next meal. "On last count I had done 28 different kinds of jobs," he revealed. He has worked in McDonald's, been a bartender in Hong Kong, transported things across the border into China ("smuggling!" he wickedly winked), been a farmer in a New York suburban estate packing apples into crates, and later turned into a croupier in a Big Apple nightclub.

What on earth could have made him want to do all of these? "A sense of adventure. An unquenchable thrill for danger," he answered flatly. He wasn't talking for effect as he continued, "I was constantly hunting down different experiences at that stage. I still am. I think you have only one life. I want to pack in as much as I can into it. So I went ahead and lived in different countries, did different things. I had no money and nothing to tie me down, so I guess this was easy for me to do. When you have nothing, you are never insecure. You take each day as it comes, and look forward to the next."

Yet, there was a method in his madness. "At no point in my life was I unfocused," he asserted, "it wasn't as though I was running around the world for the heck of it. I wasn't clueless about my ultimate purpose. From very early in the day I had set out to be a filmmaker. This is what I really wanted to do. So for four years I studied film at the New York University. It was a good film school and has produced the likes of



Gustad: sense of adventure
Photo: Ameet Mallapur

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The Bombay Boys star cast: (top) Shah and Deshpande and (alongside, from left) Andrews, Bose and Gifford

Oliver Stone, Martin Scorsese and Spike Lee," Gustad said with pride. "It was a wonderful experience," he reminisced, "and I had a great time. After I left, I started working in cinema and worked my way up virtually from spot boy level. I worked with film units in various countries: India, America, Australia. I was passionate about two things—writing and making films. That's all I ever wanted to do."

And that's exactly what he's ended up doing. As he traveled the world doing odd jobs, he stoked his creative fires by writing compulsively. Almost obsessively. Each city he lived in, each strange job he undertook, offered him invaluable experience. He wrote all this down in a diary, to look back at it a few



years later and there, before his very eyes, fiction emerged from facts. He decided that he had material for several short stories, and got into the act of writing his first book titled *Of No Fixed Address*, deeply reminiscent of his nomadic days. It was published by HarperCollins two years ago. "The sto-

ries were all contemporary, and slightly on the edge," Gustad conceded. "It was brash literature, written from the point of view of a young guy as he sees the world. They were fictionalized accounts of what I saw, felt and experienced when I traveled around. The question that I get asked most often is how much of the book is fiction, and how much is in my own life! I can't answer that. At one level, everything is fiction. At another level, everything is fact. When you sit to write, the lines between fact and fiction blur. It is just you and a blank piece of paper. The only thing that restricts you is your imagination. There are no other constraints. In that sense, writing is a far purer creative form than filmmaking. As a filmmaker, you have to cope with many hassles and constraints."

Just how many he discovered when he started filming *Bombay Boys* almost



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four years ago. He had his script ready (he naturally wrote it himself), and he had an enviable roll call of actors itching to get started. They comprised Naseeruddin Shah, Roshan Seth, Naveen Andrews, Rahul Bose, Alexander Gifford and Tara Deshpande. Everything was in order, other than the finances. He struggled for one full year to raise the resources for his film. "The trouble with *Bombay Boys*," he later reckoned, "was that it didn't fit into a slot. As I saw it, it was a contemporary Indian film with both critical and commercial viabilities. I saw it as an international film, but raising money for it was tough. Even when the money came, it never came all at once. It came in fits and starts, so I was always on tenterhooks throughout, until the film got made."

And after that, there were no distributors willing to take it. Finally, Bombay's famous diamond merchant and film distributor, Bharat Shah, stepped in, and the rest was a rollicking picnic for Gustad. He was predictably riding high after the film's initial euphoric reception at the box office. He saw it as a victory for his personal belief in striking out and doing his own thing. And he saw it as a positive signal for the

success of independent filmmakers who did not necessarily have to belong to the commercial Hindi film circuit, or Bollywood bandwagon, as it were.

To some, it appeared as though he

"When you have nothing, you are never insecure"

were an upstart who had made good with his lucky (though in parts lackluster) first film. To Gustad himself, it appeared like having finally arrived at his destination after traversing a very long road. "Remember," he cautioned, "that the film didn't happen to me overnight. It has been more than 10 years since I left home and struggled for it to happen. Finally, it has."

It is the culmination of a long cherished dream. One that began when, as a little boy, he sat in his grandfather's cinema hall in Wadi and saw fascinating films in the dark. He used to sit through all the movies. He recalled those days fondly: "The cinema was called Kismet Talkies, and that was my classroom. My first lessons in filmmaking were

learnt there. It was there that I dreamed that I would one day set up my own film company and call it Kismet Talkies."

Yes, *Bombay Boys* was a Kismet Talkies presentation!

He is wary of letting success go to his head. One of his internal anti-ego devices is not to allow himself to get attached to things, places, people. He doesn't want anything to change that. "I want to stay 'of no fixed address,'" he smiled. "I own nothing, no house, not even a television set. Tomorrow, if my rented premises burned down, I wouldn't give a damn. I'd just move on to some place else. I think it's necessary for an artist to remain lean, hungry, taut. That's how it works best for me. The day I become fat and complacent...I'm finished."

I left Kaizad Gustad thinking how true that was. How choc-a-bloc the world is with fat, complacent, finished people. For all his hype, hysteria and idiosyncrasies, he is alive to life, to its infinite possibilities, and his own insatiable longing to experience it fully, fearlessly, and head-on. He defies definition, and will not allow himself to be slotted. But he is a seeker. And a survivor. In that, more than anything, lies his success.

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Kaizad's 'fillum'

There was much hype and hysteria that contributed to *Bombay Boys*' success

Shernaaz Engineer

The first time I saw Kaizad Gustad's *Bombay Boys* was on premier night at the Eros theater in Bombay. It was a high energy evening, the hall packed to the gills with friends and family (including parents from Australia) of the celebrated young film director, script writer and smalltime actor. At the end of *Bombay Boys*, one sees his little cameo, selling tickets in black outside a cinema hall — something he claims he actually did as a young lad for a lark (see "A seeker and a survivor," page 30).

I could not help liking *Bombay Boys* that evening. It would have been impossible not to. It was a film full of fun, funkiness and an engagingly whimsical point of view. Besides, I had been sufficiently softened up by the auditorium full of determinedly appreciative co-viewers, all of whom were out to like the film if nothing else then for Gustad's sake.

I too succumbed to the feel-good lull of the evening, eager to gloss over the film's flaws, and exult instead over its unusual and quirky touches.

But there were so many 'Parsi' elements in *Bombay Boys*, starting with one of the chief protagonists being a half-Parsi boy (Xerxes Mistry, played by London-based Alexander Gifford), that I decided — for the purpose of this review and my own objective analysis — to see the film again.

This time I saw it a few days before it bid adieu to the big screen. The theater was running almost empty, and I was disappointed that a dispassionate second viewing took much of the earlier magic away.

The film appeared more like what the critics had almost unanimously held it guilty of being: a somewhat forced and facile parody of life in Bombay, complete with exaggerated caricatures

for characters, and a fairly shallow understanding of what makes India's premier megapolis tick.

The film is predominantly about three young men of Indian origin, brought up abroad. They come back to search for their roots, and strike up a friendship in the cab ride out of Bombay's Sahar Airport. This slightly contrived bringing together of their divergent paths enables Gustad to look at the city from their eyes and do a take-off or spoof on almost everything from the exorbitant flat rentals, to the Hindi movie industry and its murky machinations, to Bombay's neon nightlife and never-say-die spirit, to the dissipated youth scene — high on rock music and drug-induced nirvana.



But it was his portrayal of the Parsis that I looked at closely; and was pretty much disappointed with. Take his depiction of Mistry, one of his three central characters, as a sitting-on-the-fence homosexual, who finally succumbs to his alternate sexual orientation by the end of the film, culminating in a rather disturbing cliché. This was heightened by the fact that Mistry's mentor and landlord Pesi Shroff (played by the award-winning actor Roshan Seth) was shown as being aggressively gay. His advances towards the confused Mistry are far from subtle, and at one point when Mistry gets arrested by the police for a romantic dalliance with another young boy in a pub, Shroff, overcome by remorse, is shown lamenting the fact that homosexuality is still illegal in India.

Homosexuality and the Parsi male is a theme that has been surfacing with increasing and alarming frequency in contemporary media (cinema and writing), but in the absence of any attempt to put it in some sort of socio-emotional perspective, it appeared overdone and unnecessary in *Bombay Boys*. Much the same could be said of the other characters like Dolly the moll (Tara Deshpande) or Mastana the film producer (a superb Naseeruddin Shah) who were more "types" than real people.

But then the film is an edgy, over-the-top take on Bombay and its bizarre kaleidoscope of distorted and dizzy images. To be fair, Gustad himself calls it a "fillum" in his opening titles, thereby setting the tone for the manic montage of the not necessarily sensible or logical images that follow. The story plays hopscotch with the strange music track and the characters appear and disappear at the director's whim, leaving one unsure of exactly what was happening — and with far too many unanswered questions.

Gustad sharing a light moment with Deshpande (above) Photo: Ramakant Munde and a poster of the film

Success in the sea

On the occasion of Children's Day last year, three Zoroastrian children aged between eight to 12 years swam in the sea for over three hours to complete the 11 km distance between Uran and the Gateway of India in Bombay. The first to come out of the water after 3 hr 10 min was 12-year-old Aresh Daruwalla who covered a longer distance of 13 km because of the strong currents. Ten-year-old Kaiwan Shroff, for whom this was a maiden sea swim, arrived second, six minutes later. Aresh's eight-year-old sister Shazneen (see "Splashing Success," *Parsiana*, July-August '97), one of the youngest participants who was taking part in a sea swim for the first time, came in sixth taking 3 hr 57 min to reach the jetty at the Gateway, states a write-up forwarded to *Parsiana*.

Accompanying each child was a small guide boat, with an observer from the M.S.A.A.A. (Maharashtra State Amateur Aquatic Association) on board. Touching the boat in any way, even while accepting drinks or a chocolate, meant instant disqualification for the swimmer. Intensive training for one and a half months under Rakesh Tiwari, coach of the Bombay YMCA swim team, ensured that all the 10 children who participated from different Bombay schools completed the swim organized on November 14.

"This was my first experience in the sea and I enjoyed it. I was a little afraid

*Alongside: Shroff
Below: Aresh, mother
Pervin and Shazneen
(right) and in the water
with guide boat*

at first, but not once I started swimming," said Kaiwan, adding that he "felt very proud" when his feat was applauded at the end of it all.

"I was a little nervous before the swim, but my Mummy told me to have faith in prayer. I felt very exhausted but also very good afterwards and I would do it again," declared Shazneen. Remarked Aresh: "I was confident that I would complete the distance and felt happy that all my hard work had been rewarded." Planning to swim the 38 km distance from Dharmatar to the Gateway of India next, Aresh says he has set his hopes and his sights on the ultimate dream, the English Channel.

Karate kid

"Training for a black belt involved, among other things, being at Priyadarshini Park at five o'clock in the morning, running 35-40 laps of the track. Hector started with a couple of laps,

but by the time the examination arrived he was so totally in practice that he outran all the other 34 aspiring junior black belts over a distance of 14 kms, without any rest," states Goolshun Nadirshaw, mother of 10-year-old Hector who earned his junior black belt at the 44th (winter) camp of the All-India Gojukai Karate-do held at the Sardar Dastur Schools, Poona. The rigorous examination consisted of physical

stamina tests in Bombay on December 20, '98 which included 500 push-ups, somersaults, bunny hop, duck walk, etc, all to be done without drinking a drop of water.

This was followed by a difficult schedule of katas, shiai, multiple kumite, bunkai and yaksuku-kumite at Poona from December 26-30. Explains Goolshun, "An aspiring black belt has to take punches in the stomach, arms and legs from the other boys, and while Hector was doing his examination I was sitting outside, a complete nervous wreck! Though others do suffer injuries, Hector defended himself beautifully." Adds her son, "When I was handed my black belt, I felt very emotional. I remembered my five years of hard work and felt a great sense of achievement."

After attending one more (summer) camp in May, Hector will receive his certificate from Japan at the end of the year. Subsequent continuous practice will see him attain senior black belt level. Hector started karate at the age of six with Shihan Vispy Kapadia, 6th dan black belt. "Hector was an exceptionally shy child when he started, but karate has changed him completely. Even older boys, who used to at one time harass him particularly in the school bus, now treat him with admiration and respect," laughs his mother. "Karate has developed not only my strength and stamina, but also my concentration and



Nadirshaw: building strength and stamina





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All-rounder Irani

Photos: Clive Tarling Photography



In the second test at Lords, Irani made 41 runs and helped save England from defeat, but was dropped for the third test.

His ODI (one-day international) debut was also against India at the Oval in the Texaco Trophy series. He was selected to tour New Zealand and Zimbabwe in '96-'97 and has represented England in 10 ODIs and two tests so far.

Son of league cricketer Jimmy Irani and Anne, Ronnie was 16 when he signed on to play for Lancashire, the county where he was born (see "Into the big league," Zoroastrians Abroad, *Parsiana*, January '89). He moved to Essex in 1994 and has played in the Sun-

discipline. It has given me a sense of security and I would certainly like to continue with karate," observes Hector.

A student of Bombay's Champion School, Hector maintains his position in the top 10 of his class, states his bio data. He has won or ranked in intra and inter school elocution competitions both in English and Hindi. Under the guidance of Meher and Noshirwan Jehangir, Hector passed with distinction the Grade Two examination in speech and drama conducted by Trinity College, London. Leisure activities include watching cartoons and the Discovery channel on television.

The English cricketer

All-rounder Ronnie Irani was the first Zoroastrian to play test cricket for England, writes Behram Udvadekar, long-time UK resident and cricket enthusiast from Wolverhampton. In a brief résumé of Irani's achievements, Udvadekar states that Irani's test debut was against India at Edgbaston in 1996, where he made a quickfire 34 and took a wicket in his first over which was also a maiden.

day league and one day championships, with his county Essex winning the NatWest Cup final and the Benson and Hedges Cup in different seasons. "Few Parsis have come to see me at matches and chat with me," Irani is said to have told Udvadekar in a post-match tête-à-tête last year. The only child of his parents, Irani has been to Zoroastrian House twice on Navroz and shows interest in his roots, particularly how, when and why the Zoroastrians landed in India, writes Udvadekar.

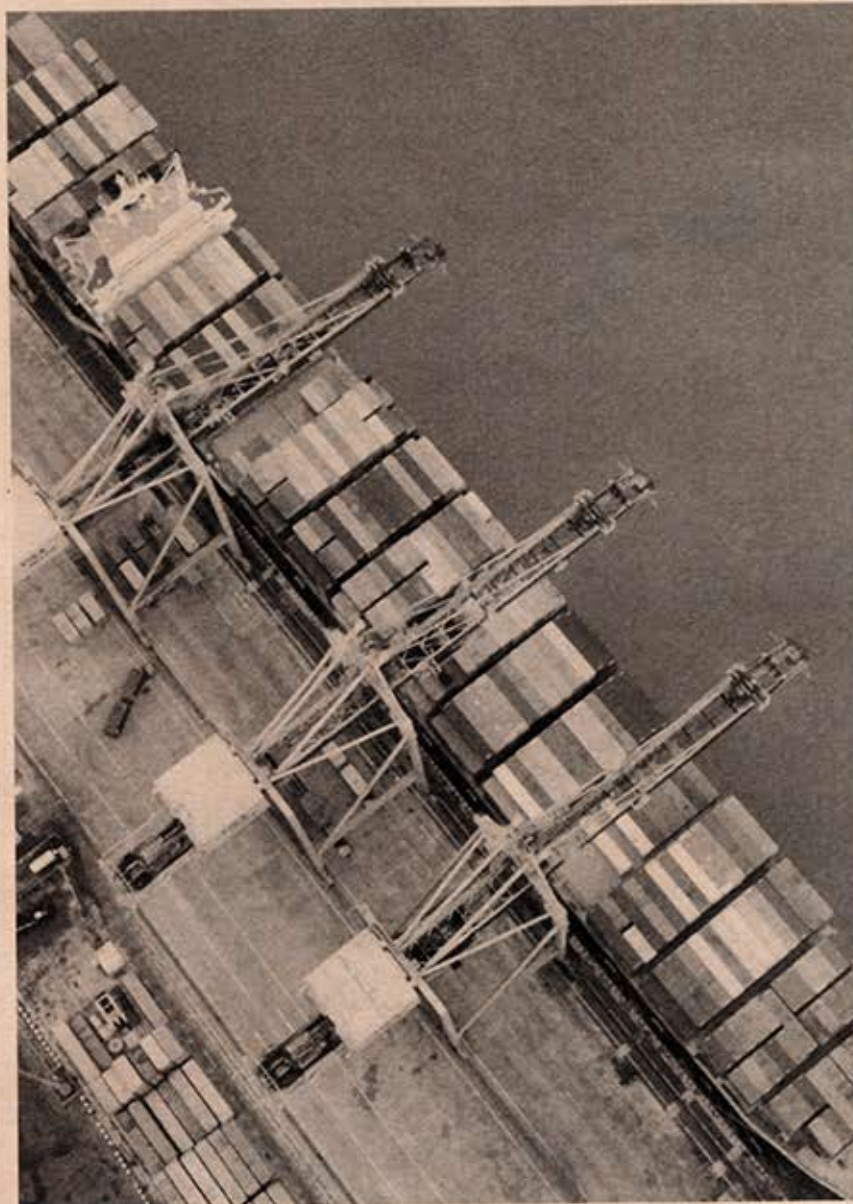
In 1998, the six-foot four-inch right hand bat and right arm medium bowler scored 1,001 runs in first class matches, at an average of 32.29 and took 41 wickets, his best figures being five wickets for 47 runs. His county championship tally for 1998 stands at 968 runs, with a highest score of 127 not out, according to the Internet (www.cricinfo.com). Though currently a "forgotten man" for England, newspapers are tipping him to soon be a part of the England team, believes Udvadekar.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder



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P&O Containers handling Jervis Bay berthed in Singapore Photo courtesy: P & O Worldwide

days while the situation elsewhere is even worse," it adds. Presently the 11 main ports handle nearly 90 percent of India's cargo traffic, the balance being handled by 139 intermediate and minor ports controlled by state governments, according to the newspaper. "Problems are likely to increase with the growth of cargo traffic from 251 m tonnes in 1998 to 415 m tonnes by 2002..."

Sealand Motivator which is 260 m in length exchanged 2976 teu (twenty equivalent units approximating 60,000 tons) when it berthed at the NSICT and the staff were confident of turning the ship in 48 hours as against the minimum 72 hours which would have been the case in any other terminal in India, points out Sarbh. The NSICT is built to accommodate two ships of 290 m or three ships of 190 m with a terminal capacity of 600,000-650,000 teu (approximately 12 million tons). The terminal when fully ready will be equipped with six rail mounted gantry quay cranes, 15 rubber tyred gantry cranes and three rail mounted gantry cranes, plus 48 internal transport vehicles, as per their fact sheet.

Although *Parsiana* had been supplied this relevant theoretical data in advance, a visit to the Terminal and an introduction to their various equipment helped us understand that the quay cranes on the wharf are used for loading and unloading the ship and are said to be capable of handling 40 containers per hour. The rubber tyred gantry cranes are the noisy ones which are constantly on the move in the container yards and the rail mounted gantry cranes are called into use when the containers have to be loaded on rail wagons, the nearest rail-siding being Panvel. The passage of internal transport vehicles is constantly monitored by the Central India Security Force who keep a vigil over the entire zone, requiring every visitor and automobile to carry a pass.

The contract for the supply of cranes was awarded to Preussag Noell of Germany; Bovis Construction (a P&O Group company) with experience in mega projects like the Atlanta Olympics have been appointed project managers for NSICT; with the Terminal being designed by Cullen Grummit and Roe, a Queensland based engineering

THE CHALLENGING PORT-FOLIO *continued from page 28*

minal at Karachi's Port Muhammad-Bin-Qasim also comes within their purview. "Victory is always sweet," announces Sarbh whose present contract with P&O Ports expires in December 2000 after which he would like to return to Australia. But before that he looks forward to winning more projects for P&O "who have been in India for 155 years, are in India and will be in India," he states confidently. There is no ambiguity as to where Sarbh's loyalties lie. On any given day a necktie would form a part of his formal attire. But on March 21, 1999 when NSICT was officially inaugurated Sarbh chose to wear a T-shirt sporting the P&O logo. When *Parsiana* was shooting a photograph of

him at their container yard, he made sure there was a P&O container in the background!

Both importers and exporters will gain from P&O's presence in this country. Sarbh is sanguine. "There is scope for growth in containerization in India...Shipping services look for quality and guaranteed service. A ship is expensive. Time lost is money lost. India needs its seaports to be efficiently managed," he reiterates.

"Heavy congestion, berthing delays and long ship turnaround time are common features of India's ports," according to an article quoted in *The Economic Times* of April 8, 1999 supporting Sarbh's stand. "The turnaround time for a ship at Cochin which is ratified as being less inefficient, is more than four



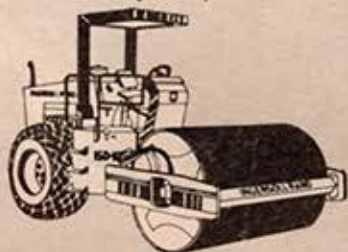
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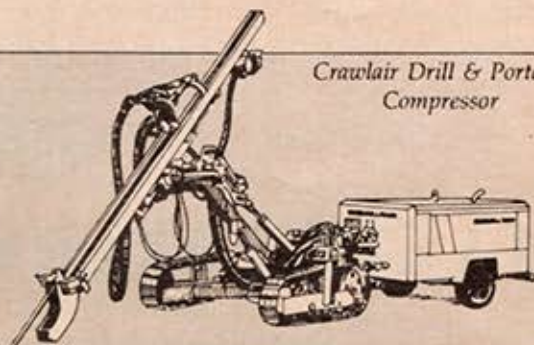
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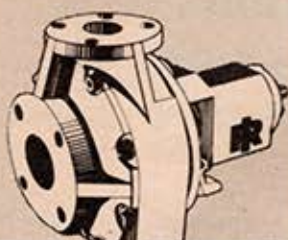
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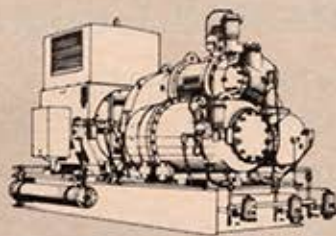
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company. The contract for the wharf and approach bridges was awarded to Trafalgar House India Limited and for the reclamation of 28 hectares of land on which stands the NSICT to Pathare Real Estate and Developers. The operations center, amenities block, workshop and canteen are being constructed by Holzmann Videocon Engineering Limited. As per their original understanding, the 150 m south extension wharf and approach bridge built by NSICT were handed over to JNPT in exchange for 150 m of existing north wharf and seven hectares of container yard, thus leaving one continuous stretch of land and quay line to be managed by the private terminal. Even now the boundary lines between the two sectors is so thin that at the NSICT they have opted for cranes of bright blue and yellow color combinations to permit locating them from a distance.

Having been at sea for nearly 18 years, first as cadet, then as second officer, chief officer and master, Sarbh acknowledges, "My sailing experience has considerably helped me to understand the business: ships, ports, containers. By travelling to different parts

of the world you understand people, their values, their culture." Similarly his two years as manager of a real estate agency in Sydney before he rejoined

**"I grew up in India.
I believe I must
give back to India
what it gave me.
Giving India NSICT
is very satisfying"**

P&O Ports "helped me polish my skills in negotiations, understand people, deal with them," he adds. "Although I am now an Australian, I grew up in India. I believe I must give back to India what it gave me. Giving India NSICT — a world class terminal — is very satisfying," declares the managing director.

With a phenomenal memory for dates Sarbh is able to recount the progress of the Terminal as also his personal career chart. On the day of the interview with *Parsiana*, March 26, 1999, it had been four years, eight days since he had returned to India on his current assign-

ment. Considering that NSICT was registered as an Indian company on March 21, 1997, that the terminal was opened for operations on March 21, 1999, does the spring equinox or Navroz hold a special significance for Sarbh? He replies in the affirmative but does not elaborate on that. What he does feel strongly about is the fact that "the Parsi community is dying; that we are becoming a collector's item" and yet children of a woman who has married out of the Zoroastrian fold are not accepted. "This nonsensical, high-handed policy" which discriminates against a woman "is completely wrong," he asserts. Conversion to the Zoroastrian faith should be open to the non-Parsi spouses of Zoroastrians and those who have studied the religion, he opines. "There is nothing wrong as long as it is controlled," believes Sarbh who wears the sudreh-kusti at all times, insisting on showing us the sudreh donned by him.

"Let every individual have a choice. I'm all for choice," points out Sarbh who has observed that the community both in Bombay where he was born and schooled (first at St Mary's and then at St Peter's) as also in Australia (where



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he has taken up citizenship) "is too caught up in the bureaucratic tangles. We argue more than we deliver."

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet, he feels, "should be more helpful in propagating the religion. It should be restructured with younger, forward thinking, dynamic personalities getting onto the board and running the institution like a corporation. Some young lawyers should take it upon themselves to work on those trusts and unlock the funds which can be used to assist the community. Unfortunately, no one has the time." Instead of building small flats like at Godrej Baug, the example of Cusrow Baug should be followed. "There are funds and companies who would assist in the right way provided the system is easy, fair," he expressed his views.

"People in Sydney are more committed towards their religion," he notes while also commenting that "they don't like to listen to the younger generation. Set in their old views, they need a paradigm shift for the 21st century... Each institution should stand alone and be self supporting," he says, referring to the AZA (Australian Zoroastrian Association) House. "Constantly seeking handouts from people who are doing

well is too stressful. The AZA should be run as a company on corporate lines."

Sarbh's parents Homai and Homi continue to have their base in Bombay. His wife Lalé, a physiotherapist by training who has accommodated her schedule to facilitate her husband's career moves, as also their two children who are Australian citizens are presently in Bombay. To his young children, 11-year-old Jim who studies at the Bombay International School and seven-year-old Simoneil who is at The J. B. Petit High School for Girls, Sarbh constantly emphasizes the need "to be good Zoroastrians, have values above material and financial considerations; to respect every individual and not discriminate between religion, caste and color."

The color of an individual may not matter to Sarbh but the color of the sea sure perturbs him especially when the Arabian Sea which he has to cross ever so often turns grey with pollution instead of blue. The sea and the port continue to be Sarbh's mainstay: when he was captain in command of a vessel, he had to look at them from one side, now from the shore, he has to view them from another.

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The Advertiser (Catering)
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400007

BUSINESS

continued from page 27

was nonetheless a proud man, remembered and honored by his old students.

After unveiling a plaque, Irani switched on the first machine, amidst the traditional *achu michu* and lighting of a divo. Speaking informally with the audience later on, Irani said the topic weighing most heavily on his mind was the budget. He was critical of some of the government's policies. "By populist measures like free electricity and heavy subsidies they are short selling our country's future" he opined.

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

In momentum

Adman Jamshed Vakeel has joined Momentum Creative Private Limited, a Bombay-based advertising strategy and



Vakeel: leading India's first fee-based ad agency

design consultancy firm, as managing director. Momentum is India's first advertising agency to work on a fee basis only, instead of the usual 15 percent agency commission system, according to a press release. "It's high time we dragged

the stone-agers kicking and screaming into the 21st century. I challenge them to explain any relationship whatsoever between the decrepit old 15 percent agency commission on anything and the value of the goods and services a client receives. Our fee system provides clients with a decision-making system... at a price that is seen to be logically fair."

Oxford-educated Vakeel has over 18 years of experience in the advertising field, having worked earlier with Ogilvy and Mather, London; HKR, Geneva, Mudra in Ahmedabad, etc. His professional experience includes marketing and advertising for clients such as the Ritz Hotel (Paris), Swiss Bank Corporation, Christian Dior, Hewlett-Packard, etc. The multi-faceted Vakeel has also been an Egon Ronay guide restaurant inspector and an accomplished cook, with published work to his credit.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

The Top Ten

"Lives of great men all remind us..."

Who were the greats? Who are the greats? Zoroastrians talk proudly of the community's achievements in the past and present. Names are mentioned randomly but collectively no international list has been compiled of the most outstanding Parsis or Zoroastrians. *Parsiana* opens its columns to suggestions from readers as to who they consider to be the 10 most outstanding Zoroastrians globally in the 19th and 20th centuries (10 in each century). The nominees could be from any field of endeavor, from politics to poetry and science to soldiering. The purpose of the exercise is to create a greater awareness of the community's past and present achievements and to put these in perspective.

Readers should send in their suggestions stating the full name of the individual, his or her field of endeavor, the reason why they feel the person is deserving of this classification and the century for which they are being nominated.

The reason for choosing the two centuries together is to allow for the overlapping of many significant lives. The reader can decide in which century he or she wishes to identify the individual's contribution. Personages should be nominated according to the century in which they made their major contribution to humanity.

Send your entries to The Editor, *Parsiana* (Greats), GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001.

MORE POWER TO THE PEOPLE

continued from page 23

tem, suggested by the six trustees for increased weightage to the elected representatives, the limit on the number of terms and the restriction on age.

Tirandaz dismissed the fear that scrapping of the donors' register would stop the inflow of funds. If even 1,000 Parsis were to give Rs 15,000 each the amount would total only one and a half crore rupees. What was this in comparison to "one donor who has given four and a half crores in one shot?" If the Supreme Court could uphold the scrapping of the privy purses of the former princes and maharajas of India despite constitutional guarantees to the contrary, what was so sacred about the vested rights of donors, he asked. The BPP trustees adopted a policy of putting their heads in the sand whenever they were faced with major problems, alleged Tirandaz. Parsis wished to participate in the decision making process of the community. "Why sell our rights to persons whose only qualification is money?" he asserted.

The discussion was then thrown open to the audience. Marazban Patrawala, a member of the National Minorities Commission, said: "There was a need for change but not absolute change...all members of the House of Lords cannot vote...say 25 percent of the donors (that number) will be the elected voters." He felt the amount of the donation given to be eligible to vote should be raised to one lakh rupees. "Let donors come together and select who amongst them will be the voters."

Kanga felt that "the general Parsi population should be given preponderance." He suggested a 25 percent to 75 percent weightage in favor of elected representatives. Kanga believed the AC was necessary as it served as a link between the trustees and the community. He was in favor of the Punchayet chairman being elected by his fellow trustees and not by seniority.

Phiroze Lam of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited felt that adult franchise was the only solution and that the necessary qualifications in a candidate standing for trusteeship elections should be spelt out.

Kersi Limathwalla who had contested unsuccessfully for a BPP trusteeship seat said, "The basic deficiency in the scheme" was that it was unwieldy.

It was "difficult to find 800 people who could understand the scheme and were willing to stand for election...Where will you get 2,000 informed, socially conscious people?" he asked. He felt the AC was "virtually defunct" and felt the body "should have a greater role to play." He advocated a small AC of maybe around 100 with 50 percent representation from donors and 50 percent from the community at large.

Educationist Prof Khurshed Sheriar felt "more number of people should take part" in the election process. "Don't think of reducing" the AC, he said.

Perviz Dotiwalla who also contested unsuccessfully for trusteeship spoke of the old *sau ni mandli* (group of 100) which comprised 100 donors and elected representatives from the various registers who in turn elected the trustees. The other alternative was to permit everyone to vote.

Hector Mehta, another unsuccessful candidate for trusteeship, felt that the system of parity was "functioning very well." He was in favor of two consecutive terms for trusteeship and an upper age limit of 70.

Social activist Phiroze Amroliwalla believed "the question of an age limit is not necessary...voters can reject" a candidate if they felt the age was a hindrance. He believed that experience and expertise should be the criteria for judging a candidate and not his age.

Amroliwalla's sentiments were reinforced by social worker Homai Modi. "People can be senile at 50 also," she noted. "The basic qualification for trusteeship is honesty and someone who one can look up to."

Community activist Noshir Dadrawala pointed out that the BPP is governed by the Bombay Public Trusts Act and unless specifically required under the deed of settlement of trust, elections were not mandatory.

In a show of hands taken at the end of the discussion only around five of those present voted in favor of universal adult franchise.

The two-and-a-half-hour meeting concluded with Guzder stating that the trustees would look into the views expressed by the participants and then decide. Engineer clarified that the decision would be taken by a majority vote of the trustees. Both Shroff and he reiterated that having got a feel for the thinking of the house, only "fine tuning" would be required.

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MILESTONES

This issue of *Parsiana* publishes intercommunity marriages registered both at the Old Customs House as well as at the MHADA office in Bandra (East) for the five-month period of December 1998 to April 1999. However, names that could not be confirmed as Zoroastrian have been omitted from the list.

The Old Customs House registered 46 intercommunity marriages plus eight civil marriages, whereas the figures of the MHADA office were 23 and three respectively.

A scanning of the Chandanwadi crematorium registers revealed the names of 10 Zoroastrians between April 1998 and March 1999.

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 23 and 36 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 27 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 25 and 43 years, averaging at 31 years.

There were 84 deaths compared to 17 births in the month

of March. Heart disease took a toll of 30 victims of whom 11 were 80 +. The other major killer was pneumonia/lung disease claiming 14 lives. Seven patients fell prey to cancer and five to diabetes. Bronchitis and high blood pressure felled three patients each. Two deaths each were accounted to brain disease, paraplegia (paralysis of the lower limbs usually including the bladder and rectum), septicemia, hypertension and myeloma (a primary malignant tumor of bone marrow). Isolated cases registered for March were: tuberculosis, Alzheimer's disease, malaria, quadriplegia (paralysis of all four limbs), liver disease, injury to vital organs, multiple organ failure, head injury, kidney failure, asthma and Hodgkin's disease (a sometimes fatal cancer marked by enlargement of the lymph nodes, spleen and liver). The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for March, in Bombay, was 76 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled

from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman 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 anjuman 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 break-up 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.

December 14
Nina Darius Anklesaria and Maulik Jhaveri; December 15
Ria Bomi Zaiwalla and Shaunak Dileep Mehta; December 15
Pushpa K. Hodar and Minoo F. Nava; December 15
Aneesha Chopra and Rustom Farrokh Mistri; December 16
Nazneen H. Parakh and Nazmuddin Sutarwala; December 16
Saker Maneck Engineer and Biju Thomas; December 17
Sharmila Label E. Gonsalves and Navroz Nariman Postwala; December 18
R. Noshir Nanporia and R. Cyrus Dadachanji; December 20
Farzana Nadir Muncherjee and Kunal Shobhan Thakore; December 23
Hemali Jayant Modi and Pervaz Shapoor Mehta; December 25
Zenobia Bakhtyar Italia and Parvez Cyrus Siganporia; December 25
Benaifer R. Canteenwalla and Hushidar Eruch Bhatena; December 29
Christina Patrick D'Souza and Farhad E. Pardiwalla; December 29
Sarvar Kothavala and Ashwin Pejavar; January 2, 1999
Yasmin K. Wadia and Satyendra S. Shenoy; January 4
Arlene Nazareth and Meherwan H. Karanjia; January 5
Farida Daruvala and Ashish Sehgal; January 7
Nirmala Khandas Vakar and Meheryar Farhad Khambatta; January 8
Deepika Bipin Maini and Cyrus S. Lalkaka; January 8
Avan Banaji and Girish Gupta; January 14
Roshni Pesi Maloo and Savio Anthony D'Souza; January 15
Anjali Ramesh Sarin and Hufid Rashid Poonawalla; January 19
Payal A. Arya and Neville H. Shroff; January 19
Meher F. Unwalla and Girish Nair; January 22
Rashna Keki Mehta and Abdeali Saifee Mamaji; January 23
Nandini Rajeswar Vasisht and

BARODA

BORN

A boy, Danesh, to Khurshid and Kemas Wadia on January 5, 1999
Twins to Jasmin and Harvesp Elavia; March 18

MARRIED

Parizad Mirza, daughter of Pervin and Homi, and Firdos Chinoy, son of Hutokshi and Keki; March 4

DIED

Ketymai Eruchsha Patel (89); December 2, 1998
Sorabji Dhanjishaw Haradwalla (85); January 14, 1999
Navroze Sorabji Contractor (53); March 20
Kersasp Kekhashru Poonawalla (74); March 25

BOMBAY

BORN

A boy, Arzan, to Meher and Farhad Engineer, brother to Meherab; December 6, 1998
A boy to Dinaz and Gev Engineer; March 3, 1999
A girl to Pervin and Yezdi Driver; March 4

A girl to Tanaz and Rustom Irani; March 6
Twins (girl and boy) to Benaifer and Naozer Bachana; March 9
A girl to Anahita and Xerxis Daruwalla; March 9
A girl to Tinaaz and Minoo Mody; March 11
A boy to Rashna and Shahrukh Sholapurwala; March 16
A girl, Anisa, to Anahita and Samir Uberoi; March 18
A girl to Kamal and Marazban Doctor; March 25
A girl, Kyra, to Maharukh and Vispi Marshall; March 25
A girl to Nilufer and Sanjay Prakash; March 25
A boy to Avan and Kayomars Doomasia; March 27
A boy, Zeliens, to Pretti and Firdos Namirian; March 27
A boy to Nargish and Rohinton Mistri; March 28
A boy to Kaizeen and Farzad Padia; March 29
A boy to Chitan and Ardeshir Bonshahi; March 30

MARRIED

Shireen Cawas Pavri and

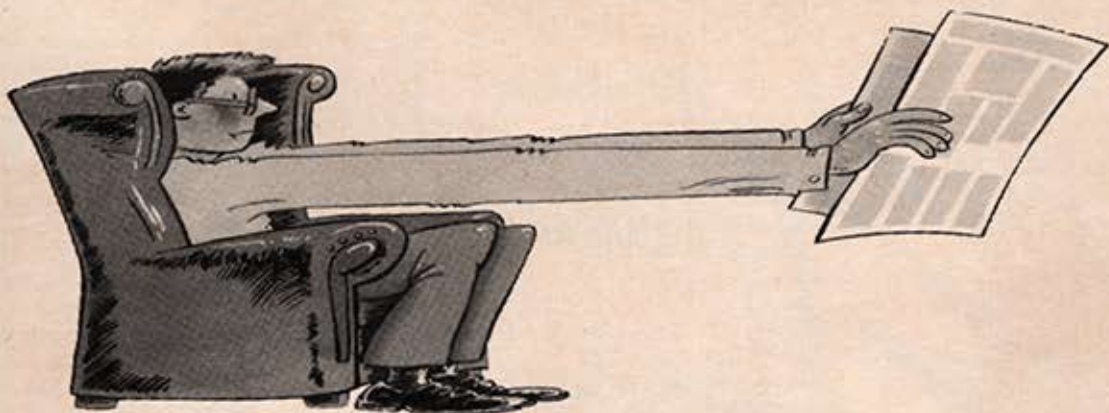
Abhijeet Shyam Chavan; December 1, 1998
Dinaz Eruch Elavia and Ashutosh Dattatraya Mahajan; December 1
Kuneesha Tinoo Bhansali and Adil Viraf Mirzan; December 1
Sherie Meher Homji and Nikhil Nirvan Khattau; December 2
Himanshu Rai and Peeran Dinshaw Mukadam; December 4
Feryn Pervaz Nanavati and Tushar P. Nemade; December 5
Aaliya Sheikh and Darius Rana; December 7
Niloufer R. Sarkari and Sachindra Devindra Pathak; December 10
Katy Keki Variava and Amar Dinesh Thacker; December 10
Feruza Firdosh Vajifdar and Shrikant Karani; December 11
Leena Popatji Gohil and Neville Kekibhai Sathvavwala; December 11
Nancy N. Zaveri and Ashish Nitin Parikh; December 13
Laleh Ardeshir Dubash and Robin Rathmell Ogle;

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OPTOMETRISTS

Sarosh Dara Patel; January 25
 Ashwini Shrikant Joshi
 and Jehangir Jimmy Virji;
 January 25
 Nazneen P. Ravji and Huseini
 G. Barodawala; January 27
 Archana R. Agarwal and
 Chirag B. Patel; January 27
 Ammi Maru and Arzan
 Siganporia; January 27
 Ambika Sharma and Khushru
 J. Divecha; February 5
 Shreya Nitin Mehta and
 Hanoze Dinyar Udachia;
 February 5
 Nawaz Nadir Modi and
 Gautam Hari Singhania;
 February 7
 Yasnaaz Homi Bhagalia and
 Jimmy Phiroze Vesuna;
 February 8
 Nina A. Sagar and Bomi P.
 Dinshaw; February 12
 Vahbiz Faramaz Doomasia
 and Hariharaprasad Narayaiv
 Iyer; February 12
 Tanaz Dara Colabawalla and
 Chesley Charles Choudhury;
 February 15
 Elizabeth D'Cruz and Yezdi
 Hosang Doctor; February 16
 Kamalpreet Kaur and Rastom
 Minocher Mody; February 17
 Shaheen MullaFeroze and
 Gurpreet Singh Sahani;
 February 17
 Kermin Patel and Sean
 Colaco; February 19
 Farah Dalal and Rahul
 Badhwar; February 20
 Sunitha Narayanan Nair and
 Adil Cawas Daruwalla;
 February 20
 Havovy Master and Pancham
 Gul Hariramani; February 25
 Hufrish Ferdoon Mistry and
 Rayomand Rustom Davar;
 March 5
 Jasmin Soli Ravtewalla and
 Kurush Neville Gandhi;
 March 5
 Arnavaaz Cawas Navder of
 Vashi and Neville Minoo
 Mistry; March 5
 Anahita Aspi Patel and Amit
 Harishankar Mantri; March 6
 Vahbiz Kersy Mehta and
 Jamsheed Pheroze Vachha;
 March 6
 Taira Cyrus Noble and
 Mehernosh Tehmurasp
 Khambatta; March 7
 Armin Darabshaw Munshi
 and Cussrow Noshir Patel;
 March 7
 Khushnoor Minoo Wadia
 and Shahrukh Navroz Patel;
 March 7

Khushnum Dhunjishaw
 Fanibanda and Neville Robert
 Crasto; March 8
 Binifer Darius Ranina and
 Cyrus Dossu Paymaster;
 March 9
 Navaz Kersi Dadinatha
 and Percy Jehangir Lentin;
 March 11
 Firuza Navroz Patel and
 Hoshang Homi Karwa;
 March 12
 Binaifer Pervez Sutaria
 and Eruch Jamasp Mehta;
 March 12
 Parvaneh Ardasher Mubarak
 of Boisar and Zarir Feroze
 Dastoor; March 13
 Pourachisty Rohinton
 Khadiwala and Shahzad
 Shahpur Bhagwagar;
 March 14
 Monaz Navroz Siganporia and
 Hormuzd Minoo Karkaria;
 March 14
 Shirin Aspi Damania of
 Daman and Feroze Aspi
 Tamna; March 14
 Ranjana K. Shinde and Adil
 Dara Mobedji; March 18
 Shirin Sam Pochkhanawala
 and Manoj Vasant Pradhan;
 March 18
 Benaifer Feroze Gazder and
 Marzban Burjor Daruwala;
 March 19
 Husna Begam Badshan Miyan
 and Homi Adi Karanjia;
 March 20
 Binaifer Bomansha Daruwala
 and Darayus Dinshawji Gotla;
 March 21
 Zenobia Jal Buhariwala
 and Zarir Adi Ichhaporia;
 March 21
 Parivaz Noshir Irani and
 Godrej Baji Mistry; March 21
 Kainaz Nazim Patel and
 Kaizad Kersy Mistry;
 March 21
 Nandita Atul Sheth and Homi
 Farrok Mulla; March 27
 Shubha Gokhale and Rustom
 K. Engineer; March 28
 Zareen Nariman Godha and
 Hoshang Rusi Nallaseti;
 March 28
 Ayesha Feroze Damania and
 Burzin Jal Somandy; March
 28
 Dilkhush Nariman Fatakia
 and Burgess Sam Cooper;
 March 29
 Nancy Jamsheed Adajania and
 Ranjit Raghuvir Hoskoté;
 March 31
 Phiroza Bomi Italia and Sohail
 Faruk Chimbaiwala; April 6

Veena Sashant Sahoo and
 Rohinton Shapoor Irani;
 April 7
 Nalini Maria Lobo and Cyrus
 Jehangir Dadachanji; April 8
 Armina Ram Java and Freedy
 Aspi Irani; April 9
 Sharon Estha D'Costa and
 Kaizad Soli Shroff; April 9
 Vahbiz A. Elavia and Kamal
 H. Joshi; April 19
 Minaz Mondegarian and
 Farokh Edulji Katrak;
 April 19
 Jennifer R. Shroff and Piruz
 N. Taraporevala; April 23
 Namrata Sanwarprasad Jalan
 and Neville Rustom Tata;
 April 23
 Dilnaz Jehangir Khambatta
 and Zubin Rusy Mory;
 April 25
 Shirley Melita Raymond
 Almeida and Sharookh Adi
 Joshi; April 29
 Avani Harshad Shah and
 Pervez Jehangir Goiporia;
 April 30
 Toi Michelle Reed and
 Dinshah Sanjana; April 30

DEED
 Perin Farrok Bhesania
 (75), residing at 10, Asha
 Mhl, Navroji Gamadia Rd,
 400006; June 23, 1998
 (cremated)
 Banoo Jahangir Maneckji
 (95), 7, Rajab Mhl, 144, M.
 Karve Rd, 400020; July 7
 (cremated)
 Jamsheed Burjor Aga (82),
 Rusi Hse, Darabsha Lane,
 Napean Sea Rd, 400036;
 August 8 (cremated)
 Homai Framroze Bode (87),
 11, Heera Meher, Wodehouse
 Rd, 400005; August 11
 (cremated)
 Behram Daruwalla (79),
 598/A, Wadia Bldg, J. S. S.
 Rd, 400002; August 31
 (cremated)
 Adi Dady Katrak (52), Spenta,
 Little Gibbs Rd, Malabar
 Hill, 400006; October 20
 (cremated)
 Dinshaw Pesi Wadia (45), 1,
 Heera Meher, Wodehouse
 Rd, 400005; October 30
 (cremated)
 Tehmina Tehmurasp Darasha
 (92), C/o P. M. Lakdawala,
 657, Firdausi Rd, Parsi
 Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 January 23, 1999 (cremated)
 Meherwan Rustom Irani (80),
 15, Contractor Bldg, Viju

Kotak Marg, Fort, 400001;
 February 11 (cremated)
 Aloo Ardeshir Shroff (80), 9,
 Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes
 Rd, 400007; March 1
 Jamsheed Nasserwanji
 Lilaowala (83), 602/B,
 Captain Hse, Dr Ambedkar
 Rd, Matunga, 400019;
 March 2
 Adil Dadi Mistry (32), G,
 Bhiwandiwalla Ter, Princess
 St, Dhobitalao, 400002;
 March 2
 Jamsheed Hormus Vakharia
 (80), 20, Alexandra Rd,
 Gamdevi, 400007; March 2
 Gool Erachshaw Gimi (79), 3,
 Gladhurst, Perry Cross Rd,
 Bandra, 400050; March 3
 Villa Ardesar Kalwachwala
 (78), 2A/5, Blue Arch,
 Convent Ave, Four Bglw Rd,
 Andheri (W), 400053; March
 3
 Dinamai Edulji Katrak (75),
 815, Engineer Bldg, Jame
 Jamsheed Rd, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; March 4
 Rohinton Parvez Chinoy (49),
 646, Gai Bldg, Khareghat Rd,
 Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014;
 March 5
 Darra Sorabji Framji (92),
 A/1, Empire Ter, Lamington
 Cross Rd, N. Petit St, 400007;
 March 5
 Furokh Bomanji Gotla (68), 9,
 Lotus Court, J. Tata Rd,
 Churchgate, 400020; March 5
 Phirozeshah Pestonji Umrigar
 (92), D/3, Cusrow Baug, S. B.
 Rd, 400039; March 5
 Sheroo Pesi Guzder (57),
 764/D, M. J. Rd, Parsi Clny,
 Dadar, 400014; March 6
 Mani Marazban Arsiwala
 (87), A/228, Shirin Mans,
 Tardeo Rd, 400007; March 7
 Perin Jehangir Gandhi (80),
 F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla,
 Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
 400007; March 7
 Dhun Manaji Kasad (75), 9,
 Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd,
 400007; March 7
 Tehmina Feroze Khan (83),
 G/10, Captain Clny, Tardeo
 Rd, 400034; March 7
 Pheroze Framroze Lally (94),
 D/43, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd,
 400039; March 7
 Mani Bomi Mistry (66),
 Burjor Bldg, Wadia St,
 Tardeo, 400034; March 7
 Eruch Cawasji Mullanfiroze
 (90), 12/5, Gamadia Clny,
 Tardeo, 400007; March 7

Rusi (Rustomji) Ruttonshaw Toddywalla (76), Nusserwanji Hse, 13-15, Dhuswadi, Dhobitalao, 400002; March 7
 Cooverji Ardeshtir Wadia (76), Kashinath Bldg no 1, Kashinath Rd, Tardeo, 400034; March 7
 Firoze Sheriar Irani (47), A, Tapia Bldg, Jalbhai St, 400004; March 8
 Keki Maneksha Wadia (60), 1/9, Patel Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; March 8
 Dhunjisha Khurshedji Sethna (79), 4/7, Tata Bldg, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; March 9
 Gool Sheriar Vaid (77), 7, Harbour Lights, 17/D, Caesar Rd, Amboli, Andheri (W), 400058; March 9
 Sorabji Nusserwanji Mistry (78), 64, Janmabhoomi Marg, Fort, 400001; March 10
 Sorabji Mancherji Sholapurwalla (95), 14/9, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; March 10
 Banoobai Merwanji Battiwalla (86), 764/B, Naval Hse, Dr Ghanti Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 11
 Alla Sorabji Nadodwalla (80), 24, Station Ter, Sleater Rd, 400007; March 11
 Banoo Minoo Bhungara (80), 307, Kerawala Bldg, Nana Chowk, 400007; March 12
 Ratan Merwanji Captain (95), Soona Mans, Tardeo Rd, 400007; March 12
 Keki Jehangirshaw Pardiwalla (74), 729, J, Vimadadal Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 12
 Noshir Homi Engineer (50), 5/4, Petit Block, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; March 13
 Homi Cooverji Homavazir (73) 9/9, Patel Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; March 13
 Shiroy Aspi Mehta (50), 12-A/3, B. S. Panthaky Baug, Andheri Kurla Rd, Andheri (W), 400069; March 13
 Minoo Ratanji Sarkari (93), Naju Villa, Vakola Bridge, Santacruz (E), 400055; March 13
 Homai Jehangir Shroff (78), 36, Adi Marzban Path, 400038; March 13
 Minoo Dhanjishaw Bharucha (73), Room no 5, Bhagat

Mans, Sahar Village, Parsiwada, Andheri (E), 400069; March 14
 Alanai Ardeshtir Mistry (97), 816, Mistry Widows' Chawl, Jame Jamshed Rd, Dadar, 400014; March 14
 Homi Behramji Mistry (78), 275/D, Soona Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; March 14
 Hilla Noshir Sukhadwalla (74), Talati Hse, 512, Girgaum Rd, 400002; March 14
 Pesi Kekhushroo Buhariwalla (61), West View, Uranwalla St, Grant Rd, 400007; March 15
 Mani Boman Fitter (84), United Chmbs, 5/A, Grant Rd, 400007; March 15
 Hilla Franji Major (83), 673, Rd no 14, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 15
 Farrokh Darabsha Mullan (56), C-5/B-206, Hari Om Apts, Opp Shastri Ngr, S. V. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; March 15
 Nargis Nusserwanji Readymaney (77), 66-E, Next to Parsi Agiary, Gowalia Tank, 400036; March 15
 Adil Jehan Battiwalla (52), 84/C, Dastur Blocks, Naigaon Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; March 16
 Tehmina Dorabji Gora (87), 1-11, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 16
 Dhunmai Darabsha Kolah (83), J/6, Tarachand Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; March 16
 Mani Noshir Randelia (70), 621, Sajid Towers, S. V. Rd, Amboli, Andheri (W), 400101; March 16
 Jamshedji Hormusji Sagar (78), Room no 65, 189, Petit Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; March 16
 Bapai Kaikhesroo Daruwalla (86), 739, Cama Bldg, Rd no 5, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; March 17
 Parvez Kaikhushtu Mistry (62), Q/1, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400036; March 17
 Viloo Rustomji Patel (54), C/12, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; March 17
 Ketty Dara Shroff (66), 7-B/3, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; March 17
 Pesi Munchershaw Antia (72),

7, Kanga Bldg, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Opp Hindmata Cinema, Dadar, 400014; March 18
 Ardeshtir Polchaji Munsiff (80), A/2, Motta Mans, Bai Dinbai Marg, Tardeo Rd, 400007; March 18
 Mehroo Noshir Unwalla (72), 132, Bora Bazaar St, Fort, 400001; March 18
 Meher Dosabhoy Engineer (86), Jehangir Baug, Jussawala Sanatorium Compd, Juhu Tara Rd, 400049; March 19
 Aspi Merwan Irani (74), Heera Meher, 108, Wodehouse Rd, Colaba, 400005; March 19
 Pilloo Phirozsha Mubarak (82), Manashni Baug, Golvad, 401702; March 19
 Nariman Faramji Daruwalla (79), 15/8, Sir Ratan Tata Bldg, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400007; March 20
 Coomi Jehangirji Pochkhanawalla (65), 3, 3rd Marine St, 400002; March 21
 Dinshaw Kaikhushtu Engineer (73), 14, Jamshedji Tata Bldg, Tata Clny, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; March 22
 Godrej Behramji Desai (87), V, Dalal Est, Opp Bombay Central Stn, 400008; March 23
 Tehmi Homi Pavri (70), Talaty Bldg, 194, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; March 23
 Keka Ardeshtir Joshi (80), 290-B/1, Joshi Apts, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; March 24
 Mithoo Homi Lali (89), Jer Mans, Gowalia Tank, 400036; March 24
 Eruchshah Tehmuras Pinter (75), B. D. Petit Parsee Sanatorium, Kemp's Corner, 400036; March 24
 Hormusji Dinshaji Bhathena (95), Room no 55, Firoza Mans, Tardeo Rd, 400034; March 25
 Ratan Rustomji Dandiwalla (80), Wassiamul Bldg, Grant Rd, 400007; March 25
 Shera Rustom Master (92), 394, Omer Mans, Grant Rd, 400007; March 25
 Behram A. Meher-Homji (85), Saher Bldg, 51/D, Warden Rd, 400026; March 26 (cremated)
 Keki Jehangir Palia (83), Sterling Apts, Peddar Rd, 400026; March 26
 Tehmina Barjorji Ankleshwaria (90), F-1/49, Godrej Hill-

side Clny, L. B. S. Marg, Vikhroli (W), 400079; March 27
 Fali Rustomji Nava (75), Room no 35, Mishra Bhavan, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; March 27
 Kaikhushtu Hormusji Hodivala (94), A, Yusuf Mans, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; March 28
 Keki Sorabji Buhariwalla (75), M/26, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; March 29
 Mani Adi Engineer (81), 315, S. B. Rd, Fort, 400001; March 29
 Gool Jamshed Dalal (85), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; March 30
 Behram Allayar Irani (65), Room no 4, Batliwalla Agiary Compd, 162/A, Tardeo, 400034; March 30
 Gover Jal Irani (82), 1, Khan Rd, Poona, 411001; March 30
 Dhun Fredoonji Tarapore (73), 14/9, Sir Ratan Tata Clny, Ratan Tata Marg, Tardeo, 400034; March 30
 Yasmin Savakshaw Variava (55), Queens Chmbs, Marine Lines, 400020; March 31
 Dowlat Nanoo Watchmaker (85), 1/11, Somerset Hse, 61/E, Off B. Desai Rd, 400026; March 31

CALCUTTA

DIED

Rati Homi Nusserwanji, mother of Darius and late Cyrus; February 1
 Rustom Cawashji Dastur, husband of Meher and brother of late Homi, Jason and Keki; March 7

NAVSARI

MARRIED

Hilla Soonawalla, daughter of Dolly and Bahadur, and Percy Kodia, son of Jaloo and Pesi; February 7

OOTY

DIED

Noshir Hormusji Vajifdar (88), husband of late Freany; January 14

POONA

DIED

Gustad Rutonji Dalal (87), Jamasp Bldg, Ma-Perviz Rd, 411002; February 4
 Maneck Gayomard Sinor (60), Survey no 223/5B, Hadapsar, 411028; February 4

Coomi Jivanji Taraporewala (81), 1, New Parsharam Soc, Vimannagar, February 7
Khushroo Fareedoon Kajian (72), 207, Alpawalla Bldg, Dr C. H. St, Dhobitalao, Bombay, 400002; February 8
Homi Kaikooshru Jamshed (53), 42, Tulsidas Apts, D. M. Rd, 411001; February 12
Sam Rashid Irani (58), Vaishally Heights, Hadapsar, Gadi Tal, 411028; March 6
Nazneen Khushru Bhatena (16), C-10/23, Kubera Park, Lullanagar, 411040; March 9
Minoo Faramroz Madon (84), A/6, Ashoka Co-op Hsg Soc, 3, Naylor Rd, 411001; March 10
Fram Minocher Dodhi (79), Viloo Hse, 616/A, Sachapir St, 411001; March 11
Piran Jehangir Irani (7), 255, Datta Soc, Nangargaon, Lonavla, 410401; March 13
Mani Jamshedji Masalawalla (73), Homi Hse, 1956, Dr Saldanha St, 411001; March 25
Daulat Fali Mehta (64), Konark Court, Deccan College Rd, 411006; March 28

SURAT

DIED

Daulatbanoo Dhanjishaw Patvi (78), Kadiyawad, Saiyedpura, Kavinast, 395003; March 2
Baby boy of Zubin Dumasia (4 mths), Wadi St, Rustompura, 395002; March 13
Kersi Maneckji Doctor (63), Parsiwad, Siganpore; March 20
Khorshedbai Jehangirji Kolet (80), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; March 27
Minoo Behramshaw Mistry (63), Bejonji Kotwal St, Nanpura, 395003; March 27

AUSTRALIA

New South Wales

BORN

A boy, **Kamran**, to **Farnaz** and **Viraf Hathiram**; December 5, 1998
 A boy, **Cyrus**, to **Christine** and **Adil Vaghaiwala** at Alice Springs; January 21, 1999

MARRIED

Marina Batliwalla and **Behram Burjor Vaghaiwala** at Sydney; March 20

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o	This issue	1998*	1999 ^o
BIRTHS									
Boys	9	116	25	2	3	3	2	49	2
Girls	9	92	21	1	5	2	—	34	1
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	22	262	99	2	15	4	1	18	1
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	35	63	9	—	1	—	—	2	1
Females married out	34	56	14	—	1	—	—	9	—
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	43	481	118	16	125	38	—	54	5
Females	41	513	121	8	114	23	—	47	3
CREMATED									
Males	6	11	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Females	4	7	1	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 1998 (January 1998–May 1999 issues)

^oRunning totals for 1999 (January 1999–May 1999 issues)

Overseas deaths are listed in the consigned column as *Parsiana* does not have a break-up 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.

Bombay: The Telling Figures

Intercommunity marriages increase to 31 percent

The number of Zoroastrians in Bombay who married out of the community in 1998 rose to 119. As versus 96 Zoroastrians who had contracted intercommunity marriages in 1997, this year's figure of 119 saw 63 males and 56 females opting for non-Zoroastrian spouses. The percentage of intercommunity marriages thus works out to 31 in 1998 as versus 26 in 1997 if calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to the total number of marriages (119:381). If calculated as a ratio of intercommunity marriages to community marriages (119:262) the percentage hikes to 45 as compared to 35 the preceding year. About a decade ago the figure was around 20 and 30 percent.

Altogether 643 Zoroastrians tied the matrimonial knot last year as compared to 646 the previous year, registering a decline of three. Community marriages which numbered 275 in 1997 fell to 262 in 1998, showing a decline of 13.

Since every new arrival in the Zoroastrian community is

welcome news, the fact that the births registered an increase of three over the 1997 total of 205 is itself heartening. The birth count of 208, 116 boys and 92 girls, includes children born of intercommunity marriages. Last year too there were more boys (104) than girls (101) born in the community. Our information on births being accessed from only four hospitals in south and central Bombay, we presume that *Parsiana* accounts for around 50 percent of the births in the community in Bombay.

But while the births increased by three, the number of deaths increased by 74 in 1998 giving a total count of 1,012. There were 994 Zoroastrians consigned at Bombay's Tower of Silence as compared to 925 in 1997, an increase of 69. The number of cremations rose by five over the previous year's count of 13 to show a total of 18. Only the data of those cremated at the Chandanwadi crematorium is known to us.

Considering that 520 females died in 1998 (513 consigned; seven cremated) as compared to

492 males (481 consigned; 11 cremated) it means that the strength of the female species is dwindling more rapidly, there being 28 more female deaths and 24 less female births.

From the details of those consigned at the Doongerwadi sent to us by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, we were able to calculate the Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB) as 75 years, the same as in the preceding two years. However, the highest LEB, 82, was in the month of December, and the lowest, 74, in the months of March, June and September 1998.

Listed below are the 1998 figures pertaining to the community in Bombay as collected by *Parsiana*.

Born: 208
 Boys 116, Girls 92
 Marriages: 381
 Parsi 262,
 Intercommunal 119
 Died: 1,012
 Consigned: 994
 Males 481, Females 513
 Cremated: 18
 Males 11, Females 7

Cancer crusader

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Dr Darab Jehangir Jussawalla, 83, founder secretary and managing trustee of the Indian Cancer Society who was known for establishing the country's first cancer chemotherapy and cytology departments, on January 29, 1999 following kidney failure at Bombay's Breach Candy Hospital.

"Very few cancer experts had the vision like Dr Jussawalla," noted a condolence letter from the Indian Council of Medical Research acknowledging that their one-time governing council member "was the first to initiate projects on cancer registration in India...Under his leadership the Indian Cancer Society became a household name in India."

"Dr Jussawalla's name is synonymous with cancer and the Tata Memorial Hospital," said the present director Dr Ketayun Dinshaw. "He was a man ahead of his times — a pioneer and a visionary. We who had the privilege of working with him will always remember the legacy he has left behind," she added.

One of the pioneer cancer surgeons of India, he enjoyed the distinction of being the only surgeon in the history of the Tata Memorial Centre (the largest cancer hospital and research institute in Asia) who was granted extension of service until he reached 71 years of age, the prescribed retirement age being 60, or 65 when an extension was permitted, recalled P. S. Suryanarayanan who was his personal assistant from 1960. For seven years he was director of the Tata Memorial Centre during which time he introduced regional specialization in surgical oncology and undertook expansion work of the Centre, noted a press release. For the last nearly 15 years he had been serving as director of the Lady Ratan Tata Medical and Research Centre which he established in Bombay's Coopers area in 1984.

Until a fortnight prior to his demise when he took ill and had to be immedi-

ately hospitalized after attending to a patient at the Breach Candy, he was active at the Centre and continued with his surgical practice too. Neither did he take leave nor would he like others to take leave, reminisced Suryanarayanan.

Jussawalla has also been credited with establishing the first Cancer Rehabilitation Department in Asia and the first

cancer detection unit in a general hospital in India, organizing the first All India Cancer Conference in 1961 where he was elected its president, starting the *Indian Journal of Cancer* and serving as its editor, laying the foundations for the Indian Association of Oncologists where he served as its first president...

"His selfless service and contribution to the Society and humanity shall be remembered forever," declared Dr Arun Singh, honorary secretary of the Indian Cancer Society. Different branches of the Indian Cancer Society which he nurtured for nearly 45 years acknowledged Jussawalla's contribution. The Karnataka, Calcutta and Delhi branches of the Society remembered the leading role he played in their trying moments. Cancer, for him, was not only an occupation but also a hobby, stated Jussawalla's wife Gertrud.

Honorary surgeon to the President of India as also to the governor of Maharashtra, Jussawalla was governing council member of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. He served as advisor to innumerable cancer hospitals throughout India and as chairman of different committees appointed by the Government of India including the Nuclear Medicine Committee and the Biomedical Group Board of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. Among the noteworthy recognitions earned by him were the Padma Bhushan and the Dhanvantari Award.

He was founder member of the International Cancer Control Commission

appointed by the International Cancer Union — Geneva, was the Indian delegate on the board of the Bruxelles based International Society of Surgery for nearly four decades, was honorary founder secretary of the Ad-Hoc Committee of the International Association of Cancer Registries established in Tokyo. He was made Fellow of seven reputed institutions including the Royal Society of Medicine, London, the American College of Surgeons, Chicago and the National Academy of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. His appointment as Corresponding Fellow of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland was a signal honor reserved for only 50 surgeons throughout the world, according to his curriculum vitae.

Additionally he had served as member of some 23 associations/societies/councils including the WHO (World Health Organization) Expert Committee on Cancer, and presided over many national and international medical seminars and conferences on cancer. Whilst furthering his own knowledge, he also made time to share his expertise with others, authoring over 100 papers which have been published in national and international journals. As professor of oncology at the Bombay University, Jussawalla had given his guidance to many upcoming surgeons.

His own education started in Bombay. After completing his schooling at the age of 14, he studied science for two years at St Xavier's College and then proceeded to the Grant Medical College to graduate in medicine. On earning his master's degree in surgery he was appointed resident (surgical registrar) at the Tata Memorial Hospital and after obtaining his FRCS diploma he was appointed surgeon.

"In spite of his remarkable achievements he remained most humble," was the experience of those who worked for him. "He was most soft-spoken, very humane to all and particularly kind to the underprivileged patients." His concern for those suffering manifested in the creation of multiple facilities includ-



Jussawalla: a pioneer and a visionary

ing free food, shelter and medicine.

Being a voracious reader, Jussawalla believed in keeping himself abreast of the latest developments in all fields, impressing upon his personal assistant that it was not sufficient for him to only have knowledge of cancer. He retained his interest in western classical music although he did not get time to play the violin which he did in his younger days.

Neither he nor his wife who is an Austrian tried to influence each other's religious beliefs. And though he believed in God, he was not a ritualist who felt the need to wear a sudreh-kusti at all times, says Gertrud. He did, however, in-

volve himself in the affairs of the community and at the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress in Bombay in 1985 he had presented a paper on "Differences observed in the incidence of cancer among Parsis and other communities in Bombay."

Cancer continued to be his preoccupation and as noted in a condolence message from Cancer Crusaders Combine, a voluntary organization based in Nagpur, Jussawalla "remained in the front as a commandant-in-chief of cancer crusaders."

The respected oncologist is survived by his wife Gertrud.

"Pride of Doon"

Died: Dr Noshir Nowroji Kapadia, 92, a founder member of the All-India Dental Association and erstwhile president of the Dehra Dun Parsi Anjuman for nearly four decades, on October 8, 1998.

"He was one of those rare human beings who imparted decency and dignity to everything that they did. His life was a saga of selfless service and adherence to the highest standards in professional ethics," wrote Lt Gen Faridoon Bilimoria, the present president of the Dehra Dun Anjuman in his tribute to his predecessor.

Just a few months prior to his demise Kapadia had been conferred the prestigious Pride of Doon award by the Doon Citizens Council. "Dr Kapadia's services to the people of Dehra will never be forgotten," mentions the tribute recalling how since his visit to the valley in 1933 he was "so charmed...by the

Drona-nagri that he made it his home; and so enamored were the people of the valley with him that he soon became one of them as if he had always belonged to the place."

Until his retirement from the medical profession 10 years ago he operated from his clinic in Dehra Dun. His distant location notwithstanding, he continued to make a mark on the national and international dental scene with his "strict adherence to ethical values which are traditionally and ideally attached to the medical profession." He served as president of the All-India Dental Association, was made a member of the executive com-

mittee of the Dental Council of India, a body constituted by the Government of India to control the working of dental colleges and to regulate dental education in the country. He also had the honor of being made Fellow of the International College of Dentistry of the USA, as listed in his achievements.

Born in Bharuch, Kapadia was educated at St Stephen's School and St Stephen's College in Delhi after which he graduated from the Calcutta Dental College and completed his training from the Ecole Dentaire de Paris in France. A good hockey player, he was a member of the first eleven of St Stephen's College who bagged the Delhi University Vice-Chancellor's Cup in 1928. Even whilst pursuing his medical profession he continued to evince a keen interest in sports, organizing the annual sports meets in Dehra Dun and serving as chief track judge for many years, reminiscence old residents of the valley.

He became president of the Dehra Dun Anjuman in the mid 1950s, the post being earlier held by his father-in-law Pestonjee Bomanjee Guzdar. His own father, Nowroji, was the founder of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman after whom the Parsi cemetery in Delhi, Navroze Baug was named, notes the write-up.

Some of the other institutions with which Kapadia was associated were the Rotary International, Freemasonry and the St John's Ambulance Association, earning a certificate of honor from the then viceroy of India, Lord Wavell.

Kapadia is survived by his wife Tehmina.



Tehmina and Noshir Kapadia: imparted dignity

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 8

nience of both the families but jewellery should not be worn openly.

I was a delegate of the Parsi Matrimonial Court for about 10 years when I found that many marriages break up owing to wives insisting on staying separately from the husband's parents against the man's wishes. The second reason was suspicion of extra-marital affairs with non-Parsis.

TEHMURAS PESTONJI SETHNA

A spinster teacher

(For the late Prof Mehroo Jussawalla who was murdered in Bombay on February 17, 1999)

The staircase would humorously
creak

to bear your load
And you would laugh out loud
at the wooden protest

O that this too too solid flesh
would melt

(That was no cosmic joke!)
And the table groaning
under mountains of food
And the full belly laughing at noon
There were other things under other
suns.

The Oxford girl reading Marvell or
Donne
Those hands were not meant for work
or the kill
But only to prise a meaning out of a
text

Her father's own Penelope
And the cobwebs and the tapestry
The warp and woof of familial love
(Mother dead)

The weevil in the bin at work
And the termite in the leather
book-binding
Ruskin, Venice and the honeyed sun
of love

Sinking over Malabar Hill
The evenings longer/The laughter
sharper

And then the night
[On the map Bombay is a hand
But it is really a hungry mouth]
There was this healthy woman
with a disease, so lonely
that grew and grew
And the working class thief
who came up at night to kill
was really a redeemer...
The branch is bent when green
and if not then... HOSHANG MERCHANT

Hyderabad

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

P.M.G.

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connoisseurs are of

one opinion. Best pineapple,
Rasna pineapple.

