



SEPTEMBER 1999 Rs 30

Pārsiānā



Finding a niche in New Zealand

While assembling a TV might be easy, procuring the components is a devil of a job. Especially when they have to be sourced from all over the world.

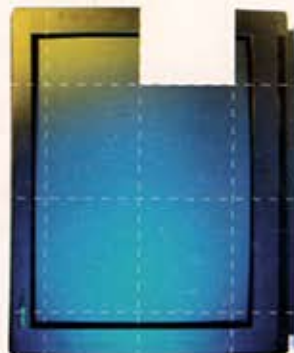
Geographical distances and time zone differences play havoc with assembly lines. A case

We then ship consolidated supplies to Mumbai under one shipping document and manage all related procedural issues.

Our Co-ordination Cell keeps MIRC continuously updated about the status of their shipments using an advanced Track and Trace

become the one-stop movement conglomerate. Today, we provide business solutions to moving anything, anywhere, anytime, by air, over land, or through water.

For this, we have upgraded our technology and systems at every step. Evidence of our providing



**You can pay for a TV
in instalments.**

**You can't assemble one
in instalments.**

in point being MIRC, the makers of Onida TVs. Their problem being consignments from various countries at various times.

Enter AFL, recognized by MIRC as the leading logistics solutions provider in the field of supply-chain management.

To make the supply chain work, we set up a hub in Singapore. As also a Route Management and Co-ordination Cell, dedicated to MIRC.

Once MIRC places orders with its suppliers in Singapore, activation of our hub is instantaneous.

system. Instantly. Through our intranet.

This unique solution also achieves MIRC's objective of just-in-time inventory management. Which means, availability of supplies in the nick of time, at a competitive cost.

The question is, why does MIRC consider us so unique?

The answer lies in fifty years of expertise. And investments.

In 1945, AFL launched air freight forwarding in India. From there we've come a long way to

the finest infrastructure, are 1200 PCs connecting over 200 offices, hubs and key customers.

This dedication has allowed our turnover to exceed Rs. 550 crore today. We believe it will help us cross the Rs. 1000 crore mark by 2002. Much to our competitors' envy. And our pride.



Where movement is a science



<http://www.afl.co.in>

AFL CARGO

AFL LOGISTICS

AFL INDTRAVELS

AFL INFOTECH

Parsiana

September 1999
Volume 22 Number 2

EDITOR Jehangir R. Patel
MANAGING EDITOR Arnavaz S. Mama
EXECUTIVE EDITOR Parinaz M. Gandhi
SENIOR EDITORS
Dina K. Mehta, Hilla P. Guzder
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Roxana A. Driver
DESIGN Kranti M. Shiltri, Nivedita S. Dhotre
MARKETING DIRECTOR Veera J. Patel
ADVERTISING MANAGER Jasmine D. Driver
ADVERTISING EXECUTIVE Susan Hadvaid
FINANCE B. L. Arora
DTP Bakhtavar R. Batliwalla, K. P. Ravi
SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Khurshid Panthaki
ASSISTANT SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Swarupa Bhagwat
ACCOUNTANT Anagha Korde
ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT
Sampada S. Patwardhan
ACCOUNTS ASSISTANTS Indu Pillai,
Sreevidya P. Unni
OFFICE ASSISTANTS Umesh Poojary,
Selvan Mark, Sunil Sakhare,
Govind Salgaonkar, Mahipat Jadhav

2 Readers' Forum

8 Events and Personalities

16 Zoroastrians Abroad

24 New Zealand Zoroastrians by Gustasp Irani

28 Billimora's Gabba Adarian centenary by Parinaz Gandhi

30 BPP deficit: Rs 1.39 crore by Arnavaz Mama

32 What price universal adult franchise? by Dinshaw Tamboly

34 The case for universal adult franchise by R. Tirandaz and D. Mehta

36 Decorating Dilnaar Ahmadullah by Hilla Guzder

38 Homi Taleyarkhan: A hall, a lecture and memories...

42 Farhang Irani's eateries

46 Business

48 Sports

49 Sri Lanka Parsis: Treasured on the Island - 2

53 Books

54 Milestones

Cover: A weeping willow in New Zealand Photo by Gustasp Irani

Parsiana is edited, published and printed by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001. Processing Comart Lithographers and Scana Color (India) Ltd. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0971-3786. Phone: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541. For editorial enquiries: 2078183. E-mail: parvo@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in Parsiana@yahoo.com For subscription enquiries and payments: C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street (Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001. Phone: 2658619, 2665661. Fax: 2654585.

Annual inland subscription for one year (11 issues) Rs 325; for two years (22 issues)

Rs 625; for three years (33 issues) Rs 925. Foreign subscription rates: Seamail for one year Rs 575/ US \$ 15/UK £ 9/Euro 14; for two years Rs 1,100/US \$ 27/UK £ 17/Euro 26; for three years Rs 1,595/US \$ 38/UK £ 23/Euro 36 (please allow six months or more for seamail delivery from the time of publication). Airmail for one year Rs 850/US \$ 23/ UK £ 15/ Euro 22 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 650); for two years, Rs 1,600/US \$ 43/UK £ 27/Euro 41 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 1,225); for three years Rs 2,400/US \$ 60/UK £ 37/Euro 57 (for Pakistan, Indian Rs 1,825). For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 20 for bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5; for UK cheques add £ 3; for Euro cheques add Euro 5. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana.



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.

A people of destiny

As I opened and read the June issue in Kansas City — a laid-back community of mid-Westerners far from the hustle and bustle of metropolitan America — I was filled with pride and excitement to see the front cover display Ruby Hall in Poona, and generously splashed across the pages were photos of Dr Hector and Tehmi Grant, son Purvez, Anu Aga, Adi uncle and Jini aunty, Frey Grant, Rusi Batlivalla et al. All my family. And in the same issue was the struggling community of Neemuch. Isolated in the middle of India, this community fights to survive and retain its identity against great odds.

The Parsis will not perish from this earth. We have been through worse. We are a people of destiny. We are special. We need to once again rise to the task of putting this vast fragmented community together so our children know their roots and whence they came from. With

the Internet and all the wealth of information it brings, there is a compelling reason why a spider web of communities around the world be grouped together for local, regional, national and continental support — synergistically.

The Jewish community has done a marvellous job of stitching together diverse communities around the world under one flag. This harks back to the days of yore when a Parsi anywhere was a Parsi first and then a Brit, or an Indian, or a (spoilt) Yankee! There was pride in being a Parsi then. After all, wherever they went, the local communities were naming streets and parks and hospitals after the great Parsi builders and benefactors.

It is true that a whole generation of Parsis from the early 1960s were involved in a massive and a dispersive migration, the likes of which we have never experienced before. We are now represented in all the continents of the world. As we settle down to the mundane regimen of raising a family, establishing our roots and blending into the landscape of the local community, I propose that we establish ourselves as the tallest tree in the area, bring pride and self-esteem back into the community of Zoroastrians. Let our children be proud of their heritage. Only by taking on a global vision can we expect to achieve in today's changed environment the same sense of loyalty, unity, camaraderie, brotherhood that we had in Bombay as I was growing up.

When I was growing up, the 'Parsas' of Bombay were a motley group of disparate communities. From the 'aristocrats' of Churchgate and Pedder Road to the middle-class communities of Dadar and Cusrow Baug to the modest communities of Grant Road and the charity buildings. We played cricket together, we had friends all across town and we dated across socioeconomic lines. But we were all Parsi first, last and everything in between.

Today, we are poised on the threshold of synergising our efforts through the coming together of the three main governing bodies of our community: the World Zoroastrian Organisation, The Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America and the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. They are collectively doing a magnificent job. If they would

put together a team of well respected negotiators that would hammer out the details for a world body constitution, we Parsis could soon see the re-emergence of the greatest community of people.

NOSHIR L. HANSOTIA

Kansas, USA

Sanctity of dokhmas

The trustees of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) are aware that our community attaches a great sentiment and emotional value to the environmentally friendly system of dokhmenashini which has admirably withstood the test, vicissitude and vagaries of time. Keeping in mind the sentiments of the community, the trustees reiterate that their intention is to strengthen the system, not to change it.

It is a known fact that for various reasons such as rapid urbanization, heavy infusion of pesticides in crops, mechanical processing at abattoirs, etc the global population of vultures is declining. The BPP trustees have been seized of the situation for quite some time now, and have already undertaken various measures to ensure that the system of dokhmenashini largely remains unaffected.

The BPP trustees have been in consultation with our High Priests, Dastur Kaikhusroo JamaspAsa and Dastur Firoze Kotwal. They have also consulted other respected members of our community such as Khojeste Mistree, Dr Homi Dhalla, Noshir Dadrawala, Ervad Parvez Bajan, Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia, Ervad Rooyintan Peer, Ervad K. N. Dastoor and Adi Doctor who are knowledgeable about the issues in question and have been making available the benefits of their expertise.

Our scholars have all maintained that the primary source of disposal are the rays of the sun or Khorshed Nagirashni, and the role of the vultures, whilst secondary, is albeit important, not from any scriptural point of view, but because over the years it has proved to be very effective.

However, we live in times that are quite distinct from the earlier ones, and whilst continuing with our revered system of dokhmenashini, we now have to come to terms with reality and address the issues that have unfolded before us.

The BPP trustees have already taken



INTERNATIONAL

CURRENCY

DEALERS

Branches

Mumbai

Kalpitaru Chambers, 6 Nanik Motwane Marg, Mumbai 400023

Tel 267-1566, 267-1432, 267-1452, 266-6529, 266-6530

Fax (022) 262-4837

Mumbai Airports

Domestic Airport: Santacruz Tel 615-6121 Fax (022) 610-6347

International Airport: Sahar Tel 832-7913 Fax (022) 822-4532

Mumbai Docks

Ballard Estate, Mumbai

Pune

8, Nalin Chambers, 173 Dhole Patil Road, Pune 411001

Tel 605-0565, 605-0566 Fax (020) 605-0584

Goa

#119, Hotel Fidalgo, 18th June Road, Panaji 403001

Tel 42-1398, 22-6291-9 Ext 119 Fax (0832) 22-0129

New Delhi

UGF-8 Indraprakash Building, 21 Barakhamba Road,
New Delhi 110001

Tel 335-2547, 331-0028, 335-2548 Fax (011) 335-7008

Bangalore

G2 Richmond Plaza, Richmond Circle,

Raja Ram Mohan Roy Rd., Bangalore 560025

Tel 222-7194, 221-1025 Fax (080) 221-1084

Tours & Travel Services

Mumbai

52 White Hall, August Kranti Marg, Mumbai 400036

Tel 362-0005, 367-1455, 368-0303 Fax 363-0656

For an authentic
Udvada experience
**Globe Hotel
and
Hotel Majestic**

Contact 02638-70282 Majestic
02638-71144, 70243 Globe

Managed by
Neville Godiwalla

13/13, Sai Niketan, B Wing, 345, Mount Road,
Mazagaon, Bombay 400010
Tel Nos.: 3775842, 3775360, 3742065, 3717036

the professional advice of a UK based internationally renowned lady who is the owner/director of the world's largest institute on birds of prey. She was invited to visit our estate, which she has done, and has forwarded her report which deals on the various methods of raising vultures in captivity.

Keeping in focus, various statutory constraints and religious sensitivities, the BPP trustees have to proceed with extreme caution. This is at the very best a long-term project which may or may not crystallize, depending on various reasons, happily, none of them being lack of interest by the trustees.

In close coordination with the BPP trustees, a small team of well-intentioned, committed and dedicated Zoroastrian professionals is also working towards introducing various measures which would reinforce our existing system of dokhmenashini. They are pooling their talents in diverse areas, all of which enjoy the sanction of our high priests and scholars.

The intention of this write-up is to keep members of the community abreast of the steps being taken by the BPP as it is apprehended that ill informed comments on this matter in the Press may be deleterious to the community's interests.

DINSHAW TAMBOLY

Trustee, Bombay Parsi Punchayet

More "Parsi myths"

With reference to a couple of letters in the April '99 issue of *Parsiiana* (namely "Outlived the dokhmas?" and "The three Parsi myths"), I embark upon this humble effort, not to provide any justification for our time-tested tarikats, but instead to drive home a point that just because we are in the



For Pure Diamonds

K. WADIA
JEWELLERS

324, Grant Road, Bombay 400007. Telephone 3099648 Fax 3073483
APPOINTED VALUERS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MASTER GROUP OF COMPANIES



www.mastergroups.com

Corporate Office:

22/D S. A. Brelvi Road, Fort, Bombay 400001

Tel: 2873567-2886642-2886643 Fax: 91-22-2870139

Cable: "MOORINGS" Telex: 118-2119 MMSB Email: mms.bom@gems.vsnl.net.in

Administrative Office:

55A/63A, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Opp G.P.O., Bombay 400001

Tel: 2692787 (10 Lines) Fax: 91-22-2652841 Cable: "SHIPMENT" Tlx: 118-2307 PSAB IN

Email: prudential.bom@gems.vsnl.net.in



**MASTER
MARINE** *Services*
973.272

*Certified Marine Surveyor
(Govt. Licensed) and Loss Assessors*



**Prudential Shipping Agencies
Private Limited**

*Shipping Agents, Cargo Brokers and
Multi Transport Operators*



**Meher Container Terminals
Private Limited**

(A division of MMSPL)

Yard and CFS management



Kalson Power Tech Private Limited
Hydro-Power

nuclear age does not mean we do away with our long-standing customs and traditions. For if we do, what do we have left? Whereas, in most cases the Zarathushti religion is explainable scientifically, there are certain aspects of it (like every other religion) that may not seem to make much sense in this day and age, and yet these are very vital for the preservation of our faith.

In "Outlived the dokhmas?" the writer has decided that the dokhmas need to be done away with, because of one scene in a movie wherein he witnessed a vulture "tearing apart and devouring its prey." The writer should consider himself fortunate not to have witnessed the digging up of a grave. The horror of the sight of millions of maggots devouring a corpse is far more disturbing but just because this decay occurs beneath the ground, some people are of the opinion that it is kinder to the dead. We couldn't be further away from the truth. As for the flames of an incinerator, what they do to the body behind the iron door is best left unsaid. But again, the only thing positive about this is that the process is actually shielded from our eyes. Whereas no one seems curious enough to dig up graves and see what happens underneath, or in the workings of the incinerators, people for some reason seem to be obsessed with entering our dokhmas.

As for making the dokhmas more efficient to suit present-day needs, steps are being taken by the concerned authorities to facilitate the speedy destruction of the corpse, without deviating from the basic mode of disposal, i.e. Khorshed Nagirashni. As for the odor the people put up with in the vicinity of the Towers these people should consider themselves fortunate to live in such a lush and lovely part of Bombay, for there are millions who live in appalling conditions, with the smell of sewage, amidst industrial pollution, chemical radiation, in the vicinity of crematoria where the air abounds in the ashes of the dead. Instead of becoming a community of wingers and finding fault with every religious dictum of ours, it is high time that Parsis use their better intellect for the betterment of the community. Just because the Zarathushti religion is tolerant of criticism to itself does not give people the license to lash out at it via the printed or any other media for that matter. People are free to make choices in the Zarathushti reli-

gion and then live out the consequences of such an act. Similarly, one can choose one's mode of exit, i.e. via burial, cremation or exposure, but asking for an ancient tradition to be changed because it seems repulsive to some, well that's another thing altogether!

As for "The three Parsi myths," why three, depending on how you look at it, everything in a religion is myth. Is it not? Will people be asking next for proof that our Prophet Zarathushtra existed? Just because there are a few hymns ascribed to this seer in the past, is it enough proof of his existence? Did the able writer stop wearing his sudreh-kusti when the bullet-proof vest was invented for bodily protection? I am sure not. One may wonder about the relevance of certain age-old rituals, but to demand a scientific explanation for them, and in the absence of which to call for their being done away with, amounts to childishness. A people without a tradition are like a ship without a rudder! All great religions survived because of the importance placed by them on ritual...whether it be circumcision of newborns or sacrificing of animals in the name of God, whether it be Sunday Mass, or the sacred application of bull's urine.

Even the army and navy of a nation have a number of elaborate rituals. Horses are still extensively used in these rituals (in parades, etc) although the automated car has been long invented. Now if horses are still a part of an army's ritual, can we not justify keeping the intrinsic bits of our tarikats which themselves are steeped in science? Just as we do not forsake the power of prayer in spite of the vast advantages made by medicine, similarly it would be quite out of the question to sacrifice the consecrated nirang in favor of Dettol!

Then there are many things science cannot explain, for example, how a bee can fly, or even why out of all the known planets in the universe, why is it only Earth that developed life forms? If we humans still have the dignity to retain the relevance of Almighty God in this nuclear age, surely we can make place for His prophets and the commandments expounded by them and by their closest disciples?

And in the words of our own beloved Prophet Nabi Zarathushtra (Yasna 53.6, I quote from the more poetic rendition by Dr J. N. Sidhva):

"The lures of untruth which appear to attract,
Will actually from your spiritual selves detract.
The veil of dim light of those bearing woe
Doth obscure the deceit of truthfulness' foe.
These wicked ones who are the bearers of strife
Do verily pervert our spiritual life."

PASHMINA M. CONTRACTOR
Kathmandu, Nepal

"Parity with priests"

In response to "Parity with priests" by Dali Gundevia (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February-March 1999) I wish to quote some memorable instances which I will carry throughout my life. In December 1997, I attended a jashan ceremony at Cama Baug, Bombay performed by Ervad Keki Ravji where prayers were recited in a unique manner, with true emotion. After the jashan ceremony I was told by a friend of mine that had I heard the prayers recited by his father the late Ervad Kavas Ravji, I would have experienced a soul-stirring sensation.

On another occasion in March 1999, jashan prayers were recited in a loud clear voice by Homi Govadia of Mahim, at our flat in Shapur Baug. Never have I witnessed so serene an atmosphere. I felt I was in *minoj jehan* (divine spiritual world). FAROKH NAVAROLI DARUWALA
Middlesex, UK

Calcutta Club's reunion

Nestled among the little tents that dot the spacious open maidan in the heart of Calcutta lies the Calcutta Parsee Club (CPC). Founded in 1908, it boasts of the cheapest membership in the world. Yet it gives much more to its members and the community than it receives.

Nine months ago, the Club celebrated its 90th anniversary with a series of well-attended functions spread over a month. We are now organizing a Millennium Reunion of our many members and well-wishers and invite all Parsis of Calcutta origin to attend. Many of you are now settled in different parts of the globe but continue to give moral and financial support to your beloved Parsee Club. This will be a unique event at which we expect a minimum of 100 out-of-townners, if not more.

The celebrations, presently planned
continued on page 52

NSICT has been operational (through construction) for only 150 days....

we have the world's major shipping lines as our Associates

and we have already created history in India.

- ⌚ The total 600 meters of quay commissioned in 20.25 months ahead of schedule.
- ⌚ Largest exchange handled 3,955 TEUs in 27 hours on 29th August '99 - vessel Sealand Pride.
- ⌚ Gross ship Crane rate achieved: 96.15 moves per hour on 29th August '99.
- ⌚ no berthing delays
- ⌚ we give our customers the services they demand and deserve.



**Experience the difference and save costs at -
India's first private Container Terminal**



**Nhava Sheva International
Container Terminal Limited (NSICT)**

Contact:

**Capt. Jimmy Sarbh, Managing Director or Anil Singh, CEO,
Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal Limited,
Darabshaw House, Narottam Morarji Road,
Mumbai 400 038.
Telephone: +91 22 261 0619, 261 0566, Fax: +91 22 262 1405**

Events and Personalities

Effective youths

An electrocardiogram (ECG) machine, a blood pressure monitor, an instrument sterilizer, an x-ray viewing light, an examination light, a pathological test kit and a kerosene and diesel operated generator were among the equipment gifted to Udvada's Seth M. C. Damanwala Charitable Dispensary by the WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Youth Wing, according to a write-up submitted by Zubin Mistry. "This charitable dispensary is a boon...to the residents and visitors in the village," added Mistry specifying that Rs 60,000 was spent by the WZO Youth Wing to provide better facilities there.

The elderly residents of Udvada will now no longer need to travel far for prompt and efficient medical aid, commented Keki Dastur, president of the Damanwala Trust, at a function on June 20, 1999 at the idyllic two-storeyed seaside dispensary. He congratulated the WZO Youth Wing on its continuing efforts to improve the quality of life in Udvada through its long-term "Project Udvada." Dastur mentioned that the Dispensary was founded in 1867 and that the present premises were donated by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust in 1924. Major repairs in 1995 were made possible through the largesse of the WZO Trust Funds and Cyrus Unwala.

Expressing the hope that the resident doctor Chetan Ondia would continue here for a long time and that the rapid turnover of doctors at the Damanwala Dispensary would halt, Sarosh Bana, president of the WZO Youth Wing outlined their future plans. Whilst recognizing the need to help the residents he urged

them to identify their requirements and come forward with possible solutions. The Youth Wing is keen to start a gymkhana, set up a permanent exhibition on Udvada and the Iranshah, revive the local community center, open an old people's home and have Udvada de-

Iranshah but to restore it to its former glory by encouraging traditional local crafts like the weaving of kustus and torans," as per Mistry's report.

The members of the Youth Wing then entertained the gathering with their banner song, *Ud! Ud! Ud! Udvada*, composed by Homi Bana, which was also sung on March 21, 1999 when the second anniversary of the Youth Wing was celebrated. At the Jamshedi Navroz function at Bombay's Sophia Bhabha Auditorium, Adi Marzban's popular natak *Dinshaji na Dabha Gul* was performed by the famous Yazdi Karanjia troupe from Surat to raise funds specifically for their "Project Udvada," as per a write-up submitted by Zenia Mistry. Eminent economist and Tata Sons director Dr Freddie Mehta who was the chief guest on the occasion expressed his personal interest in the development of Udvada and exhorted all Parsis to lend their support.

The active Youth Wing organized yet another function, a treasure hunt in the morning of June 6, 1999 which was flagged off from the Parsi Gymkhana.

Organized by Zubin Mistry and Armin Choksey, 24 teams comprising nearly 100 individuals participated in the event that took them past Malabar Hill, Warden Road, Mahalaxmi, Prabha-devi, Byculla, Tardeo, Colaba, Cuffe Parade, Nariman Point and back again to the Gymkhana in time for a lunch of chicken dhansak and mutton kebabs. The winning team captained by Phiroze Katrak got the first prize of Rs 1,000 plus a dinner for four at the Chung Fa Restaurant on Warden Road, the team captained by Kaizad Mistry won the



Top: Bana addressing the gathering at Udvada's Damanwala Dispensary
Below: Youths who participated in WZO's treasure hunt

clared as a heritage precinct and a pilgrim center. "He debunked the misgivings of certain vested interests that the Youth Wing was attempting to alter the basic character of Udvada by facilitating industries to be introduced into the area. He assured the audience that the Youth Wing's objective was not only to retain the identity of this sacred haven of the



Leading contractors for coatings,
painting, abrasive industrial blasting,
anti-corrosion, waterproofing,
construction, diving, dredging, reclamation
and offshore contractors

Patron Member of S.S.P.C. (USA)

Corporate sustaining member of NACE USA

Corporate Office

46/A, Cawasji Patel Street, Fort, Mumbai 400001

Tel: 2853058 • 2854218 • 2042432 • 2853080 • 2844574 Fax: 91-22-2855325

Cable: "PALLONJIM"

Registered Office

87, Abdul Rehman Street, Mumbai 400003 Tel: 3424150 • 3436607

second prize of Rs 750 and Roshan Elavia's team won the third prize of Rs 500, as per the details from Sanobar Italia. Credit for the successful organization of this hunt should also go to Rusi Bhungara, joint treasurer of WZO (India) and honorary secretary of the Parsi Gymkhana, states Italia, pleased that the occasion provided an opportunity for interaction and bonhomie.

Molding young minds

The attitude of most of us is "I am happy and even proud to be a Parsi but I am afraid I don't know too much about my religion." With this frank but woeful admission, there is little we can do to instil religious values in our children at a juncture when awareness and pride in our identity as Zoroastrians is a must if we want the coming generation to carry forward our religion into the next millennium.

Making an invaluable contribution to the Parsi community of Nagpur, Narges Desai has started Sunday school classes in religion for young children. A human dynamo with the energy and enthusiasm of a 16-year-old, Desai at 61 has recently retired as a senior officer from the Central Bank of India and her husband Naval is an erudite. They are a deeply religious couple with knowledge and awareness of religious theology and ritual. What sets this couple apart from most others is the sincere effort they make to spread this zeal and to awaken the community from its sense of apathy. Since dedicated mobeds are in short supply, Narges would like to volunteer to be the first female priest. She is often the choreographer and inspiration be-

hind many of the Zoroastrian oriented stage productions and fashion shows put up by the Nagpur Gymkhana.

What began four years ago with a neighbor's daughter pestering her with questions about our prayers and rituals and listening wide-eyed to stories of Persian kings and conquerors, soon attracted more and more youngsters. "With minds like sponges, eager and ready to absorb, it became both a pleasure and a challenge for me to expend my time and energy in teaching children about our religion," says Narges.

As more parents came to know of these classes, more children joined them. Today about 30 happy, chattering children fill every nook and corner of the Desai living room on Sundays between 10.30 a.m. and 12 noon. They start by learning the basic prayers with their correct pronunciation and intonation and *Khodaiji na 101 nam*. They then proceed to learn the names of the *rozs* and the *mahs*, the *Gathas*, the *yazads*, the *farohars*. All this is taught in play, without any pressure, making it a fun experience for the children. Snacks too are invariably served at the Desais' expense.

Some Sundays are devoted to drawing on Zoroastrian themes. The navjote prayers are taught along with the significance of the *sudreh* and *kusti*, the number of seams that go into the making of a *sudreh*, the number of strands of lamb's wool that are twisted into a *kusti*. The highlight as far as the children are concerned are stories from the *Shah Namah*

and all of them love acting episodes from it. The older children form a melodious choir to sing Gujarati songs at community functions.

After an hour at the Desai home the little army of young Zoroastrians troops out to the *agiary* next door. They are taught the dos and don'ts of behavior inside a fire-temple. They end their class with a beautiful ritual. The children make a circle, holding hands and chant in unison *Khshnaothra Ahura Mazdao, Ashem Vohu...* As the last sounds of this high powered prayer stop reverberating around the high ceiling of the *agiary*, they stand silent with eyes closed and are told to feel the energy of their words flow from one clasped hand to another, binding them in a circle of Zoroastrian togetherness.

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

First in University

"Binaifer Sarosh Patel has proved her mettle by securing the highest marks in Gujarat University Third Year BCom examination with a grand total of 628 marks (79 percent)." This commendation for Patel dated July 12, 1999 was from C. B. Raval, principal of Ahmedabad's H. A. College of Commerce. "She will be awarded a gold medal for standing first in the College as well as in the Gujarat University," adds the principal mentioning that other gold medals and merit prizes will also be awarded for her performance in different subjects.

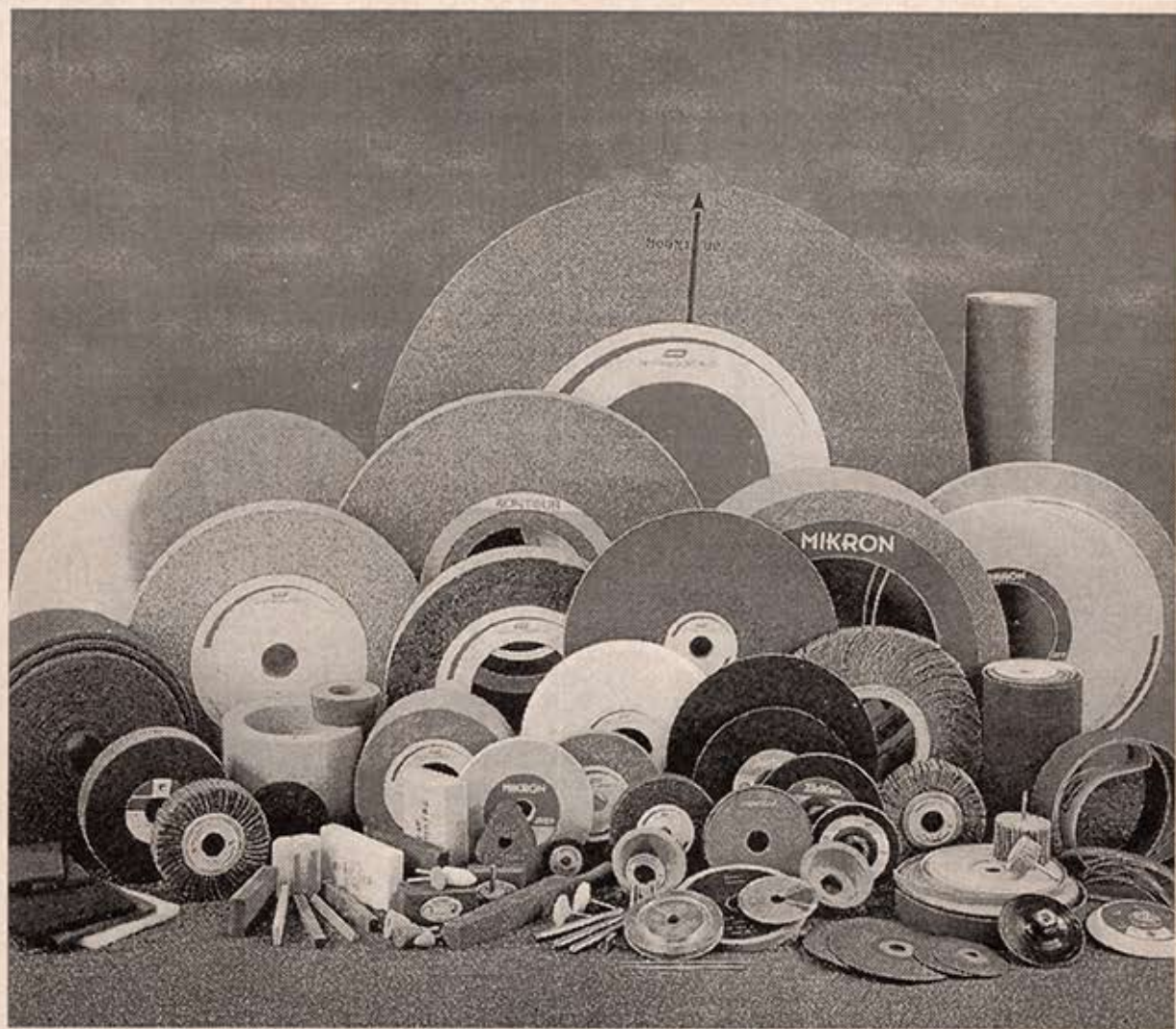
Whilst the commerce graduate specialized in accountancy and auditing, among all her papers, her best performance at the external examination was in the subject Elements of Business Statistics where she scored 68 out of 70. At the internal examination she had scored a full 30 out of 30 in business laws.

Tall and slim, Patel had won the H. A. College personality contest in 1996 and was crowned The Carmel Queen in '95 and '96 by her alma mater

Narges Desai (center, back row) with Nagpur's enthusiastic children and some inspired drawings



NORTON



**Your only full line source
of all abrasive products**

NORTON

• Ahmedabad • Bangalore • Baroda • Calcutta • Chennai • Coimbatore • Delhi • Faridabad • Indore
• Jaipur • Jamshedpur • Kanpur • Ludhiana • Mumbai • Nagpur • Pune • Rajkot • Ranchi • Secunderabad

**GRINDWELL
NORTON LTD.**

Mount Carmel School, Ahmedabad. At the all India intercollegiate fashion show, Chaos 97, held at the Indian Institute of Management, she had stood second, notes her curriculum vitae.

Twenty-year-old Patel is also fond of composing poems, painting, music and dancing.

The gay crusader

"Effervescent teacher, delightful person, trusted friend, prolific poet, committed crusader for the rights of homosexuals...that's Hoshang Merchant," notes the introduction to the three-page article titled "Gay abandon" by N. U. Abhilash in *The Week*, April 4, 1999.

Herein there is food for thought, for the soul, for the senses as the highs and lows in Merchant's 52-year life span are candidly related. He recounts intimate anecdotes from his life with unabashed frankness. "I live by no book, I write my own book," Merchant's lines from his collection of poems *The Birdless Cage* aptly describe his nature.



Merchant: "write my own book"

Photo: *The Week*

All his 12 collections except the one brought out by Rupa were published by The Writer's Workshop, Calcutta. *Stone to Fruit* was his first book published 10 years ago.

"My generation has not given me a good deal. Respect, adulation, love...they have come from the students," confessed the professor of English at the Hyderabad University whose gay activism is through discursive papers, talks and even books such as the anthology he edited on Gay Writing from India to be published by Penguin. "I hope that the book enables Indian society to understand homosexuality," expressed Merchant.

Well over a hundred

Most Zoroastrian centenarians make news when they cross 100. But Jaiji Nusserwanji Patel, who according to the death list provided by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet was aged around 112 years at the time of her death on June 10, 1999, had not observed her centenary milestone because her son Dinshaw had died then, according to a family

source, Khurshid Pardiwala.

Patel had been residing with the Pardiwalas since the early '70s ever since her younger sister Cooverbai Pestonji Pardiwala, Khurshid's mother-in-law, was diagnosed as a cancer patient. Prior to that she had been living with her brother Edulji Pardiwala believing that to be her maternal home while her husband's family was based in Pardi. Refusing to stay with her two married daughters Khorshed Pesi Bulsara and Tehmi Eruch Merchant, Patel insisted that she was more at home in nephew Dhunjishah Pardiwala's (proprietor of Colaba's Causeway Chemist) household which includes sister Soonoo, wife Khurshid, and children Paurooshasp and Rayomand. "My children would relate better with her than with us," admits Khurshid.

Born and brought up in Pardi, Jaiji was the second child in a family of six sons and four daughters. She had studied up to the fourth standard at the local school in Pardi and was known to move around without inhibitions in her *ijar* and *jhabla* when other girls her age were draped in a sari. She was fond of stitching and embroidery, and believed in performing all the prayer rituals for the departed in the family which in those days were undertaken at the residence after ensuring that the code of purity was well maintained. At the family house in Pardi she also maintained the Pirbabji ni dargah, a shrine frequented by those who believed in this saint.

Since her husband's demise in 1947

Patel (right) enjoying her hot tea and (below) with family Khurshid, Dhunjishah and Soonoo Pardiwala

she chose to settle in Bombay. Until then she had been living with her step-mother-in-law at Pardi but was never happy there as she was not permitted to accompany her husband who was looking after the family's agricultural lands at Velparve, states Khurshid.

Accustomed to a simple lifestyle, she was an accommodating and contented individual who even in her old age was never a burden on the relatives, maintains Khurshid who recalls Patel trying to ease their tension and fatigue after they had returned from work. On getting up in the morning, Patel was fond of drinking piping hot tea which she could manage on her own. Until a few years ago, during mealtime Patel would be seated on her *patlo* (low stool), her head covered with a mathabanu, a napkin spread on her lap. Her intake of snuff which she enjoyed was stopped in the last four years.

She was fairly mobile and could even bathe by herself until last year. Her faculties of sight and hearing as also her memory were fortunately intact till the end. She could recall past incidents as also names and nicknames of relatives and the days of the month as



FIRDOS & S. CAMBATT A CO.

'Cambatta Central', Bharat Bobins Ltd Premises
Rakhial Road, Ahmedabad 380023

Agents in Gujarat for



M/s ION EXCHANGE (INDIA) LTD

For INDION Water Softening Plants,
Demineralisers, Cation & Anion Resins,
Filters, Chemical Dosers, etc

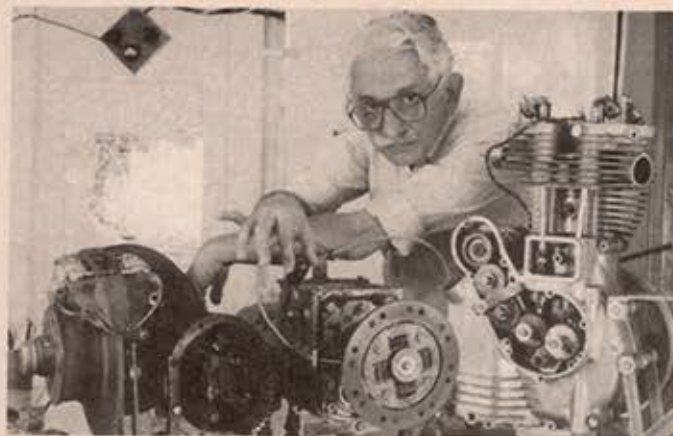
* * *



Sole concessionaires in Gujarat for

M/s INGERSOLL-RAND (INDIA) LTD

For Air Compressors and Vacuum Pumps



*Bharucha:
generating
respect for the
car*

per the Zoroastrian calendar. Even in the last five days of her life when she was confined to bed Patel was reluctant to let a doctor examine her on the rationale: "Pelo doctor hukarvano (what good will a doctor do?)" in her typical Gujarati accent.

Creative yet mechanical

"(His) advice on things mechanical, on legal matters, and on packaging and advertising (his sphere of specialization) has always been sought by many and given by Adil Godrej Bharucha enthusiastically and expertly, complete with wagging index finger," notes a

write-up by Behram S. Nagarwalla of Ahmednagar. Although presently based in Poona where he runs his advertising agency Concepta, Bharucha was formerly a resident of Ahmednagar.

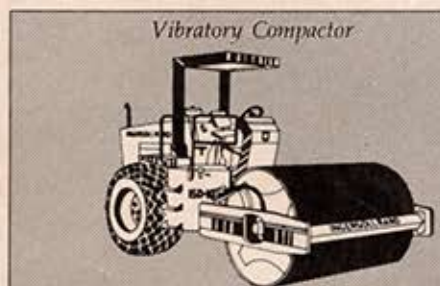
One of his worthwhile contributions is his Car Care Class, a full day course conducted every alternate Sunday in Poona to "help the average person understand his vehicle and at the same time enable the person to conduct preventive maintenance and interpret trouble signals before things get out of hand," thus preventing an unscrupulous mechanic from taking you for a ride, mentions an article in the *Pune Times of India* of May 15, 1999.

With an operational, cutout skeleton of a car used in the demonstration, Bharucha ensures that all the technical

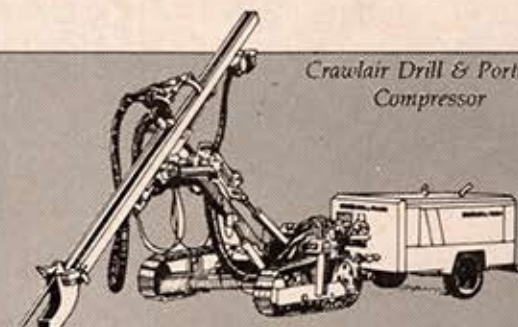
jargon like catalytic converter and turbo charger are comprehensible to a layman. Having driven a car since he was 10 years old and with machinery being his hobby for the last 40 years Bharucha ensures that his course, aimed at the housewife, students and retired persons, not only educates but also generates a respect for the complex machinery. "I read, I forget; I see, I understand; I do, I remember," is Bharucha's principle.

The Sundays he is not involved with four-wheelers, Bharucha takes wings. He is a licensed pilot with 25 years' experience. As vice chairman of a trust which runs the Gurukul School and a permanent invitee on the advisory board of Ahmednagar's S. M. Joshi Diagnostic Centre, he likes to set aside some of his time and earnings for social welfare work, mentions Nagarwalla. Bharucha's wife Feroza, the proprietor of Pune Arts Theatre is a known educationist conducting classes in speech, drama and effective communication. Their son Riyaz, a graduate in catering and hotel management, markets cakes and chocolates and is a qualified speech and drama tutor.

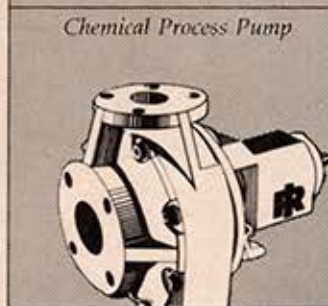
Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi



Vibratory Compactor



Crawler Drill & Portable Compressor



Chemical Process Pump



Centrifugal Air Compressor

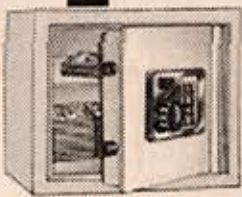
Air and Gas Compressors
Chemical Process Pumps
Construction, Mining &
Waterwell Drilling Equipment
Aircraft Ground Support
Equipment

INGERSOLL-RAND

Ingersoll-Rand (India) Limited, Rhône-Poulenc House, S. K. Ahire Marg, P. O. Box 9138,
Mumbai - 400 025. Tel : 022-493 6765, Fax : 022-495 0516.

SAVINGS SCHEMES FOR

SAFETY



GR WITH

LIQUIDITY



State Bank of India offers a wide spectrum of savings and deposits schemes for your benefit and convenience, to meet your every need. All our schemes have one common factor : Safety.

- Savings Bank Account
- Current Account
- Term Deposit Scheme (TDR)
- Special Term Deposit Scheme (STDR)
- Recurring Deposit Scheme
- Money Box Deposit Scheme
- Liquid Term Deposit Scheme
- Multi-Option Deposit Scheme

You can avail of these schemes at most of our branches spread across the country. All you have to do is to contact the branch officials who will be eager to guide you.



State Bank of India
Security with high returns

Visit SBI on the internet on : <http://www.sbi.co.in> & : <http://www.statebankofindia.com>

Electing a trustee

The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) trustee election of November 8, 1998 had to be rerun at a special general meeting (SGM) on June 13, 1999. Though seven months of controversy intervened between the two events the result remained unaltered: former ZTFE president Kersi Jasavala joined Cawas Sethna and Noshir Avari on the board of trustees for a seven-year term.

In the November elections there had been two original contestants for the post — Mack Dinshaw and Dr Firoze Munshi. The latter however had to withdraw as he was not a life member of the ZTFE as prescribed by its constitution. Whereas this could have led to Dinshaw coming in unopposed, the day's chairman and ZTFE president Dorab Mistry chose to accept a nominee from the floor, at variance with the ZTFE's agenda notice which had clearly stipulated that nominations from the floor would not be accepted. Jasavala was proposed by Adi Billimoria and seconded by Shehnaz Mistry and Zal Sethna. Jasavala won by a margin of 40 votes.

To document the events thereafter and to present a clearer picture Rohinton Irani who proposed Dinshaw's candidature on both occasions, has written to *Parsiana* enclosing a dossier of speeches and letters. "Your prestigious magazine had printed a related article in the April '99 issue. Due to some incorrect and maligning statements, the article created uneasiness," he notes.

Parsiana's report on the issue, based on interviews with Mistry and ZTFE vice president Farokh Sorab, has been faulted on five points by Irani in his letter, by Dinshaw and by World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) president and ZTFE life member Rumi Sethna in their speeches at the June 13 election. The disputed *Parsiana* statements are reproduced below with the relevant criticisms:

• *Parsiana*: "Though Munshi agreed to stand 'after some hesitation,' the committee's endorsement was not unanimous, with Mack Dinshaw, a WZO sympathizer and ZTFE life member of 37 years winning Rusi Dalal's support."

According to Irani, "People who know Mr Mack Dinshaw, confirm that he is not a supporter of WZO. He supports ZTFE."

• *Parsiana*: "Till the morning of the AGM

Mistry and his fellow members were unaware that their candidate Munshi lacked one essential attribute of trusteeship — he was not a life member."

According to Sethna: "Dr Munshi informs us that he told Mr Mistry that he was not a life member at least 10 days prior to the election. Then Mr Mistry and Dr Munshi checked the register and discovered that he was not a life member — and yet Dr Munshi's nomination was accepted."

According to Irani: "Then at the SGM on June 13, '99 Mr D. Mistry finally admitted that Dr Firoze Munshi did tell him many days before November 8, '98 that he was not a life member."

• *Parsiana*: "'Mac and I resolved it between us on December 11, '98,' informs Mistry."

Said Dinshaw: "There was an official apology meeting convened and attended at my home on December 8, 1998 by select members of the committee (Farokh Byramjee, Rusi Dalal and the president Mr Dorab Mistry). To the horror of all present Mr D. Mistry, the president of our association, shocked us by asking me to destroy all correspondence relating to the irregularity of the election of trustee. He said in turn he would destroy from the files of ZTFE, all similar correspondence. To this I did not agree. The conclusion of this meeting was that both Mr Mistry and I would draft an agreed statement of apology to be published in the next circular newsletter. It could be Mr Mistry's reluctance to accept the blame or it could be poor advice given to Mr Mistry; the agreed wording of the apology never materialized until May 14, 1999. Ladies and gentlemen if that agreed version of the apology had been published in January 1999, I had given my solemn assurance that I would not seek another election."

Dinshaw's statement regarding Mistry's suggestion to destroy the correspondence between them was buttressed by Sethna: "To the person who would not believe when Mack was speaking about the tearing up of all the correspondence which existed between Mr Dinshaw and the ZTFE, I would confirm that I was there at the meeting when this statement was made by Mr Mistry, the president. Surely seven of us would not have misheard him."

According to Irani, Mistry in an at-

tempt to defend himself, swore on the lives of his three young daughters that he had made no such statement. "Ervad Rustom Bhedwar had to intervene by snatching away the microphone and making a statement like 'Please Dorab stop it. We Zoroastrians do not swear...'" writes Irani.

• *Parsiana*: "Unwilling to risk seven years of attrition in case Dinshaw decided to use his trusteeship credentials to stall the ZTFE team..."

Irani writes, "Mr M. Dinshaw's fault was that, as a friend to others, he also is a friend of Rusi Dalal... the main reasons given regarding Mr M. Dinshaw were: He is Rusi Dalal's friend and 'kaccha kanno cché' (easily influenced)."

Dinshaw stated: "...on oath I state that I am not here to cause a war of attrition for seven years wasting both mine and everybody else's time. I am committed to dealing with issues pertaining to our ZTFE association and not personalities."

• *Parsiana*: "'Rusi Dalal is the only president (of ZTFE) in recent history to get a standing ovation from the community when he announced that he had decided to step down,' notes his successor Dorab Mistry."

Said Sethna: "As I was not present (at the AGM of 1997), I do not know whether Mr Dalal got a standing ovation. However, I do know from Mr Mistry himself, that he informed Mr Dalal that should he not resign, then Mr Mistry would stand against Mr Dalal and, furthermore, should Mr Mistry lose, then four of the committee would resign. Rusi had no option but to resign. Why then does Mr Mistry speak of 'standing ovation' when he has manoeuvred a Brutus Act?"

Sethna further notes, "In the *Parsiana* article, Mr Mistry has stated that WZO's Rumi Sethna, Shahpur Captain and Prochi Colabavala wrote letters, and I quote 'protesting vehemently that I had done wrong by taking nominations from the floor.' All these letters were written by long standing members of this ZTFE association and not because they are also members of the WZO. It is high time Mr Mistry realized this. May I state that none of these letters were replied to by Mr Mistry."

The newsletter of May 14 has published an apology from the managing committee which states: "This note is a

DISCOVER THE LUXURIES OF A PREMIUM BATH



Sandal Rich



Imparts **natural richness**
of Sandal to your skin

Deo Fresh



With TCC which cuts down odour and
gives you freshness for hours together

Luxury



With 80% TFM to prevent
afterwash dryness



Luxuriate in a skin friendly PREMIUM bath *J.K.Helline Curtis Limited*

further elaboration to the brief explanation written in our last newsletter of February 2, 1999.

"As a result of the past election of trustee held at the AGM on November 8, 1998, the managing committee and the president wish to highlight the following:

"We accept that although there was only one valid nomination of Mr Mack Dinshaw for the position of trustee, the presiding chairman, Mr Dorab Mistry over-stepped his discretionary powers by accepting further nominations from the floor of Mr Kersey Jasavala, in view of the notice for election of trustee which specified that nominations from the floor would not be accepted.

"We are grateful that in an endeavor to preserve harmony at the AGM, objections or points of order for conducting the election were not raised from the floor at that meeting. If the association were legally challenged, the most probable outcome would be for us to rerun the election. The committee had also overlooked the fact that Dr Firoze Munshi whose nomination was not proceeded with was not a life member as required by the articles.

"We the committee wish to thank Mr

Mack Dinshaw, Mr Kersey Jasavala and Dr Firoze Munshi for being true Zoroastrians, abstaining from taking any further actions and giving us the opportunity to rectify the situation. The election of a trustee has not been a happy episode. However, thanks to the community spirit of both our peers and elders, we are sure that the association will emerge happier and united."

This apology, an explanation note to the reelection and the notice to hold the SGM for the reelection were the result of an agreed settlement through the solicitors, writes Irani.

According to Irani rumors had been circulated alleging that Dinshaw had faced bankruptcy. Dinshaw had strenuously denounced the allegation: "In the last seven months, my family and I have been targets of much malicious gossip. This seems to have emanated from confidential and restricted information, termed 'privileged information,' shared with a person of trust who has now circulated this to certain members of the community. The rumors relate to bankruptcy. For the record, I wish to state categorically that neither I nor my wife nor any person in my family has been declared a bankrupt. The recession in

the '90s certainly had adverse effects on many businesses including mine but with the support of my wife, Daulat, my family and hard work, I am completely free of any debts."

Jasavala won a second time with a margin of 100 votes.

Mayor Maravala

Councillor Filly Maravala, elected Mayor of London's Redbridge Borough, was presented a bouquet by the Indian High Commissioner to the UK Lalit Mansingh who was the guest of honor at the Jamshedi Navroz function organized by the ZTFE at Zoroastrian House. Another prominent guest on the occasion, best-selling author Lord Jeffrey Archer praised Maravala for participating in the political life of the country even as he urged Zoroastrians to carry forward the parliamentary line pioneered by Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Muncherji Bhownagree and Shapurji Saklatwala, informs the May 11, 1999 newsletter of the ZTFE.

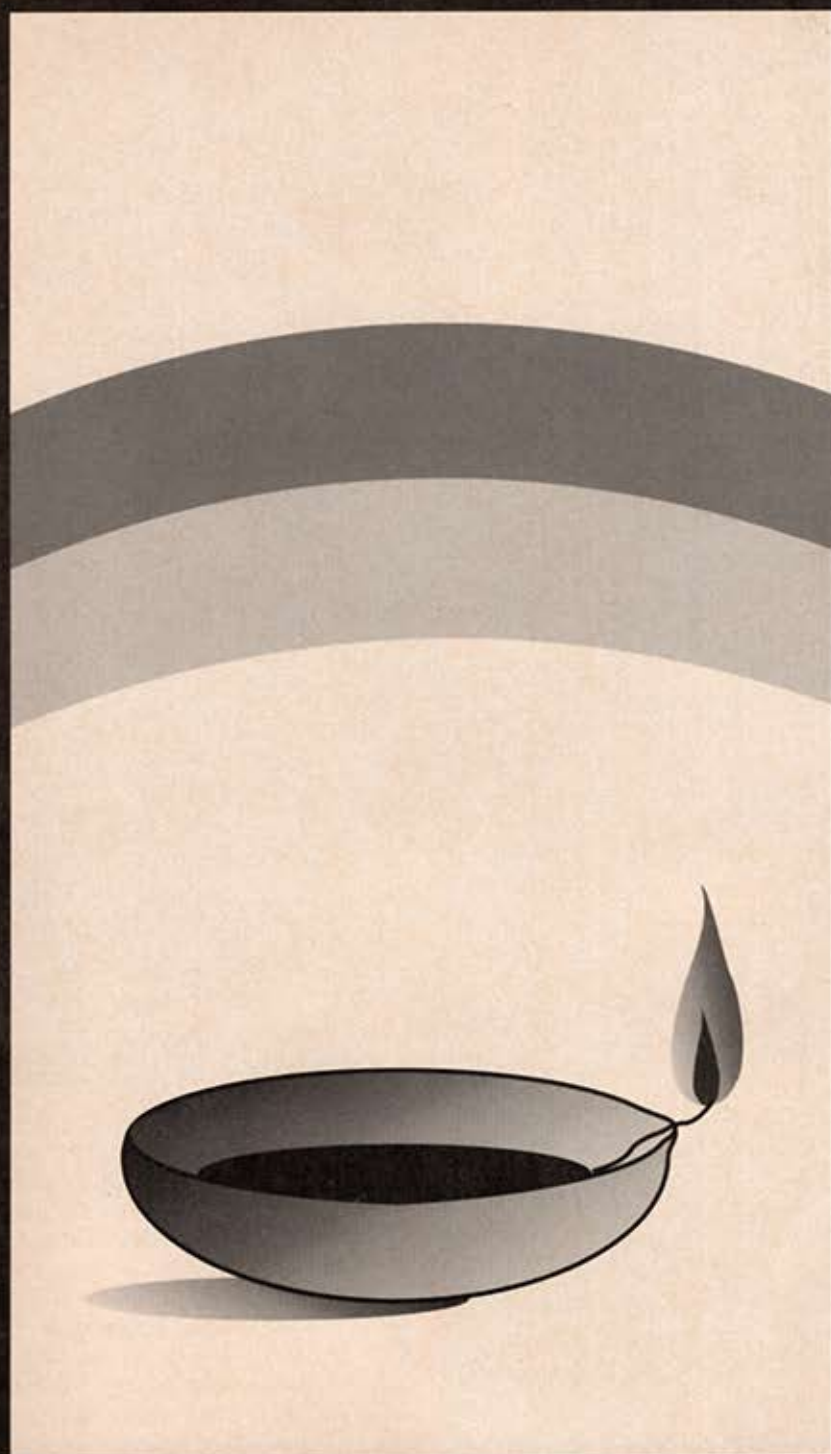
Joining the Labor party in 1980 Maravala was elected to Redbridge Council in 1994 where he represented Loxford Ward. Having served on a number of council committees, heading sev-

With Best Wishes From

Mr Rusy M. Shroff, M.B.E.

and

Mrs Purviz R. Shroff



**This festival of lights,
see the underprivileged
come out of darkness**

**WHEN YOU BUY CARDS
FROM
CONCERN INDIA
FOUNDATION,
YOU HELP MORE THAN
YOU THINK YOU DO**

Our greeting cards are all about love, care and concern. For the street children the elderly, under-privileged, and other underprivileged people of society, who benefit from the proceeds of the card sales.

So when you buy greeting cards from Concern India Foundation, you make a big difference to their lives. You help them see a brighter side of it.

For orders, contact
Concern India Foundation:

Mumbai : 287 1175
Delhi : 622 4482 / 3
Pune : 668 4807
Hyderabad : 773 2950 / 1460
Bangalore : 530 5775
Calcutta : 464 6531

CONCERN

INDIA FOUNDATION

Helping People Help Themselves

eral of them, Maravala is also chair of the Governors of Mayespark School and serves on two other local schools, informs the newsletter.

During his long innings with the ZTFE managing committee Maravala, 53, has served as social, house and joint secretary. His Indian Musical Evenings have raised thousands of pounds for the ZTFE's projects, notably the Brookwood Bungli Extension Project completed in time in 1998 within the budgeted £ 20,000, and the ongoing New Premises Project, acknowledges the newsletter.

Immigrating from Aden in 1967 Maravala has worked as a communications analyst in the insurance industry. Living at Ilford since 1971 Maravala and his wife Hutokshi have two children Katy (10) and Cyrus (nine). He also has two older children, Persis (28) and Jimmy (25), from a previous marriage.

Maravala, the second Zoroastrian elected mayor in the UK (the first having been Tehmtan Framroze in Brighton), assumed office on May 20 and was felicitated by the ZTFE on August 7, 1999.

The high office has energised Maravala into greater involvement with community work, according to the newsletter. He has enabled the association to organize its annual summer barbeque, aimed at aiding the New Premises Project, at the Redbridge Institute of

Maravala in mayoral regalia and with family: Jimmy, Persis, Cyrus Hutokshi and Katy



Adult Education on September 5, 1999. Thereafter, on September 26, 1999 he is scheduled to host a Fun Day for the combined purpose of the New Premises Fund and his own adopted Charity for the Homeless.

In and around London

For the first time in over 50 years Zoroastrian prayers were recited at India House as Ervads Zal Sethna and Rustom Bhedwar performed the Atash Niayesh when the community was invited by the Indian High Commissioner Lalit Mansingh to celebrate Navroz on March 28, 1999, notes the ZTFE newsletter. The ZTFE and the WZO organized the function together and Paridokht Falahati arranged the traditional Haf-sin table.

The guests of honor included Maneka Gandhi, India's minister for social justice and empowerment who introduced her 17-year-old son Varun Feroze to the audience. Also present were Dr Ashok

Reaching for the Sky



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

Both built by Shapoorji Pallonji of course!



SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

Shapoorji Pallonji Centre, 41/44, Minoo Desai Marg, Colaba.
Bombay-400005. Phone: 2870211/2870195/2870197.

GLOBE THEATRES Pvt Ltd

Established
April 3, 1915

Pioneers of Show
Business in India for
the last 84 years

We rededicate
ourselves to the ideals
we have cherished and
practised all along --
namely to show

**NOTHING BUT
THE BEST**
to our ever increasing
number of Patrons

Controlling:

REGAL
BOMBAY

*

CAPITOL
BOMBAY

*

GLOBE
CALCUTTA

All the above Cinemas have
now been equipped with



Sound System

Kumar, MP for Cleveland, former India and Lancashire cricketer Faroukh Engineer and India's attorney general Soli Sorabji.

The entire jashan ceremony on March 21 and the jashan at Fasli Khordad Sal were photographed by the New Millennium Experience Company for representation in the Spirit Zone of the Millennium Dome, notes the newsletter. The Dome is expected to attract 12 million visitors in 2000. The photographers and the choreographer were briefed and assisted by ZTFE managing committee member and librarian Malcolm Deboo together with Interfaith veteran Jehangir Sarosh. The filming had been okayed earlier by the mobeds.

Well-known presenter Mike Harding had been to Zoroastrian House and Brookwood to shoot a six-minute feature on Zoroastrianism for the BBC's *Heaven and Earth Show*.

Perveez Dadachanji's second book *Miracle* has been published by B. R. Publishing Corporation of Delhi as part of its New World Literature Series. A family saga with historical overtones, the story of the Das family stretches over many years of the Raj into the carnage of Partition. In her earlier work, *Illusions and Disillusions* the chief protagonist Yasmin Wazir leaves Bombay to live with her aunt in England and finds herself oppressed by a lifestyle more Indian than the one she left behind.

Dadachanji, ex Dadar, Bombay, lives with her family in Surrey, dividing her time between writing and music which she has taught over many years, as notes the newsletter.

Kerman Jasavala has stepped down as chairman of the Young Zoroastrians Committee after a hectic six-year term. He is succeeded by Navaz Sethna. Ronnie Munshi was unanimously elected treasurer, notes the newsletter.

This year Zoroastrianism and Jainism led the march of Britain's minority religions at the annual Commonwealth Day Multi-Faith Service at Westminster Abbey on March 8, 1999.

At the Asian Business Forum's breakfast meet at the House of Commons on April 16, former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was the main speaker. It was the turn of the Zoroastrians to perform the opening prayers thanks to solicitor Sarosh Zaiwalla and Ervad Jal

Karkaria invoked Ahura Mazda's blessings on the distinguished gathering, informs the newsletter.

When Prof Nawaz Mody, head of Bombay University's department of civics and politics spent a spell in London researching the life of Madame Bhikhaiji Cama, she spoke on the redoubtable freedom fighter at Zoroastrian House, identifying her in a 1906 photograph of a community celebration. Accompanying Mody was Prof Nergish Charna, vice principal of Bombay's Elphinstone College, who is researching the life of Dadabhai Naoroji.

After many years two full-time Zoroastrian students have enrolled at the London University's School of Oriental and African Studies: Rayomand Mirza of London is doing his doctorate in Zoroastrian Religious Musicology while Burzine Waghmar of Bombay is doing a graduate course in Iranian studies. Their studies are been supported by interest free loans and grants from Mehraban and Faridoon Zartoshty and the ZTFE, but they need more help, mentions the newsletter.

The New Premises Steering Committee chaired by Shahrokh Shahrokh has collected over £ 3,00,000 as at end March 1999. A site very close to the underground station at Northolt was inspected but found too large for ZTFE requirements.

Adil Todiwala (13) was the star of a cookery competition for schools sponsored by the retail chain Sainsburys. He had produced a portfolio on Oriental Honeyed Chicken with Noodles which could be sold as a meal for two at £ 4.99. Todiwala's winning recipe will soon be packaged and sold as a Ready Meal by Sainsburys, according to the newsletter.

Vera Contractor, introduced by the BBC as the "unsung cook from Cranleigh" on the new cookery program *Anything you can cook* was introduced with 32 others shortlisted from among thousands of contestants by celebrity chef Brian Turner. The contest required Contractor and Turner "to use identical ingredients to make *kolmi per eeda* (eggs on prawns) and Sweet potato *sali* (straws). Brian was amazed at the variety of ingredients chosen by Vera!... (she) was the first of eight contestants to beat Brian," notes the newsletter.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

Be a proud owner of **Centralcard**



The Card of Convenience and Confidence

Contact: Centralcard Dept

15-16, Bajaj Bhawan, 1st Floor, Barister Rajani Patel Road,
Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021

Tel: 2026312, 2022331, 2823789, 2042376-80-83

Fax: 2024004

OR Zonal/Regional Office:

Ahmedabad 5503586 • Mumbai 2047229

Calcutta 2201270-75 • Chennai 8554668-69 • Chandigarh 702994-7

New Delhi 011-3311290 • Hyderabad 590361-4, 4611402-5

R.O.: Bangalore 2265652-4

सेन्ट्रल बैंक
ऑफ इंडिया



Central Bank
of India

Central Office: Chander Mukhi, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021

On a high down under

While adhering to their faith the Zoroastrians in New Zealand are willing to make new moves

Gustasp Irani

His voice was insistent on the phone. He was not going to accept any excuses (the fact that I did not plan to make any was another matter). He would drop by at my hotel by five that evening and pick me up. He was taking me to a wine and cheese party at a friend's home. No, I would not be intruding in any way. I was a Zoroastrian and that was enough. I would be welcome. More than welcome, for the Zoroastrians settled in Auckland, New Zealand were always hungry for news about the parent community back in Bombay. Yes, Bombay, not Mumbai as they did not particularly care for the new name of the city.

Wine and cheese rather than dhansak, and Bombay rather than Mumbai. It somehow summed up the spirit of the Zoroastrians in Auckland: gingerly nudging the future while always testing the rope that tied them to the past. Compared to the sister communities settled in North America, Europe or even neighboring Australia, the community may be relatively new and small but it seems determined to find a niche for itself in its new homeland. "We have come here not as refugees, but by choice: for a better future for our children and ourselves. And while we must integrate with the mainstream, it is crucial that we do not lose our identity," said my friend Gev Daji as we drove to the party that evening: the beautiful sprawling city of Auckland sparkling with lights in the gathering dusk.

According to Daji, there are around 250 to 300 Zoroastrians in New Zealand, and the number is growing. Ten years ago, they numbered only 25 to 30. Most of the community reside in and around Auckland and for one obvious reason. Being the commercial capital (Wellington is the political capital) and largest city in the country, it offers the best and widest job options. In fact, of the total population of 3.5 million in New Zealand, about 1.5 million reside in this

city alone. (Compared to this, there are around 45 million sheep in the country.)

When Daji arrived in New Zealand in 1995, the community had no formal association. Members, however, kept in touch with each other, especially inviting each other over to their homes during festive occasions. In addition, Jamsheed Sidhwa, a qualified priest who had migrated a few years earlier, conducted Zoroastrian religious and prayer classes for children. These religious classes soon became the catalyst to the establishment of a formal association.

Earlier there were a few attempts to form an association, but differences of opinion between the orthodox and the liberal members of the community scuttled these efforts. Eventually, around April-May 1996, Sidhwa rallied the orthodox group and established the Traditional Mazdayasni Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand (TMZANZ).

Within a few months, the liberal group formed the Zoroastrian Association of New Zealand (ZANZ). The two separate associations (ZANZ, according to Daji, has more members than TMZANZ) have learned to coexist with a minimum of animosity: each one trying to determine how best the community would survive and prosper Down Under. A few Zoroastrians however, prefer to remain neutral by not joining either association.

Presently on the TMZANZ committee are president Meher Kolah, vice president Aarmine Allabadi, treasurer Navaz Karbhari, secretary Daji, and Sidhwa and Porus Tarapore as members at large. The current managing committee of ZANZ comprises Yazdi Mistry, president; Darius Mistry, vice president; Jarafshan Mistry, secretary; Zarir Choksy, treasurer; and Frey Khambatta, Daulat Shahlori, Rustom Dubash and Armin Wadia as members at large. According to Yazdi Mistry, there are around

95 Zoroastrian families settled in New Zealand and 73 individuals are members of ZANZ. Later, talking to others I would learn that the split was largely, if not solely, due to the issue of mixed marriages and the question of whether such unions would dilute the community's identity. What was reassuring was there was no open hostility between the two groups and I was assured that efforts were afoot to reunify the community under one umbrella association.

Daji seemed quite confident that the differences would be ironed out. He identified strongly with the community and the issues that it confronted in this two-island country. Yes, as he spoke more about his concern for the community and less about his personal struggles, I realized that he had finally settled down in New Zealand. His story portrayed the hopes, trials and tribulations of the Parsi migrant to this land Down Under.

I recalled the time when I knew Daji, an accountant with a leading publication, back in Bombay. He was simmering with anticipation when his application to migrate to New Zealand had finally come through. The move would guarantee a better future for his two children, Benaifer and Cyrus, then seven and four years old. His wife, Shehnaz, however, was apprehensive and did not seem to share his enthusiasm even if she did not give voice to her feelings.

Two years later the family returned to Bombay to have their son's navjote done. Daji seemed a little gaunt and a trifle troubled. He was not complaining, but starting life all over again and readjusting to the vagaries of a new country was not the bed of roses one might have imagined. Shehnaz, however, now seemed more self-assured and convinced that moving to New Zealand had been the right decision.

Now, as Daji pulled into the drive-

Where there's 100% love,



there's an Aquaguard.

Your family means the world to you. Their health, their happiness, that's what really matters. And an Aquaguard water purifier is what you need to keep them smiling, always.



Aquaguard has a complete purification process with an **Electronic Monitoring System** that monitors the level of purity. If the purity level drops, the water flow stops automatically. So you can be sure that every sip your little ones take is 100% safe.

Today, over a million homes in India trust only Aquaguard, to keep their loved ones healthy and happy.

Aquaguard also comes with the Eureka Forbes promise of after sales service at your doorstep (though you may never need it). So call the friendly man from Eureka Forbes today.

ISO 9002 certified
Aquaguard
WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM



For more information, visit us at: www.eurekaforbes.com

For pure and safe drinking water call or write to: MUMBAI: PRABHADEVI: BHUPESH GUPTA BHAVAN, 85, SAYANI ROAD, PRABHADEVI, MUMBAI 400 025. TEL: 4301725/1713 • TARDEO: TEL: 4949183/6184 • BANDRA: TEL: 6442742/6432263 • ANDHERI: TEL: 8200404/707, 8863828 • MULUND: TEL: 5640962, 5672098 • COLABA: TEL: 2187441/58 • BORIVLI: TEL: 8065596/601 • KALYAN: TEL: 911- 315735/7 • VASHI: TEL: 7684941/7636462/6463.

way of his cottage in the suburbs of Auckland, it was more than apparent that New Zealand was finally and truly home and Bombay was a fond memory. The crucial point in the transition, according to Daji, was when he came to terms with the fact that in the job market, a resident New Zealander always gets preference over the migrant, even if the latter is better qualified. The trick is to compromise a little at first and accept a position even if it is an insult to one's qualifications and then work and prove one's mettle. Once the bosses recognize a person's true worth and potential, they are willing to reward him with promotions.

He also realized that unlike India, changing jobs was the norm rather than the exception. Indeed, it is quite possible that if a person were to go on a long vacation and someone filled in effectively for him during that period, he might find himself without work on his return.

Of course, in a welfare state like New Zealand, where education is free up to high school, such hiccups do not affect the children unduly. In addition, there are other cushions built into the system to help people tide over difficult patches.

Soon Daji was driving his family and me towards the party zone. The hosts, Meher and Farrokh Kolah, welcomed me to their beautiful cottage like a long lost friend. There were more greetings in the sitting room which was alive with the sound of Parsi Gujarati. Almost immediately my eyes fell on the fireplace: a flickering diva kept vigil over the spot where a crackling fire raged each winter. Yes, I was amongst friends even though they had been strangers only moments ago.

It soon became apparent that the community here consisted of families, most with playful kids who knew each other well. Even the few bachelors and single women here had migrated to New Zealand with their families. Most were

originally from Bombay, a few from Dahanu and one family had recently moved from Hong Kong.

The place was buzzing with activity: women crowded in the spacious kitchen, men laying out the table and serving wine, children playing. Suddenly an elderly lady, who had come to stay briefly with her son and his family, rose and

Of course, they were quick to point out that arriving in New Zealand was not the end but rather the beginning of the adventure. One should be ready to face trials and tribulations at first but with the right attitude one will soon discover that the rewards are worth the effort. And if at any time they need a little help, one may always lean on the community for a little dhansak and sympathy.

Or wine and cheese! And smoked salmon, an assortment of cold cuts and desserts: the table was brimming over with the bounty of New Zealand's culinary delights. This, I was told, was the first time the Parsis had decided to try something a little different from the traditional dhansak parties that celebrated their frequent get-togethers especially those held during festive and religious occasions like Pateti and Navroz.

Indeed, the Zoroastrian community in New Zealand may be acquiring new tastes but their commitment to their heritage remains steadfast.

Zoroastrian Help Lines Down Under

The postal address of the Traditional Mazdayasni Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand (TMZANZ) is P O Box 51-611, Pakuranga,

Auckland, New Zealand. One may also get in touch with either Jamsheed Sidhwa at 50B Millhouse Drive, Howick, Auckland, New Zealand, email: jsidhwa@ihug.co.nz or Farrokh Kolah at 21 Paisley Street, Howick, Auckland, New Zealand, email: hormozk@clear.net.nz (marked Attn: Farrokh Kolah). Both Sidhwa and Kolah will be happy to assist any Zoroastrians who need guidance or information about migrating to New Zealand.

To contact the Zarathushtrian Association of New Zealand (ZANC), one may get in touch with Yazdi Mistry at 1 Bungalow Ave, Pt Chevalier, Auckland, New Zealand, or Darius Mistry, e-mail: darius.mistry@imagetext.co.nz or Tehmus Mistry, e-mail: tehmus@extra.co.nz

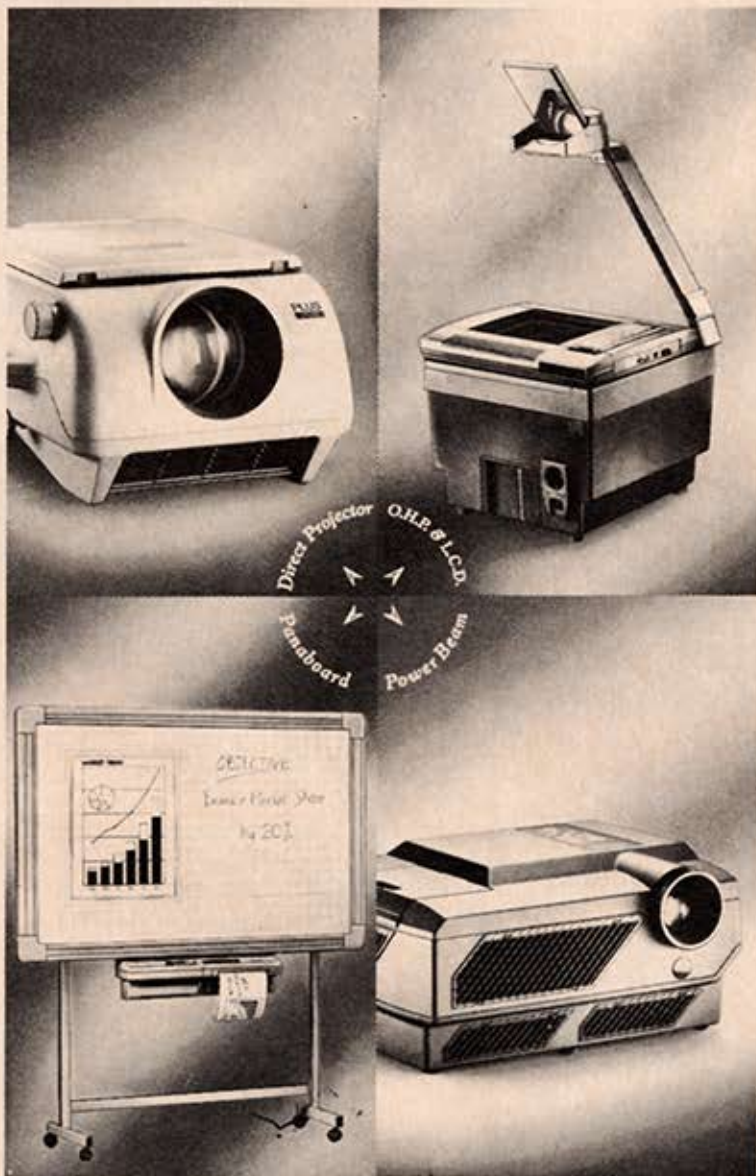


Party time for New Zealand Zoroastrians and (below) an overview of Auckland Photos: Gustasp Irani

proposed a rousing toast to the Zoroastrian community of New Zealand. She reassured them that the prophecy of Shah Varjavand's return was imminent and that he would ensure that the community here grew and prospered.

Till the 'savior' arrived, however, the community seemed to be working in that direction. I could sense the gratitude they felt towards their adopted country and a genuine desire to help interested Parsi Zoroastrians make the move. In fact there is one Zoroastrian lawyer who specializes in processing immigration applications.

**NOW, YOU DON'T NEED RICHARD BURTON'S VOICE.
OR IACocca's PRESENCE. OR CHURCHILL'S WIT.**



**Godrej draws upon
the world's best talent
to enhance your
presentation skills.**

Godrej Prima Division brings you a range of sophisticated presentation equipment sourced from all over the world. To enhance your communication skills. And ensure that your presentation leaves a lasting impression.

Unforgettable presentations in a snap : The Direct Projector by PLUS Corporation, Japan, lets you project books, magazines, printed documents... with the same ease as transparencies in a single presentation.

A new generation of lighter and brighter overhead projectors : Sourced from Anders+Kern of Germany, these OHPs offer brilliant optical quality and project uniformly sharp pictures.

Larger than life ideas preserved forever : Panaboard — the Electronic Print Board manufactured by Panasonic, Japan, is an exciting new communication tool which can copy anything that is written or drawn on it.

Computer images projected on the big screen : Now, you can project information directly from your computer or VCR with the Powerbeam LCD Projector and LCD Panels from Davis, Norway.

Godrej

PRIMA DIVISION

Prima Division, Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd., Plant 6, Pirojshahnagar, Vikhroli, Bombay - 400 079 Tel : 5171166/77 Fax : 5172232

For further details please call or fax on the following numbers: **Bombay:** Tel: 2049661 Fax: 2846056. **Maharashtra:** Tel: 5171166/77 Fax: 5172247. **Pune:** Tel: 641740 Fax: 650861. **Ahmedabad:** Tel: 831545/49 Fax: 830336. **Rajkot:** Tel: 24919/27289 Fax: 33297. **Bhopal:** Tel: 572228 Fax: 550029. **Indore:** Tel: 539076 Fax: 533735. **Jabalpur:** Tel: 314321 Fax: 311776. **Delhi:** Tel: 6921071 Fax: 6841482. **Chandigarh:** Tel: 709461 Fax: 703047. **Faridabad:** Tel: 216415 Fax: 212861. **Jaipur:** Tel: 514731 Fax: 515496. **Kanpur:** Tel: 293550 Fax: 256520. **Lucknow:** Tel: 218826 Fax: 221671. **Calcutta:** Tel: 3370895/99 Fax: 3378271. **Bhubaneswar:** Tel: 405082 Fax: 220832. **Guwahati:** Tel: 32901 Fax: 543466. **Patna:** Tel: 225886 Fax: 222579. **Madras:** Tel: 6258804 Fax: 6257155. **Bangalore:** Tel: 2271480 Fax: 2279312. **Hyderabad:** Tel: 202894/5 Fax: 203587. **Visakhapatnam:** Tel: 545262 Fax: 545878. **Cochin:** Tel: 319461 Fax: 371838. **Trivandrum:** Tel: 461649 Fax: 75935. **DEALER ENQUIRIES ARE SOLICITED.**

Benedictions for Bilimora

Contributions from near and far made possible the renovation of the 100-year-old Gabba Adarian

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Supervising the consecration of the Dadabhai Dhanjibhai Gabba and Sorabji Shapurji Gabba Adarian in Bilimora 100 years ago was Dastur Darabji Mahiarji Meherjirana of Navsari. Leading the jashan and hambandagi at the time of the centenary festivities on April 27, 1999 was yet another high priest of Navsari, Dastur Meherji Meherjirana.

For the resident Zoroastrian population of Bilimora, numbering nearly 200, the presence of as many devotees from Valsad, Chikhli, Gandevi, Pardi, Navsari, Surat and Bombay was a cause for rejoicing. Among the distinguished personages who graced the centenary function organized by the trustees of the Bilimora Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman's Trust Funds at Tata Bungalow were chief guest Dr Sam Bhacca, president of the Surat Parsi Panchayat, another trustee of the Surat Panchayat Noshir Dabhoiwala and Ilm-e-Khshnoomist Ervad K. N. Dastoor of Bombay who was invited as the guest speaker to give a talk on atash, stated Marzban Baria, managing trustee of the Anjuman, in his report on the proceedings.

Congratulating the Bilimora Anjuman trustees, Bhacca commended their efforts to renovate the Gabba Adarian and give it a new look whilst managing the Trust affairs and looking after the interests of the Parsi community. To show his appreciation he presented a shawl to Baria.

"It made our hearts race with joy to see the newly renovated agiary which now takes pride of (place) in the sleepy little village," wrote Rati D. Wadia, principal of Bombay's Queen Mary School in her report on the function. "The Adarian has received a completely new face-lift with a beautifully tiled front facade with a glowing atash and asho farohar on the top, and the two winged bulls on the

inside wall," she continued.

More than 20 times the original amount of Rs 23,000 spent on building and furnishing the Gabba Adarian was expended on the repair and renovation of the fire-temple on the occasion of its centenary in 1999, noted Baria. As the building had deteriorated substantially, major renovation was essential, mentioned Baria in his

Surat to comper the function in his inimitable style was honored with a shawl by Baria whilst co-trustee Farokh S. Vasanja felicitated Dastoor for his inspiring talk.

On April 20, seven days prior to the centenary function on *mah* Adar, *roz* Adar, Meherjirana had performed a jashan at the Adarian. The previous day Percy Panthaki along with Navsari priests Ervad Keki Karkariya and Ervad Kersi Minocherhomji and Gandevi panthaky Ervad Kurush Sidhwa had performed the *ijashne* ceremony when the fire was brought back to its original abode after the major renovations which cost Rs 4,78,650.

The Gabba Adarian has since its inception been entrusted to the Bilimora Parsi Anjuman for the use of all Zoroastrians, mentioned Baria, giving a historical account of the fire-temple. Before this Adarian was consecrated, the residents of Bilimora had in their midst a dar-e-meher housing a dadgah built by Navroji Jamshedji Wadia on July 18, 1828, *mah* Dae, *roz* Behram. As the Zoroastrian population in Bilimora increased, two cousins Dadabhai Dhanjibhai Gabba and Sorabji Shapurji Gabba, residing in Bilimora, offered to build an atash adarian on land purchased by the Anjuman. A team of 10 Bhagaria mobeds from Navsari led by Ervad Faramji Kekobadji Meherjirana and Ervad Nasarvanji Ratanji Kutar performed the consecration ceremony of the new building lasting eight days. Thereafter a fire of the adarian status was enthroned on *mah* Adar, *roz* Adar, May 21, 1899 with the first *boi* being offered by Ervad Edulji Nasarvanji Kutar.

As Parsi mohallas reverberated to the sound of music and drums, community members dressed in new clothes walked

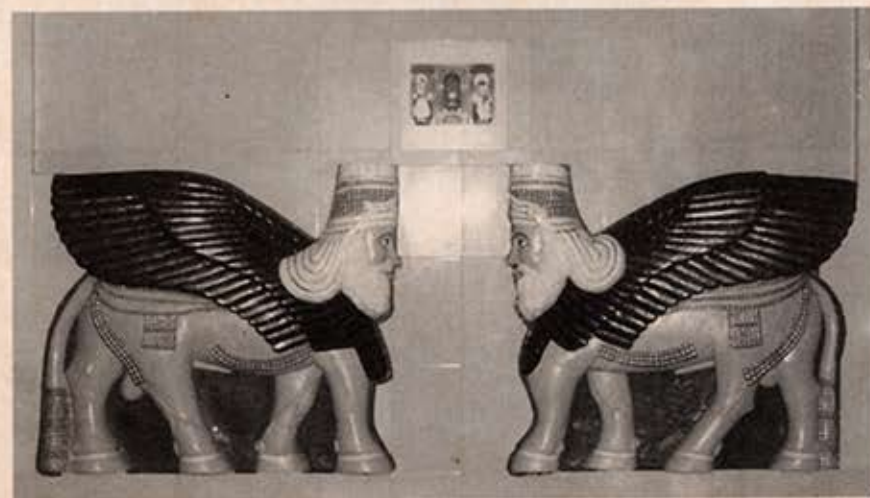
continued on page 52



From left: Besania, Baria, Bhacca, Dastoor, Vasanja and Dabhoiwala

speech whilst acknowledging the generosity of major donors: Godrej and Maherji Navroji Bilimora and family (of USA), the heirs of the Gabba family, Bilimora Anjuman trustee Phiroze Sorabji Vaghaiwala and family, Hosang J. Painter of Bilimora who donated the silver toran for the fire-temple. Numerous shawls were presented to the donors who came forward to help the Trust as also to Pilamai Tata and Nergesh Gabba, their senior panthaky Ervad Jamshed M. Panthaki who had served the Adarian for 35 years before retiring and their present young panthaky Ervad Percy G. Panthaki, wrote Baria.

Since Vaghaiwala and another co-trustee Piroj B. Dandiwalala could not attend the celebrations, messages on their behalf were read out on the occasion by the secretary of the Anjuman, Homiar Medhora. Master of ceremonies Rusi Besania who was invited from



*Top and below: glimpses of Bilimora's newly renovated Gabba Adarian
Center: Bhacca (left) felicitating Jamshed Panthaki; Bilimora residents with Meherjirana in their midst*

BPP deficit: Rs1.39 crore

Financial stringency and electoral reform were the major topics raised at the Anjuman Committee meeting

Arnavaz S. Mama

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) suffered a deficit of one crore, thirty-nine lakh rupees in the financial year 1998-99, noted BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder addressing the Anjuman Committee (AC). An overwhelming amount — Rs 139.19 lakhs — went into the upkeep and repair of Punchayet properties including the various baus, colonies and isolated buildings as also in rent subsidies. Other major claimants on Punchayet resources were the doonergwadi (Rs 18.61 lakhs) and the Boys' Hostel (Rs 8.16 lakhs).

Only about 128 of the 1,600 members of BPP's AC which elects trustees deigned to respond to the Punchayet's invitation to meet the trustees on June 24, 1999 at the Sir J. J. Modi Hall of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute. The meeting had been specifically called to discuss the trustees' suggestion to change the current parity between donor and elected members to a ratio of one to two, respectively.

The suggested change, which will need the consent of the Bombay High Court before it becomes applicable, is a response to the insistent demand in some quarters for universal adult franchise (UAF) which would obviate the need for an electoral college. The most vociferous proponent of UAF is BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz who is supported by fellow trustee Dinshaw Mehta. The other five trustees of the BPP oppose it.

As on earlier occasions, an appreciation of the trustees' handling of Punchayet affairs was tempered with the demand for greater transparency. Apart from a general summary of the Punchayet's activities provided by Guzder in his welcome address and an interlude when the problems of building repair were briefly discussed, the meeting was dominated by concern for the electoral scheme. Considering that the tenure of the present AC will end in

November this year and fresh elections should preferably be held by March 2000, there is little time to lose if any change is expected to be effected. Trustee Silloo Kavarana's term also expires in 2000.

The ratio between donor and elected members of the AC has been the focus of attention ever since the CER (Committee for Electoral Reform, since renamed as Committee for Economic Revival) in 1984 alleged the packing of the donors' register by supporters of tax expert Homi Ranina when he won against CER candidate Fali Poncha. Hence, when the trustees applied to the Bombay High Court in 1985 for an updating of the scheme which had been framed by the Court in 1908 and subsequently revamped over the years, the judges had swept aside the plea for adult franchise and insisted on preserving the rights of donor members with two modifications. The 1991 judgement had increased the amount of donation earning the right to vote from Rs 5,000 to Rs 15,000 and, to prevent any further allegation of buying of votes, held the right to vote in abeyance for five years or until the next general election is held, whichever is earlier.

This history was recalled by trustee Dadi Engineer who further defined the AC as "a ventilating chamber," which had the prerogative to "criticize trustees, look into accounts, ask questions, demand transparency. We want to strengthen the AC. We stand for UAF but in consonance with the rights of donors." The other changes the trustees sought to introduce in the election scheme was an upper age limit of 75 years and a maximum of three terms of seven years each for trustees. He sought

"constructive criticism" from the audience to their idea of doubling the number of elected members in the AC.

Barely had Engineer finished when Tirandaz was on his feet, lambasting the opposition: "...my fellow trustees insist on being custodians of trusts and properties (instead of being the apex body of Zoroastrians)." His most cogent criticism of the proposed increase of the AC was the administrative hassles attending the election of over 2,000 elected members to match the more than 1,000 donors currently on the BPP register. To enable the community to make a choice there would need to be a minimum 3,000 candidates. Even though AC elections are held in different areas on different days to enable the demarcated localities to elect their representatives, the enormous size of the ballot papers ("300 candidates per ballot paper") makes the verification and counting of votes a challenge. "The concept of an electoral college (generally holds) where each elected member represents 1,000 plus persons." According to him with a little over 40,000 Parsis in Bombay they represent a minuscule 20 individuals each.



Do we have the right to deprive others of the right to vote?" He argued that ardent young Zoroastrians were being deprived of the opportunity to participate in the governance of the community.

The incipient fear of "politics" in the minds of the anti UAF lobby was voiced by trustee Dinshaw Tamboly and former sheriff of Bombay Jehangir Nicholson who noted, "We've seen in India what democracy has given us." But the latter wondered aloud how much time the busy professionals/businessmen were actually giving the Punchayet and

whether they were addressing truly cogent issues and told the trustees that on many occasions they were "not transparent enough.... With more transparency, you'll find the community behind you," he assured them.

Acknowledging that "interest from the AC is very very minimal (and) waning," CER president and former trusteeship candidate Fali Poncha noted that numbers were declining at each successive AC meeting. "Most trustees at election time had spoken in favor of UAF. What has prompted them to change their views?" he asked. Recalling how donor register members had gone into appeal against the scheme formulated for the BPP by Bombay High Court judge Hosbet Suresh who had cut back direct donor voters to a fourth of a total AC of 100 members, Poncha predicted that the proposed dilution of the donor's right would be a "non-starter... We're being led down the garden path because we like to compromise on everything. No court of law would oppose UAF if the trustees or the community were to go to the court (and ask for UAF)." Looking at the issue dispassionately however he wondered, "What exactly will adult franchise give? Will it bring more people into the mainstream?" Noting that there was the possibility that "no one would (then) be able to control elections," he observed that the Punchayet was involved in "legal gymnastics," and ended with the call, "we're born equal; we die equal; let's vote equal."

Providing a summary of the Punchayet's activities, over the past year, Guzder acknowledged a seven crore rupee donation willed by the late Manekji Sett and executed by solicitor Burjor Antia and others. According to the terms of the will, the BPP has accepted reciprocal responsibility to provide accommodation to 35 Bhagaria mobeds. As part of its antipoverty program the BPP spent 2.2 lakh rupees on subsidizing the rent of deserving tenants and 11 lakhs on old and aging members of the community. There are 58 families on its third child program, receiving assistance to the tune of 5.7 lakhs. Forty-nine students received special training for the SSC (Secondary School Certificate examination) at a cost of little under five lakh rupees while just under 10 lakh rupees were spent on similar training for junior college students. Seven lakh rupees have been budgeted for renovating doongerwadi bunglis and

a total expense of 40-50 lakh rupees earmarked for "changing the facade of doongerwadi" with more than 1,000 trees to be planted. The late Hirabai Bhagat has bequeathed a plot of 26,700 sq ft at Vile Parle to the Punchayet, acknowledged Guzder. He also informed the gathering that the cosmopolitan Pestonji Davar Trust under BPP administration which began with his Rs 50 lakh bequest

"It is the moral responsibility of tenants who pay Rs 17 to Rs 30 in monthly rents to pay 75 percent of the repair costs"

in 1981 has now grown to just under four crore rupees.

Noshir Bhathena, who had set the ball rolling that evening by vehemently opposing Guzder's request to delay the proceedings in order to wait for late-comers, complimented the trustees' good work in Gujarati: "Everyone knows that your credibility in the community is very high." Citing the case of the Parukh Dharamshala, Bhathena spoke of the fine treatment of inmates there without a trace of corruption or nepotism. He registered against UAF.

Dr Maharukh Joshi wondered if an AC of 500 to 600 persons could coexist to provide guidance to the trustees with direct voting for the community. "We're 100 percent literate. There's no cattle mentality. We're small in number. Direct election should pose no major problem." She was against the 75 year age embargo on trustees because "man's intellect is more important than age." Polla Mistry had a similar message to give although younger trustees as in North America would be welcome, she said.

Bahadurshah Dalal suggested that the BPP change its name to Bombay Zoroastrian Punchayet to obviate the Parsi/Irani labels. Otherwise he favored the status quo.

Cyrus Bhaya of Nowroz Baug was upset that only UAF was being discussed and not such "major issues as the repair of 40-50-year-old buildings which may not withstand another 10-15 years." However trustee Dinshaw Mehta cut

him short by noting that the reconstruction of 80-year-old buildings in Nowroz Baug was already on the BPP agenda but that the tenants were not cooperating. "The ball is in your court," said Mehta. "It is the moral responsibility of tenants who pay Rs 17 to Rs 30 in monthly rents to pay 75 percent of the repair costs," amplified Guzder and Tamboly remarked that in the last financial year the BPP spent over Rs 1,40,00,000 in excess of the rent it received. "Not even 20 percent of the tenants pay 50 percent of repair costs." They keep strings of cars, running private taxi services but refuse to pay a modicum even of parking charges, it was said. While Nicholson suggested that the BPP demand payment for cars parked Engineer amplified, "Every Parsi who does well doesn't come forward with even a pittance."

Piqued by Nicholson's earlier criticism of professionals who don't devote enough time to Punchayet work, management expert and BPP trustee Minoo Shroff announced that he was resigning as executive vice president of Raymonds by the end of the month. He said he would "very much like younger people to come" into the BPP and was exasperated that a "chap earning two lakh rupees (a month) doesn't want to pay" his share towards the maintenance and repair costs of the Punchayet property he inhabits. Referring to the donation of the Sett trust in exchange for Godrej Baug residences for Bhagaria mobeds, Shroff noted, "We don't look a gift horse in the mouth," and explained that one crore rupees from the seven crore donation had been earmarked for rent subsidies to those mobeds who would not be able to afford Godrej Baug rents.

Marzban Giara suggested that an annual report of the BPP's achievements should be despatched to AC members together with an agenda for the meeting "to save the time that the chairman spends in his speech." Rustom Chothia felt that it should be mandatory for elected members of the AC to attend meetings. "If they don't attend they shouldn't be allowed to stand for re-election," he opined.

Even as the community "elders" dispersed after the two-and-a-half-hour talkathon what emerged was a measure of support for the BPP with some reservations and an overriding demand that the trustees hold such accountability meetings more often.

What price Universal Adult Franchise?

Will a change in the system of election of Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees make the organization more responsive to the community? Three BPP trustees present contrary viewpoints

Dinshaw K. Tamboly

I would like to begin this article with two quotes on democracy:

"Democracy is only an experiment in government, and it has the obvious disadvantage of merely counting votes instead of weighing them." — W. R. Inge (1860-1954), Dean of St Paul's, London

"Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." — Sir Winston Churchill in a speech at the House of Commons, November 1947

In India, universal adult franchise (UAF) is used to elect representatives to municipal corporations, legislatures, central or state. UAF is part of an election process through which the public elects their representatives to serve and govern them, provide infrastructure developments, levy taxes, etc. And it is the perception of some Zoroastrians residing in Bombay that the prevailing system of electing Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustees must be scrapped and UAF introduced.

The populist UAF concept enables individuals to feel that they have participated in and contributed towards the creation of an assembly that would serve and govern them. However, in the case of a public charitable trust such as the BPP, it is essential for all concerned to realize that the trust subsists on donations received, and on interest from donations already received and capitalized.

Centuries ago the BPP was established to administer the donations received for the welfare of the community. Initially the donors elected the trustees as custodians to safeguard the substantial

assets which have accrued over the years. Donors supporting the BPP trust do so after taking into consideration its constitution, aims and objects. The present scheme of electing trustees is therefore also accepted and covered.

As per the prevailing system, donors are rewarded by giving them an opportunity to vote at the time of the election of trustees — a right based on 'vested interest,' which cannot be taken away by the introduction of UAF.

It is the opinion of various eminent jurists that it is very doubtful if any court would ever agree to alienate a right that has been given on acceptance of a conditional donation.

This is only one aspect of the issue.

A very important issue that needs to be recognized

is that the scheme for the election of trustees of the Funds and Immovable Properties of the Parsi Punchayet of Bombay was originally sanctioned by the High Court of Bombay in suit no. 689 of 1906. The scheme has been suitably modified by the orders of the court during the years 1931, 1935, 1970, 1987, 1992 and 1993. In all the modifications, the court has continued to uphold the right of the donors.

An argument is also advanced that as most of the other anjuman and punchayets in India already have a system of UAF in their areas, the BPP, acknowledged to be the apex body of Parsis, should also follow suit.

For the worthies who put forth this line of thought, it should be mentioned that these smaller anjuman and punchayets were not established to preserve any assets as in the case of the BPP, but were established more to keep

the community together and to work for its welfare. In most of these cases, the institutions were first formed, and thereafter began collecting funds for their local activities. The assets of the smaller anjuman and punchayets are minuscule as compared to those of the BPP.

Earlier, I too used to hold the view that there should be UAF in the BPP. My view at that time was based on a lack of background information and other realities. I gradually began to change my view in this matter, pursuant to a discussion that I had, among others, with Nani A. Palkhivala, before I was elected a trustee of the BPP, when he explained to me the genesis and background of the Punchayet.

After I assumed office as a trustee of the BPP, my view that UAF is at the present not a suitable system for electing BPP trustees has been further reinforced. I have realized that at present the disadvantages of UAF far outweigh its advantages.

It must be remembered at all times that the BPP trustees are custodians of substantial assets. It is a distinct possibility that the introduction of UAF would result in the politicization of the BPP, with parties being formed and whips being issued to elected representatives on how to vote.

If UAF were introduced, chances are that the elections would thereafter not remain value-based but could possibly degenerate into becoming party-based. It is not difficult to imagine the immense harm that would befall the community if a group with personal vested interests managed to get their representatives elected by making false commitments and thereafter presided over the dissolution of the substantial assets. In such an eventuality what recourse would the community have?

We have before us varied examples of the manner in which some individu-



Tamboly: "UAF would politicize the BPP"

als whom we elect to the municipal corporation, state assembly or Lok Sabha discharge their duties. Are we, those who vote for such individuals, in a position to do anything? Do we want to introduce such situations in the management of the BPP? Can we not learn from the lessons of history? Is it necessary for us to condemn ourselves to repeat it? Have we not realized that UAF is the reason why quality individuals of repute shy away from contesting elections to legislatures and municipal corporations?

It is also worth remembering that a public charitable trust such as the BPP functions according to specific objects and is not an open arena. Generally, seasoned individuals with wide experience and a good background, who have been successful in their careers, are elected trustees to enable the trust to derive optimum benefits.

It must be remembered that even elections to all public positions are not always by way of UAF. In the case of election to certain public offices such as the President of India or membership of the Rajya Sabha, the election is by an electoral college, just as in the case of BPP trusteeship elections.

The BPP is today perhaps one of the oldest functioning trusts in the world, and its present voting system, with periodic changes, has admirably stood the vicissitudes of time.

The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence. Similarly, UAF is a concept that looks to be attractive when it is far away. The nearer it arrives the blemishes begin to show. Consider the following opinion held by no less an individual than Palkhivala (ref *The Free Press Journal*, April 28, 1998, article titled "Six Fatal Mistakes," when he refers to the golden jubilee of India's independence):

"First, our greatest initial mistake was to start with adult franchise. No democracy has ever paid, all things considered, a heavier price for adult franchise than India.

"Two of our greatest statesmen of the earlier years were C. Rajagopalachari and Sardar Vallabhai Patel. When the Constituent Assembly was in session, both these stalwarts recommended that we should not start with adult franchise but educate our people first to make them worthy of discharging their duties as citizens of a great democracy; but they were outvoted."

If all Parsis are really keen to participate in the election of BPP trustees, the simplest thing for them to do is become members of the General Register by paying the meager subscription of Rs 5. This would enable them to participate in the voting for the electoral college by electing members of the Anjuman Committee (AC).

At this stage, the actual position at the time of the last election (February/March 1993) of the AC needs to be mentioned. Out of 18,521 members registered on the General Register who were eligible to elect members of the AC, only 3,541 (19.11 percent) individuals exercised their right.

Another fact worth considering is that whilst there were 18,521 members on the rolls of the General Register on November 30, 1992, the number has increased to 19,611 as on March 31, 1998, an increase of 1,090 members (5.56 percent), and that too over a period of five-and-a-half years. This is the level of interest that the rank and file of Zoroastrians have in BPP elections.

To sway innocent people with promises and words is a very simple thing to do. However, to analyze and realize shortcomings and highlight issues by placing them in their proper perspective, and thereby possibly invite the wrath and condemnation of some sections of the community, is a price that one placed in my position has to be ready to pay.

My duty to my community, as a sitting trustee of the BPP, is to function according to the dictates of my conscience without fear or favor, and when necessary have the courage to stand up and be counted. At a juncture when the long-term wellbeing of the community could be threatened by the taking of incorrect decisions based on populist measures, I cannot remain silent, or run with the hare and hunt with the hounds.

I would urge the proponents of UAF to view this issue with an open mind, objectively and rationally, without introducing emotions, sentiments or rancor in the matter.

After considering all possible issues, let them ask of themselves the question, "Is universal adult franchise a suitable system for election to the office of the trustees of the Parsi Punchayet Funds and Properties?"

If the proponents of UAF are honest with themselves, they shall not find the answer to be easy.



With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

The case for universal adult franchise

Rustom S. Tirandaz
and Dinshaw R. Mehta

As Zoroastrians move into the next millennium, there is a crying need for their participation in community affairs. With the term of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet's (BPP) present Anjuman Committee (AC) (which elects trustees) coming to an end in November '99, there is an opportunity for the community to promote a sea change in its entire outlook.

Tricky issues that can only be settled with the total participation of the community can now become soluble issues if, to begin with, we can introduce universal adult franchise (UAF) for the direct election of the community akabars, the trustees of the BPP — a system touted by almost every candidate before the election, but neglected subsequently.

The controversy about adopting UAF for electing BPP trustees is being created by persons who fear that they will not be able to control and manipulate a larger electorate, as they can a small electoral college. All the so-called learned, legal and constitutional arguments advanced by those persons against UAF are nothing but attempts to retain control in their hands. The issue is being given an intellectual garb in an attempt to conceal the play of power politics.

Under the present scheme of elections, from among the adults in Cusrow Baug (which boasts of being the cream of the community) less than 100 persons are eligible voters for the trustees' election from the combined registers of donor and elected members. The Dadar Parsi Colony, which boasts of an adult population of more than 4,000 Zoroastrians, has only around 100 voters for the election of trustees. It's the same story everywhere. Only a fraction of Zoroastrians are deemed to be fit to vote directly. For it is felt by the opponents of UAF that the time is not yet ripe, that the community is not ready and mature enough for adult suffrage. What arrogance and vanity! Yet a Zoroastrian who is not a voter is eligible to contest the election as a trustee!

The electoral college (comprising 1,604 members in 1992 when elected) has already increased to over 2,000 members, and continues to grow with each donation of Rs 15,000. This in turn will automatically result in an increase in the number of elected members since the present scheme requires that the AC comprise of donors and elected members in equal numbers.

Considering that there are not more than 20,000 registered members on the Samast Anjuman — and the number could be further reduced by deleting the



Tirandaz (left) and Mehta: the community as a whole should elect trustees

old, infirm and dead — and given the past trend in the percentage of polling, the actual possible voting members would not be more than 15,000 persons. On the basis of an amendment proposed by the trustees, to have two elected voters for every donor, the new AC in November '99 could have around 3,500 members.

This is absurd and absolutely unheard of anywhere in the world under any system or scheme. The idea of having an electoral college presupposes that the electorate as a whole is either too large or is ill equipped to take proper decisions. This is certainly not the case with the Zoroastrian community in Bombay.

On the contrary, by depriving the electorate of a direct right to vote, one is obviously acting in an anti-democratic manner and preventing the popular view from being expressed. In these circumstances, an electoral college can only result in power politics, cliques and coteries such as CER (Committee for Economic Revival) and CUZ (Committee of United Zoroastrians) being

formed, which is not at all in the community's interest.

It is a matter of common observation that day by day more and more Zoroastrians, especially of the new generation, are visiting the Iranshah at Udvada and other fire-temples on auspicious days. The maachis in all fire-temples are being sought and for important days there is a waiting list. Zoroastrians are coming together in larger numbers. The high and mighty are rubbing shoulders with the poor and lowly. A realization is dawning slowly but surely that we need to participate in community affairs or we shall perish. Enthusiasm appears to be fast replacing apathy and nonchalance. But if not constructively channeled, this enthusiasm will be replaced by indifference. Not all Zoroastrians have an opinion on UAF, but most of them would like to be in the know of things.

Major issues concerning the Parsi community have been handled by the Samast Anjuman in Udvada and other parts of Gujarat. However, the BPP which originally started out as a group of custodians of charities sponsored by do-gooders almost 350 years ago has now unwittingly become the apex body of the community. The government has always looked on the BPP to give it clear indications on matters of religion and sociology, such as the issue of adoption among Zoroastrians, for one. Whenever there is an unclaimed dead body in the city morgue, identified as a Parsi by the sudreh and kusti, after the lapse of the statutory period the body is handed over to the BPP for the last rites and disposal. The same is the case with intestate wealth and property left behind by dead Zoroastrians.

Over the years the BPP has emerged as the apex body of Zoroastrians not only of Bombay but of the world, what with the largest single conglomerate of the community being clustered in and around the metropolis. With the largest Towers of Silence complex and the biggest troupe of qualified priests anywhere in the world, the Zoroastrians of Bombay are the only really substantial, residual homogeneous section of the community left.

The Doongerwadi Awareness Day attracted over 450 young and old Zoroastrians despite the fact that there was

continued on page 47



We've chosen to Support the Strong.



Women, especially those from lesser literate families, are a downtrodden lot. But not weak. They possess immense traditional strengths that keep our social fabric intact. All they need is a little support. Like clean water, hygienic living facilities, health care, sources of income. And yes, some literacy. Which is what we've been giving to Kasarwadi's 70,000 residents.

Forbes Marshall is a 50 year old company involved in the manufacture of *Steam Engineering and Control Instrumentation Systems*. And while we excel in doing that, we have recognised what our community needs. We strive to provide services that help the residents of Kasarwadi build a better living around themselves. Not strengthening them. Just giving them support. A small example of our giving to society for what we've got from it.

**Forbes
Marshall**

Mumbai-Pune Road, Kasarwadi, Pune 411 034, India
Tel: 91(0)20 - 794495, Fax: 91(0)20 - 797413

Decorating Dilnaar

In recognition of her distinguished service, Dilnaar Ahmadullah of the British Deputy High Commission was awarded an Honorary MBE

Hilla P. Guzder

Brass railings gleam, floors sparkle. Security is tight, with a series of interlocked doors leading from one room to another.

"Ours is the second busiest visa issuing section in the world," states Dilnaar Ahmadullah, head of the visa section at the British Deputy High Commission at Nariman Point in Bombay. Ahmadullah was awarded an Honorary MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth II in recognition of her distinguished service towards British interests. "The award came completely out of the blue, I was stunned and all I could say was 'thank you, thank you,'" smiles soft-spoken Ahmadullah.

As immigration office manager, a post she has held for 19 years, Ahmadullah heads the complex and sensitive visa service, dealing with over 60,000 applications annually and almost 1,000 applications on peak days. Supervising over 20 local staff and providing a continuity with the frequently changing UK-based staff, Ahmadullah has "consistently impressed senior management and entry clearance officers alike with the very high quality of her work... She is a most loyal, hard working lady who leads by example," noted a commendation which was read out when the award was conferred on her by the British Deputy High Commissioner Michael Bates on May 14, 1999. The order is in the form of a badge on a rose pink ribbon showing the imprints of King George V and Queen Mary, with the motto 'For God and the Empire' and is accompanied by a citation. It was created 82 years ago, states a press release, by George V to recognize the efforts of individuals across the world who had assisted Britain during World War I. It was the first time women and foreigners were included in an order of chivalry!

Nominations are scrutinized by specially appointed committees of experts from different walks of life and the final list is sent to 10, Downing Street to be ratified by the British Prime Minister. "Yes, one does feel good when one's work is appreciated," states Ahmadullah.

"Immigration profiles have changed over the 30 years I have been with the British Deputy High Commission," she remarks. In the 1970s, there was more immigration and very little tourist traffic. Now, with the more liberal economic policies of the government, there is a wide spectrum of visitors taking advantage of the numerous package tours available. "Television programs have also fed people's wanderlust and now you see even retired people venturing out, whereas earlier they would not have dreamed of using their hard-earned savings on touring!" she says. Visa applications come from Bombay and surrounding areas and from the interiors of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Because of the large number of Gujarati-speaking people from East Africa who became British citizens, the announcements in the visa section are made in three languages — English, Hindi and Gujarati! UK citizens of Indian origin often come to India and choose a spouse who is then granted immigration rights, as are dependent parents, as well as children, provided of course they meet all other criteria, a major one being sufficient accommodation, explains Ahmadullah. "It may be okay for five to six people to live in one room in India, but UK law does not allow that," she elucidates, adding that most people are quite truthful and in her estimation hardly one percent of people who go on a visitor's visa do not return. It is much easier to 'disappear' in the USA because of its vast size, she says. "Fill in your form properly, bring the documents required

and tell the truth!" she recommends. "We do understand genuine problems, but when someone says her mother can't come in person because she is too old and she turns out to be 52, or because she has diabetes, these are not genuine problems!"

The number of Indian students going to British universities has also increased and almost 800 students were issued visas last year, she says. Very few young UK Parsis, however, seem to seek a spouse from India and she believes one can count on one's fingertips the number of Parsi boys and girls going to the UK after marriage.

Born in Delhi to Bejon and Khorshed Talati, Ahmadullah spent the first six years of her life there. The family moved when the Central Bank of India transferred her father to Indore. "The Parsis of Indore were like one big family," she recalls. Three years later it was on to Calcutta which was the hometown of her mother's Gazder family. There were almost 3,000 Parsis in Calcutta at that time though you probably wouldn't see what you might call a 'typical' Parsi in Calcutta as you would in Bombay, because of the lack of bays or colonies, she observes. "My greatest joy in my youth was the Calcutta Parsee Club (a small tent out in a maidan!) and the worst punishment was to be told on weekends that I could not go to the Club! The Navroz natak performers came from Bombay and there was always the excitement of what to wear!" she laughs. Basketball, tennis, badminton and table tennis were favorite sports but much of this was lost, she says ruefully, when she came to Bombay. Present interests include listening to pop, not classical, music and reading fiction by bestselling authors, particularly Indian ones!

After her Senior Cambridge and BA with English Honors from Calcutta's

Loretto House on Middleton Row, Ahmadullah worked for two years as an airhostess with the BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation). Moving to Bombay with her Cambridge-educated husband Saleem a year after marriage, Ahmadullah joined the British Deputy High Commission, then situated at Flora Fountain, in 1969. "My mother-in-law Deena was the sister of Air-India's Bobby Kuka and the Kukas were partners in Globe Theatres Private Limited with the Sidhwas, with cinema houses in Bombay and Calcutta," she ex-



Very few young UK Parsis seem to seek a spouse from India

plains. The Ahmadullahs' son Zafar, following in the footsteps of his father and paternal grandparents, has also studied at Cambridge and is currently working as an investment banker in the UK. "Though he studied law at Cambridge, finance has been his love from childhood," she chuckles. Though proud to be a Parsi, she did not have her son's navjote performed as "it is not allowed," she states matter-of-factly. "I would certainly like to see a change, but the change should come from the community leaders themselves." As the community gets smaller with changing times, Ahmadullah believes a choice should be given to the parents whether to perform the child's navjote or not, as the child is too young to decide for himself. "Extreme rigidity serves no purpose. I would rather not have conversion, but have the child become a Zoroastrian if one parent is Zoroastrian. I would also feel very sad if the two people closest to me, my husband and my son, were not allowed to see my face when the end comes," 55-year-old Ahmadullah says.



Terming the Parsis a "caring" community, where a number of people do good work very quietly (like Scylla Vatcha for example, she observes), Ahmadullah quotes the instance of one of her office employees whose daughter was suffering from aplastic anemia (see "To the marrow borne," *Parsiana*, July-August 1999), for whom "help came quickly" in the form of generous donations. The Parsee General Hospital is "a very good community facility," she as-

Above: Ahmadullah (right) with Bates and (below) flanked by Saleem and Zafar at Cambridge

serts, citing the example of her mother who insisted she be taken only to that Hospital when she was ill. Parsis are also, by and large, "loyal and good workers who never let the office down," she opines — a fact reinforced by her own commitment and dedication to the job she has held for 30 years.

A hall, a lecture and memories..

The Red Cross Society receives a plush new hall dedicated to Homi Taleyarkhan's memory

Arnavaz S. Mama

"Whenever I think of Homi it is as giving a talk or listening to a talk. The idea of a meeting place is most appropriate," remarked Dr P. C. Alexander, governor of Maharashtra, as he inaugurated the new Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan Memorial Hall at the Red Cross Building in Bombay's Town Hall Compound on June 29, 1999.

Gifted by Taleyarkhan's wife Thrity to the Red Cross Society and the city of Bombay to commemorate his first death anniversary, the elegant, airconditioned auditorium is a far cry from the original hall which the Society's chairman Kersey Gherda, described in his welcome address as "dark and dingy." Moreover, the metamorphosis was effected in just 18 days with architect Urvaksh Aga and contractor Bomi Vania and their men from Hormuzd Company working round the clock with a speed and dedication comparable to the late Taleyarkhan's own fondness for quick execution of projects, as noted Homai Modi, honorary secretary of the Red Cross Society of Bombay and the evening's compere. Midway down the side of the Hall Taleyarkhan's full-length portrait by Pawan Kumar smiles his characteristic quizzical smile.

Paucity of real estate at affordable rates in the city combined with sentiment in Thrity Taleyarkhan's choice of project. "For the last few years of his life he worked here regularly, even the day he died," she told *Parsiana*.

Recalling Taleyarkhan's "great commitment for service to the people," Alexander emphasized his "total, unreserved involvement." When asked by the International Committee of the Red Cross to suggest an individual capable

of spearheading its rehabilitation work in post earthquake Latur, Alexander said he gave Taleyarkhan's name "without hesitation as one who would complete the project on time." Taleyarkhan spent tireless days and nights but delivered two hospitals, five primary health centers, 24 primary health subcenters,

national consciousness, the political activity to liberate India from the colonial yoke had generations of notables like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dinshaw Vatcha, S. M. Joshi, Vasantdada Patil, Yashwantrao Chavan and others in the third phase. In the post independence period, successful industrial empires, educational institutions, eminent lawyers flourished all over India, but in Mumbai they sported an ethical dimension, profiting honestly. Alexander quoted J. R. D. Tata, "No success or achievement in material terms is worthwhile unless it serves the country and its people and is done honestly."

Placing the services of Homi Taleyarkhan in that context, Alexander noted how the Maharashtrian tradition and Parsi heritage had strengthened his commitment to service. Dividing society into three sections, Alexander said there are the few who make things happen, the few who watch things happen and the majority who have no idea of what's going on around them. "Homi (belonged) to the first category," he concluded.

Others to pay tribute to Taleyarkhan were Gherda who recalled his "yeoman service to the Red Cross" and national vice chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society B. K. Goyal who referred to him as "an integral part of this country's life... one of the greatest citizens this metropolis has produced." Modi remembered how he "often jested that he was a racehorse" who couldn't even wait for the start signal, calling her to work with him even when he lay in hospital with a drip in his arm. "A millennium gift to the Red Cross" coincidentally on the 50th anniversary of



Entrance to the new Hall in the Red Cross Building

135 staff quarters, a special ward for trauma patients, seven schools and a water supply project with 10 reservoirs in one-and-a-half years, and presented the accounts a week before he died, attested the governor.

Taleyarkhan's "total belief in being of help to others" led Alexander into examining the "tradition of service in Maharashtra." Tracing the foundation of service to society's victims through spirituality over four centuries, Alexander ascribed these tenets to Hindu saints and philosophers like Dyaneshwar, Ramdas, Tukaram and 50 others who largely belonged to the nonpriestly classes. In the next phase social reform got shape and impetus from the 19th century onwards as Mahatma Phule, Behram Malbari and their ilk labored to mute social inequities. The revival of



**Find Purpose
The Means
Will Follow**

TATA
FINANCE

Corporate Office: Tata Finance Ltd, Dubash House, 15 J N Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai 400038 Tel: 2661471
Regional Head Quarters: Calcutta Tel: 2296867/3065 • Chennai Tel: 8232748/49/50 • Delhi Tel: 3316299 • Mumbai Tel: 5232765



The plush new auditorium (above) with Taleyarkhan's portrait unveiled by Alexander (extreme left) as Ackama Alexander, Thrity Taleyarkhan and Goyal look on. Below: The distinguished audience and Mukherjee (left) and Rajgopal garlanding the portrait before the BPL Urja lecture



the Geneva Convention, as noted Bombay Red Cross vice president Dr Chandi Batlivala, the Hall will be a source of income to the Society which intends to hire it out for bonafide functions. She also thanked the trustees of the Dorab Tata Trust for underwriting the waterproofing and reinforcement of the building to enable the 200 plus seater Hall to be airconditioned. The dedication of the Hall by the governor was preceded by the invocation of universal benign forces by the chanting of Vedic and Koranic verses, a hymn and an Avestan prayer. "May all those who make decisions in this Hall do so right and implement them justly," prayed Father John Rodrigues, principal of Campion School.

The institution of the Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan Memorial Lecture series by the IBPL Urja Research Foundation was flagged off with former union finance minister Pranab Mukherjee speaking on "Consensus on economic policies — a few thoughts" at the Bombay House Auditorium on June 25, 1999. The function had been cosponsored by the 28-member H. J. H. Taleyarkhan National Memorial Committee. Taleyarkhan had been the founder-chairman of IBPL Urja which is a non-governmental organization working in the field of energy conservation. Its president Rusy Engineer paid tribute to Taleyarkhan's vast energy and subtle sense of humor while Urja vice president and the evening's compere Dhun Baldawala read the messages received from Alexander, Maharashtra chief minister Narayan Rane and Urja chairman Prof M. G. K. Menon who was attending a conference in Hungary. Urja vice chairman S. Rajgopal introduced the speaker and informed the gathering that their application for a postal stamp commemorating Taleyarkhan had been forwarded by the government to the philatelic committee.

Mukherjee recalled his two-decade long personal association with Taleyarkhan, referring to an occasion when the latter had averted a major crisis as governor of Sikkim when three ethnic groups were threatening an agitation, emphasizing Taleyarkhan's "depth of

understanding and sincerity with which he pursued the cause. There are very few who have the tenacity to take ideas to their logical conclusion," he added. With tax and legal authority and economic commentator Nani Palkhivala prominent among the other bigwigs in the audience, Mukherjee quipped, "Like all of you, I used to eagerly await Palkhivala's comment on the budget — especially my first budget in 1982!"

It was Mukherjee's contention that over the past few years a consensus on economic policy has emerged: "We



Mukherjee (speaking), Baldawala, Palkhivala, Rajgopal, Engineer and Thrity Taleyarkhan

have had four governments at the Center in the last three years. The essential nature and broad direction of economic policy has not changed significantly... While in power, political parties end up doing pretty much the same thing whatever they might say when out of power. This is the logic of running a government. You have to be responsible and pragmatic. You also have to realize the limitations of doing U-turns... Some come to this consensus out of conviction, some come to it out of commitment, some come to it out of compulsion and others come to it on the basis of the TINA factor — There Is No Alternative... It is remarkable that when you look at the 25 state governments in the country ruled by diverse political parties of varying economic and social ideologies... you will find a great similarity in the language and practice of economic policy."

Much else that Mukherjee said was sobering: according to per capita income by the World Bank Atlas method we rank 124th among 157 countries; 36 percent of the world's poor are in India and 50 percent of the Indian population

is poor. According to the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Program we rank 139th among 174 countries. We need investment for growth but the "government's consumption expenditure is crowding out its essential investment expenditure... It is not as if the agenda for action is not known. What is lacking... is the institutional framework for discussion and debate... a framework that ensures that politics does not needlessly and unnecessarily derail sensible economic policies... What we need is responsible politics... that becomes the harbinger of economic change and social transformation."

All of Taleyarkhan's papers — correspondence, memoranda, notes, statements, articles — will rest at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi, informs Thrity Taleyarkhan. The Museum which began with the nucleus of the Nehru family paper now preserves the correspondence of nearly 700 distinguished Indians including politicians, diplomats, educationists, scientists and others who have contributed to the national welfare, as notes the letter from the Museum to Thrity requesting her husband's papers. "The late Shri Taleyarkhan was not only an ardent patriot and a staunch nationalist but was also a dynamic organizer deeply devoted to the welfare of the Indian people. Our institution will consider it a great privilege if you are kind enough to accept our proposal and decide to deposit his papers in this institution for the purpose of historical research," wrote research officer J. L. Gera in a letter dated October 28, 1998.

The papers will be scientifically immunized and systematically cataloged. A copy of the list rests with the donor who continues to be the owner of the transferred material with the Nehru Museum acting as custodian, notes the letter. The papers and records are made available to bonafide research scholars in their supervised reading room facility, informs the letter.

The Museum has taken delivery of a part of the papers and will be collecting the rest shortly, says Thrity.

Irani's idlis

Famed for their vegetarian fare, Farhang Irani's three eateries in Bombay are well patronized

Parinaz M. Gandhi

"We have always been in the food business. My father, my grandfather, my..." trails off Farhang Irani. "Looking at my size you can make out," says the rotund hotelier and restaurateur who with his chubby cheeks and white beard, affable ways and generous disposition brings to mind the familiar image of Santa Claus. Irani's presence though is not seasonal but perennial at his eateries in Bombay.

"We are the pioneers of pizzas and idlis," he claims. "It is not that we discovered these items or the recipes," he clarifies. They were being made and sold. But they would be made once a day and sold throughout the day after reheating. Irani and his nephew Farshid Irani were of the opinion that customers deserved to be offered fresh fare. So using the pizza base they would bake it afresh each time. Their idlis steamed in the specially installed machines were a favorite with the diners too and on festive occasions and pooja time Irani remembers receiving bulk orders during the five years they managed Sukh Sagar Snacks (on Sandhurst Bridge connecting Chowpatty to Opera House) in the early '80s.

The popularity of their venture gave them the confidence to launch their own Santosh Sagar in 1986 after they raised the necessary loan. Situated on Napean Sea Road, diagonally across Priyadarshini Park, this restaurant has a seating capacity of just eight and may get lost in the chain of shops during the daytime. Come dinner time and this place acquires a different vibrancy. Shortage of sitting space does not seem to deter those, mainly the youths, keen to eat

here. They are content to balance their plates in and on their cars and their two-wheelers while they sample the regular favorites like pav bhaji, idlis and dosas, and the newly introduced Mexican tacos and paneer-chilli rolls.



Irani: "You have to change with the times"

Following the success of Santosh Sagar, Irani started Santosh Sagar Snacks on Tardeo Road, close to Haji Ali, which can accommodate 35 diners. Then came Sagar Snacks at Chowpatty, next to the Kilachand Garden where nearly 150 individuals can enjoy the Punjabi, south Indian, Mughlai and Chinese fare offered on their ground and mezzanine floors plus small open-air terrace.

Are his vegetarian restaurants well patronized by members of the Zoroastrian community? Not at all, maintains Irani, "Not because they are averse to vegetarian food but because they feel *mooaa Irani ne soo idli banaavta aavre* (how can you expect an Irani to make idlis)!"

Seven years ago he started the three-star Dan Tourist Hotel at Silvassa in the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Its 18 air-conditioned double occupancy rooms are available for Rs 450 per day, the vegetarian and non-vegetarian restaurant and beer bar enticing many tourists to Udvada to make a trip to this pleasant resort.

When asked about his expansion plans for the future, Irani jests, "Now only the body is expanding." At 52 years he dreams of "taking life easy. *Kétlu mènhat karé maanas* (how much should a man slog?)" rhetorically enquires the businessman who has no

male heirs. His two married daughters Afreen Framroze and Armin Irani are not involved in the business. Farshid too is now settled in the USA.

Every Monday and Friday Irani is at the Crawford Market by 6 a.m. to buy the supplies in the auctions. If the quality of the products there is not good, it means making a trip to Vashi where the market has now shifted. The rest of the day sees him shunting between one or the other of his establishments. Until 1 a.m. he is present at one of his eateries, all of which are usually open till 2 a.m. From Tuesday to Thursday he is at Silvassa. Sunday is one day he takes a break from work unless he is summoned in an emergency.

When we interviewed him on Friday, July 23, 1999, he continued to man the cash counter at Sagar Snacks. As we stood to pose him one query after another, every time there was an exchange of cash with one of his waiters and an interruption in our conversation he would dutifully ask, "*Kai khaso* (will you eat something?)" ultimately ensuring that we did not leave his restaurant without sampling his idlis and pizzas and sweet lime juice. Even whilst responding to us, his observant eyes had not missed that there was a young schoolboy waiting outside for a glass of water, and his well-trained nose could detect the smell of gas from the kitchen!

"*Havé pahlé ni kani majaa nathi dhandho karvama* (Running the restaurant now is not as much fun as in earlier days)," confesses Irani. With the mushrooming of fast-food joints at every corner, the business now is more competitive. When they started selling idlis, it was at Rs 2.50 a plate. Today it is Rs 15 per plate. But at that time a coconut was available for 60 paise whereas today it costs five rupees, he explains. "Formerly we could be choosy about our suppliers. With the increasing demand today they say '*maal joito hoi to lai jao* (if you are interested you can take the stuff).'" Despite all the travails, Irani maintains, "We can't complain."

He would never think of selling out, he announces. "My managers are like my sons. I have full faith in them. One of them has been with me for 18 years, another for 28 years." Barring Zubin Kolah who is in charge of his Napean Sea Road restaurant, Irani regrets that he



The restaurant at Tardeo with their popular idlis and dosas



has no other Zoroastrians in his employment. "Aapraa poriao (our boys) want to go home at 5 p.m. If it is Saturday they have to take their girlfriend out. Sundays they won't come. I have had many Parsi boys who have left after 15-20 days...I'm willing to take them in as partners but I have not found anyone till now. I am willing to give 10 percent share of my profits plus a good salary but where are they?" One of Irani's nephews, Aspiandiar Irani, based in Dahanu, continues to serve as Irani's partner since he had helped him out with a loan when he was struggling to raise finances for his own ventures.

Disillusioned with the members of his Irani fraternity, Irani says, "When you are on the downtrend, no one will help you. But when you are prospering, they will all come to your doorstep. Jealousy has ruined the Irani community. At one time there used to be an Irani shop at every street corner. Why have they all sold out? You have to change with the times."

Irani's father Merwan used to run the Ideal Restaurant at Alice Building in the Fort area which was a bakery cum restaurant cum stores. When fire engulfed the building in 1973, the restaurant was burnt down. For seven years thereafter the family were involved in a legal battle with the landlord which they ultimately lost and so had to start from scratch. There was a time when Irani sold hamburgers and rolls made by his wife Frangis from a small outlet at Kermani Building on P. M. Road. He then took up



jobs at Snowmans (Breach Candy) and Badshah Cold Drink (Santa Cruz) before running Sukh Sagar Snacks and launching his own enterprises with Farshid with a substantial loan offered by his brother-in-law Khorram Irani.

During his school days at St Peter's at Panchgani, Irani always dreamed of becoming a pilot, but being the only son in a family with four daughters, the parents refused to consider his wish. Come vacation time, Irani remembers his father sending him to their bakery every morning trying to impress upon him that the practical lessons learnt there will remain with him through life, not the ones seen in the movies! Today Irani is grateful for his father's foresight. Yes he can cook, "I am a very good cook," he states, and is familiar with the ingredients and proportions that go into making even idlis. "This is very important otherwise *maanasa maathaa par chari jai* (the employees can take you for a ride)."

The relationship between Irani and his employees at Sagar Snacks seemed to be cordial with the proprietor offering them prasad following his devo-

tional trip to the Mahalakshmi Temple which is a weekly Friday routine, just as going to the Siddhi Vinayak Temple on Tuesdays and attending the Novena at the Mahim church on Wednesdays is part of his schedule.

Every Sunday, it is time for the fire-temple near his residence at Fort. He did not know the name of the fire-temple but from the description of its location, it

must be the Godavara Agiary. "At this quiet and peaceful fire-temple I am happy to see the old priest every time and he is happy to see me," says Irani who has never professed to have any conservative leanings although wearing the sudreh-kusti at all times is a must for him.

What is important for Irani is to maintain the reputation of his restaurants as places offering good, authentic, hygienic food at reasonable rates and to ensure the goodwill of his customers. "One satisfied customer is worth Rs 50,000 spent on advertising," believes Irani who is constantly impressing upon his staff the need to keep their patrons contented. "People are willing to travel great distances if they are happy with the food and service," he has noticed.

When dwindling profits haunt members of all industries, be it the trendy jewelry or garment, as has been Irani's observation, he is sanguine that "those in the food and hotel business will always thrive."

RECIPES

Farhang Irani shares the recipes of four

*We never take our guests and
breath-taking views for granted*



Lord's Central Hotel

Matheran 410102

Matheran Telephone 021483-0228 Fax 021483-0595
Bombay telephone 3867776

**For Navjote &
Wedding Receptions**

Children's Parties

Ladies Lunches

Social Gatherings

**Celebrate
at Caravan**

A very central, convenient location

Contact

Caravan
RESTAURANT

at

STERLING

65, Muzban Road, Fort,
Mumbai-400 001.
Tel: 2072492-2077513
Fax: (91 22) 2076310

of their popular dishes with *Parsiana* readers.

IDLIS (8 pieces)
Semolina (100 g)
Urad dal (100 g)
Cumin powder (1 tsp)
Salt (½ tsp)

Soak semolina and urad dal in water separately for 15-20 minutes. Drain out water. Blend urad dal in grinder. Mix dal, semolina, cumin powder and salt and steam in cooker.

SAMBHAR

Masoor dal (100 g)
Tomato (1 — chopped)
Kashmiri chillies (2)
Poppy seeds (2 tsp)
Coriander seeds (½ tsp)
Cumin seeds (½ tsp)
Salt (to taste)

Soak dal in water for 15-20 minutes. Wash and put to boil. Add tomato while boiling. On a griddle roast chillies, poppy seeds, coriander seeds and cumin seeds. Grind into powder and add to the cooked dal. Stir till flavor absorbed in the dal.

COCONUT CHUTNEY

Coconut (1 — grated)
Green chillies (2)
Grams (50 g)
Coriander (2-3 sprigs)
Mustard seeds (½ tsp)
Salt (to taste)

Fry mustard seeds in a little oil. Drain oil. Blend the remaining ingredients in a mixer. When serving sprinkle mustard seeds.

PANEER — CHILLI DRY

(to serve 2)
Paneer or cottage cheese (100 g)
Capsicum (1 — finely chopped)
Green chillies (2-3 — finely chopped)
Garlic (½ tsp — finely chopped)
Ginger (½ tsp — finely chopped)
Soya sauce (2 tsp)
Vinegar (½ tsp)
Cornflour (25 g)
Salt and pepper (a pinch of each)
Oil (to fry)

Cut cottage cheese or paneer into cubes and fry till golden brown. Remove from fire. Sauté capsicum and green chillies with garlic, ginger, salt and pepper. Add soya sauce and vinegar. Make a paste of cornflour mixed with water and pour it over the mixture to give it a thick base. Add the fried paneer. Garnish with coriander.



O.K.



Good



Excellent



Outstanding

HSBC. It's a sure sign that you're dealing with a world-class financial services organisation.

We've been around for more than 130 years. Now we're in 79 countries and territories, serving over 20 million customers.

Those are the numbers. But it's our integrity and common sense solutions that you can truly count on.

Wherever you are in the world, wherever you are in your life, HSBC will be there for you.

Call us - Bangalore: 559 1381. Calcutta: 220 0905. Chennai: 522 3227. Gurgaon: 359 786. Hyderabad: 335 6367. Mumbai: 498 2424.
New Delhi: 335 4499. Trivandrum: 331 269. Visakhapatnam: 568 936. Fax - (022) 265 1605. E-mail - hsbcindia@vsnl.com

HSBC 

YOUR WORLD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited.

Dinshaw's delicacies

After the success of their heart-shaped ice cream Heartbeat, Dinshaw's Dairy Foods Private Limited has introduced an ice cream sandwich named Sumo. Competitively priced at Rs 16 for 80 ml, Sumo consists of a slab of chocolate and vanilla ice cream dipped in chocolate sauce garnished with nuts and sandwiched between chocolate biscuits. Sales have crossed two lakh units per month, within two months of introduction, according to a press release, and the company plans to introduce a series of innovative products.

Dinshaw's now has a capacity of 40,000 litres per day and is one of the biggest ice cream manufacturing units in the country. It has recently installed India's first ice cream extrusion plant imported from Italy which called for an investment of over five crore rupees. Managing director Jimmy Rana, the founder's nephew, explains: "Conventionally made ice cream cannot be given fancy shapes and also tends to be crystalline in structure. The state of the art extrusion technology enables us to



manufacture smooth and creamy ice cream in any desired form and shape... we are trying out different shapes and combinations of flavors to add extra appeal to our ice creams and get an edge over competition."

It was in the 1920s that the founder Dinshaw Rana invested his life's savings into the purchase of three buffaloes in the then small town of Nagpur (see "The delights from Dinshaw's," *Parsiana*, September '88). Dinshaw's started making ice cream in wooden molds in 1933, but the ice cream business was limited to only three months of the summer!

Rana took charge in 1981 and has over the past 18 years steadily expanded its

capacity and marketing network. The company owns 14 cold storages across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, states their company profile. Dinshaw's aims to increase its current turnover of Rs 50 crores by 20 percent in the coming financial year and capture a 13 percent share in the Rs 450 crore ice cream market.

Naaz no more

It was one of Bombay's serene spots. Situated on the crown of Malabar Hill, Café Naaz provided from its three levels a commanding view of the blue of the bay, the gold of Chowpatty beach and the green of the trees on the hillside that had survived the onslaught of the skyscrapers. But on July 23, '99, officials of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) accompanied by a police party entered the premises of Café Naaz, tossed out on to the street the Café's tables, chairs, utensils, trunks, etc and closed down the restaurant. Civic officials plan to construct a water reservoir control room on the municipal land which had been leased to Café Naaz almost five decades ago, according to newspaper sources. Litigation between the parties has been going on from 1977.

For years the restaurant had been a favorite spot for cooing couples, backpackers flipping through the pages of their *Lonely Planet*, celebrities and camera crews of Bollywood shooting their films there, as well as the common man enjoying his falooda or tandoored meats, watching life go by on the streets below. "In recent months every morning down these green slopes would come a waiter from Naaz carrying a large kettle of tea. He would proceed to the Nana-Nani Park on the beach and serve the tea to the oldies taking their walks there. That was Naaz's contribution to the city," wrote Busybee in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of July 29, '99. "It was not the greatest



Deserted interior of Café Naaz

Photo: Hilla Guzder

restaurant in the world. The Irani partners, who ran it, tried, they were honest and friendly, and the staff worked hard, running up and down the three terraces with steaming kebabs and large plates of aromatic pulaos... And they served Parsi food, one of the few restaurants in the city that continued to serve it, when everybody else had packed up. They also served some Iranian food and were particularly proud of it," he stated.

A petition filed by Café Naaz seeking to restrain the BMC from repossessing the land was rejected by the Bombay High Court. "The BMC can build its grand pump room... an engineer looking from a meter to the beauty of Queen's Necklace isn't going to deliver better quality water or more of it," noted columnist Anil Dharker in *Mid-Day* on July 28, lamenting the demise of one of the city's romantic landmarks.

Equity online

Pheroza Billimoria, former marketing director, *Business India*, and Ajit Dayal, a pioneer in equity research and investment management in India, have launched their website, www.equitymaster.com three months ago, informs the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* of August 5, '99. The website contains comprehensive information about Indian stock markets as well as financial data of over 500 leading Indian companies. The website includes a portfolio tracker which has proved to be very popular, stated Dayal.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

THE CASE FOR...

continued from page 34

just a small write-up in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* on one preceding Sunday. More than one percent of Bombay's total Zoroastrian population turned up in a show of solidarity. On that occasion, for the first time ever, a tour of the entire estate was very revealing. The final result can be seen today, less than three years later. The renovation of bunglis, the forestation program, the plans to increase the vulture population, the anxiety to be rid of encroachers and other such issues once swept under the carpet now receive attention.

Compared to that, the apathy of donors and elected AC members to the election of BPP trustees under the present system stands out starkly, to say the least. Every up-coming election is publicized for months, with various candidates sending out their manifestos, getting coverage and giving out advertisements in the Gujarati Press. This has attracted at best indifference from the rank and file members of the community who are helpless bystanders in this drama that unfolds a minimum seven times in as many years. The BPP trust-

ees, though highly respected individually by the rank and file of the community, are collectively the favorite whipping boys due to the remoteness of

A Zoroastrian who is not a voter is eligible to contest the election as a trustee!

these donors' representatives from the large group of beneficiaries, the common Zoroastrians.

In knowledgeable circles, Nani Palakhivala's statement to the effect that India owes the majority of her ills to UAF is being merrily touted to ensure that UAF doesn't get a fair chance now, nor in the near or even distant future. The quality of trustees thus elected will deteriorate, they insist.

Nothing can be farther from the truth. The state has its political parties, the leaders of which select their candidates who are more loyal than competent, whereas in the case of the BPP there are no demi-gods deciding the community's

destiny. Individual members offering themselves for election will be elected each time on the strength of their individual acceptability to the whole community, and not just the donors and the AC.

It is not as though the donors will be deprived of their votes, as is sought to be made out, but that the whole community will also get the same right to vote. The constitutional right of the Privy Purses was with one stroke of the pen abolished and kings were reduced to commoners. Certain quarters have argued that if the donors' special right and parity to elect the trustees of the BPP is taken away, then donations will dry up and the community will be the poorer. But it is a matter of common knowledge that the really large donations have come from generous people and not from those who donated only to pack the donors' register with their nominees in order to influence the result of the election in their or their nominee's favor.

We pray to the Almighty to grant generosity to the opponents of UAF so that they may gracefully accept at the turn of the century what should have been adopted at its beginning.

With Best Compliments

From

A WELL-WISHER

MATRIMONIAL

Alliance invited from educated, good-looking Zarathushtrian girls of respectable families, for two young Zarathushtrian boys of 28 and 27 years respectively. Both boys are professional and career minded graduates and are electrical engineers from Sydney. The elder boy is an electronic engineer and the younger one is a software engineer. Both are working in reputed organizations. Girls must be 21 to 28 years and willing to settle in Australia.

The boys along with their parents will be visiting Mumbai in Dec 99/Jan 2000. Please send detailed information with a photograph (returnable) to:

The Advertiser
Parsiana, Matrimonial (Sept/22-99)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

*Please make sure the reply envelope bears the reference number cited here.



Personal sale of
**Authentic Parsi garas,
silver, gold and
jari borders**

Contact: 2833078, 2873373



GOOLKHUSH RESORT

Bordi (Station Golvad)
"Off Seabeach"

AC-Deluxe Couple Rs 1,000/-
extra person Rs 450/-

Non-AC Couple Rs 800/-
extra person Rs 350/-

Inclusive all meals and free access
to swimming pool, once a day.

Contact 3821494 Pager No. 9628238800
02528 41182-41336

A good delivery

His perceptive eye sweeps a wide cricket canvas — from the picturesque stadia at Guwahati in Assam to Dunedin in New Zealand, to the on-field triumphs and tragedies of the Indian team, to the off-field machinations of selection committees, to the follies and foibles of spectators. His comments are witty and accurate, but the humor is never hurtful.

Howzzat! is a compilation of 74 of the best of Busybee's columns on cricket which first appeared in the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* from 1985 to 1999. The book, a special limited edition for World Cup '99, is illustrated by Mario de Miranda and presented by S. Kumars. Priced at Rs 100, it was published by Oriana Books, Bombay and released in May '99 on the eve of the World Cup.

Cricket is "a game of English meadows and tea tents and county squires, played under mellow sunshine with the threat of a sudden shower hanging in the summery air, and yet it seems to be more at home in hot, sweaty stadia... So here is an English game... played in an eastern country... promoted by soft drink and plastic card companies from an exclusively baseball country like the U. S. of A. If you do not find that odd, it is because you are an Indian," writes the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* editor Behram Contractor in his foreword, as he hands over the ball to "my friend Busybee (Contractor's nom-de-plume). After all, this is his book."

Ensnared within its 120 pages are Busybee's familiar characters — the wife, the children Darryl and Derek, Bolshoi the Boxer, the friend on the 21st floor. Nostalgia pervades its pages. Busybee remembers the first Test match he saw — West Indies versus India way back in the '48-'49 series — from the concrete slabs of Brabourne Stadium's East Stand, at a time when spectators threw seeds and orange peel on other spectators and not on fieldsmen stationed on the boundary! Polly Umrigar made his debut in that Test, writes Busybee: "He immedi-

ately struck everybody as a fine all-rounder, modest, hard working, reliable and the amazing part is that after much success and fame, he remained the nice, modest, gentleman cricketer."

And Busybee recalls this in his column penned 40 years later, in 1988! With his shrewd grasp over men and matters, Busybee chronicles it all in tongue-in-cheek style — from spoilsport Kanpur spectators flashing little mirrors reflecting the sunlight onto visiting batsmen's faces, temporarily blinding them and engineering their dismissal, to Bishen Singh Bedi's famous remark about wanting to dump the Indian team into the Pacific Ocean!

Over the half century he has been watching the game, writes Busybee, "it has undergone a world of change," with cricketers wearing football style jerseys with their names on the back and umpires carrying mobile communications. Sometimes you do not know, he observes, "whether you are watching World Cup Football or World Cup Cricket."

The book was released at Afternoon House by Raj Singh Dungarpur, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, amidst an assembly of celebrities including veteran cricketers.



Darius Marshall of Calicut won his fourth gold medal at the 42nd National Shooting Championship at Bangalore in the 50 meters, .22 rifle prone position for veterans in January '99, representing Kerala state. Marshall's tally of medals includes four silvers.

Compiled by Hilla P. Guzder

Treasured on the Island - 2

Warm heart and hearth

The Parsis of Ceylon regularly enjoyed
the hospitality of Framjee House

After being shipwrecked in the turbulent waters of the Indian Ocean a handful of Parsis landed in Ceylon in the early 17th century. In the 18th century, some adventurous Parsis had sought to establish themselves on this beautiful island as planters and shopkeepers. By the 19th century the community was so well respected that on the formation of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in 1839, Hormusjee Espondiarjee and Shapoorjee Hirji were the only two non-English members invited thereon.

At the beginning of the 20th century Zoroastrians in Ceylon numbered less than a hundred, reaching their peak of over 350 prior to World War II. Then followed the exodus and today around 60 Zoroastrians remain in Sri Lanka (see "The Zoroastrians of Serendip," *Parsiana*, January 1999).

Starting with the July-August issue, *Parsiana* is chronicling the achievements of prominent Sri Lankan Zoroastrians of the 19th and the 20th century. These are edited excerpts from Behram Kaikhushroo Billimoria's historical compilation, *The Parsees in Ceylon*, culled from the memoirs of Framroze Rustumjee and K. D. Choksy. Written about nine years ago, factually there may be a change of circumstances for some of the individuals mentioned herein although we have imposed on Sri Lanka's respected legal light Kairshasp Choksy's time to check the episodes for accuracy.

The first instalment detailed the success story of Dady Muncherji also known as Dady Parsi who was a merchant held in high esteem by the locals as also the Europeans who patronized his shops. Transport facilities too came within his purview in the early 19th century and there are references to his establishment running the palanquin facilities for the convenience of passengers.

The coffee estate and exports of

Cowasjee Eduljee Colombowalla earned him substantial wealth and he used a part of it to donate a burial ground for Parsis in Colombo, mentions this second instalment. (This old burial ground in Kottanchina was in use prior to the present one on Jawatte Road, acquired for the community by Pestonjee Dinshawjee Khan.) To Framjee Bhikhajee and Company goes the credit for making possible the influx of many Parsis from India. The Khan Clock Tower and the Crippled Children's Ward bear testimony to their largesse. Framjee House was the venue for all Parsi festivities and it was also customary to have an "open house" for all Parsis every Sunday, it is recounted.

The rags to riches story of Rustumjee Muncherjee who had assiduously toiled to build up his business empire and invariably presided over every meeting of the community is related in the third instalment. Among the leading professionals of the 20th century were Homi Framroze Billimoria who enjoyed the distinction of serving as the first Ceylonese (the previous incumbents being English) chief architect of the public works department of the government and Dr Rustum Pestonjee who had served the King during World War I and returned with distinctions in war service. Some of the imposing structures erected by Billimoria are the Independence Hall, The Elphinstone and Majestic Theatres and Navroz Baug. As superintendent of the Leper Asylum in Hendala, Pestonjee played host to the Parsi community every Christmas when they gathered there to celebrate the occasion with the patients.

Another revered medical practitioner was Dr Dadabhoi Pestonjee Banajee who had served the Maharaja of Morvi before being appointed member of the Colombo Municipality, states the fourth instalment. Even though the Maharaja

followed Banajee to Ceylon to persuade him to return, Banajee's wife would not allow it for one of his duties was to taste the food before it was served to the Maharaja which she felt could endanger his life. The legal fraternity's claim to fame was Nariman Kaikhushroo Choksy who was appointed King's Counsel and his son Kairshasp who officiates as President's Counsel. The Prayer Hall and priest's residence known as Navroz Baug were constructed by Meherbai who was keen to fulfil her husband Pallonjee Nowrojee Kapadia's dream project.

The Parasmani Hall which is in use by the Parsi Sports Club was the combined effort of Framroze Rustumjee who donated the land and Ruttonshah Rustumjee who bore the cost of construction, it is explained in the fifth instalment. As per Ruttonshah's last will, every year the community is invited to a dinner at the Navroz Baug on a date close to his death anniversary. The academician Kaikhushroo Billimoria, who as principal of the Dharmaraja College was responsible for building up the center of learning into a reputed institute, was always happy to host Parsi visitors to Kandy as theirs was the only Zoroastrian family resident there.

Many other outstanding Parsis have their roots in Ceylon. Professional, business and/or family commitments may have persuaded them to settle in other lands. But their accomplishments are fondly recalled in the final episode of this treatise on Sri Lankan Zoroastrians.

...

In the early part of the 19th century there was an edict prohibiting the purchase of lands in all parts of Colombo (except a few acres demarcated and depicted in the Pettah and the Foreshore Street of Colombo) as well as estates in the interior of Ceylon. As the Parsis had

purchased land in Colombo and estates in the interior they moved the government to revoke this edict which was later done and people were at liberty to purchase properties in all parts of the island. The main purpose of this edict was to leave most of the lands to be purchased by people and officers in charge of the government of this country. Many of the Parsis who later came over to trade in Ceylon had purchased extensive lands and estates in Ceylon. The Persians were among the foremost faces of the world noted for plantations and fruit cultivation.

The Parsis who settled permanently in Ceylon proved themselves to be thrifty, hardworking and persevering. They were of a benevolent turn of mind and heart towards their friends, neighbors and business acquaintances. In business they had been consistently honest, faithful and punctual in discharging their financial obligations with strict integrity. This inborn trait of the Parsis at all times helped them to establish worldwide connections on the basis of long-term credit facilities as well as to import stocks of goods on commission basis, without the importer having to pay the value for the goods on arrival. The Parsi merchants who became established in their regular business activities helped the other Parsis from India to start a trade suitable to theirs in all parts of the island. The result of such spontaneous and brotherly feelings shown by the Parsis in Colombo towards their brethren in India was generously demonstrated to all the Parsis who crossed over to Ceylon for business with little or no capital.

The traders among the Parsis who imported large stocks of commodities for the indigenous population of Ceylon had merely to order their large requirements from Indian traders and the latter readily sent the stock of goods on credit, requiring the local Parsi traders to sign and return to them *hundies* (promissory notes) equivalent in value to the goods ordered. All such *hundies* were most scrupulously honored by the Parsi traders by payment of their dues at the banks without demur. Thus there was

built up a fair volume of friendly trade between the two countries of Ceylon and India, the like of which the generations yet unborn will never come to know. That prosperity which the island had enjoyed for years unmitigatedly has now disappeared.

There is a reference in the *Parsie Prakash* that one Dhunjishah Ruttonji Captain came to Bombay in 1800 and worked under his brother Jamshedji.



Graves at the Jawatte Burial Grounds

The *Prakash* goes on to say that in 1805 Jamshedji's ship on its voyage from Colombo to Bombay was captured by the French but he was released near Cape Comorin. Dhunjishah Captain set up his own business in Bombay and called his brothers to join him and in 1812 he and his brothers spread out to the Malabar Coast and to Colombo. Unfortunately there does not appear to be any record of this family locally.

One of the most prominent among Parsi traders was Cowasjee Eduljee. He was a public-spirited and influential Parsi in his days. He owned a coffee estate. He lived in Bloemendhal Road, Kotahena in Colombo and he made a trust of his extensive property in Kotahena for the benefit of the Parsis in Colombo, setting aside a portion of the said property as a burial ground for the Parsis. A portion of that property was sold by the trustees of the Burial Ground Trust and the money realized therefrom forms the nucleus of the present Colombo Parsi Burial Ground Trust.

Under the date 1860 the *Parsie Prakash* notes, Cowasjee Eduljee, Colombowalla had a new ship built in Cochin and named it *Shapurji Hirji* after his father-in-law.

Cowasjee Eduljee came to Ceylon in 1828 when he was 18 years of age. By 1846 when his father-in-law died they had built up a lucrative business in Fourth Cross Street. Cowasjee Eduljee's brother-in-law Behramjee Shapurjee Ayerton (also known as Owenna since he had worked for a Mr Owen) and Nowrojee Pallonjee Kapadia were their assistants. His business was the export of Ceylon products to India and Europe; he also exported coffee in a very big way. When he retired he sold his business to his two assistants. Ayerton left for Bombay and established himself in business there but Kapadia carried on his business in Fourth Cross Street under the firm and style of Nowrojee Pallonjee and Company.

Between the years 1853 and 1868 Cowasjee Eduljee purchased various bits of land which he incorporated into a coffee estate called "Wewwssa and Debedde" Estate in extent 815 acres. On his death on January 5, 1887 at the age of 75 years, he left a last will leaving all his assets to his widow Avabai. She later sold the estate for a sum of Rs 200,000 in or about 1889.

The *Parsie Prakash* further indicates under the date 1861 that Cowasjee Eduljee Colombowalla (as he thereafter called himself) built a wall round the Parsi burial ground in Colombo. This is the old burial ground in Kottanchina which he had earlier donated to the Anjuman. This portion of the burial ground was sold in 1967.

The pioneer firm which established large business connections for Ceylon among the Parsis was the firm that came into existence in Colombo in the year 1844. It became known as Framjee Bhikhajee and Company and had its shop in the Pettah of Colombo. This followed the arrival of two brothers Framjee Bhikhajee Khan and Dinshahjee Bhikhajee Khan who commenced business under that name and later became well-known and highly respected both among the Parsis and among the business fraternity in Ceylon. They were financiers, importers and exporters on a very large and unprecedented scale of all consumer goods and textiles. Being

large financiers they were known to every business firm in Colombo and also in other parts of Ceylon. All traders and large business institutions trusted the honesty of this firm. Most of the Pettah petty traders deposited their cash capital with this firm earning interest on the capital left in deposit. They were also empowered to draw on their capital at any time without prior notice whatsoever. This firm was largely responsible for the influx of many Parsis from India who came over and joined the firm at the outset, some of whom later commenced their own independent business through the assistance of this pioneer firm.

Framjee Bhikhajee Khan died in Bombay on January 4, 1878 aged 53 and Dinshahjee Khan died in Bombay on July 7, 1887 aged 67 years.

The descendants of the Khan family that thereafter ran their lucrative business in Colombo were Bhikhajee Framjee Khan, Munchershaw Framjee Khan (sons of Framjee Bhikhajee) and Pestonjee Dinshahjee Khan (son of Dinshahjee Bhikhajee). They too were astute businessmen and commanded considerable trust among members of all communities in Ceylon. They were appointed members of the Municipal Council of Colombo. Her Majesty's Government conferred on them honorary ranks.

Bhikhajee joined the business at a very early age after his father's death and by his perseverance, hard work, preciseness and a keen sense of justice, along with great industry and enterprise, built up with his partners the oldest and perhaps the best known Indian firm of merchants with a tremendous stake in Ceylon. He was the joint owner and founder of that well-known concern at Grandpass known as the Colombo Oil Mills which stood on an extensive piece of land of over 14 acres. They imported much machinery for extending the scope of this mill for the making and exporting of a large volume of coconut oil to different parts of the world.

They did a roaring trade in the purchase of copra and the export of

coconut oil. They exported every type of indigenous produce such as tea, coffee, cocoa, cinnamon, cardamoms and areca nut and amassed considerable wealth and owned many properties in Colombo. In 1890 they became members of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce.



Caretaker's bungalow at Jawatte

They lived in their magnificent bungalow called "Framjee House," a landmark at the junction of Galle Road and Station Road, Colpetty. This vast bungalow and its extensive grounds which extended from Galle Road to the sea face was the venue for all functions of the Parsi community. It was the venue for the annual Pateti festivities including sports and dinner. It was also always an "open house" to all Parsis every Sunday. All Parsi transit passengers were met on board the ship by a clerk who brought them ashore for a meal and a short stopover. It is now a part of Methodist College and the large garden has been converted into office buildings called Nadarajah Building and other residential bungalows.

Framjee Bhikhajee and Company owned an extensive shopping center at the corner of Main Street and China Lane in the Pettah of Colombo. They were the sole agents for a number of foreign firms. One of their activities was the import of foreign liquor. They were till 1939 the sole importers of the well-known French brandy known as "Beehive Brandy" which used to be sold at Rs 2.50 a bottle in 1904. The firm also traded in precious and semi-precious stones and sometimes even imported toys.

They were philanthropists at heart and made large and munificent contri-

butions to the welfare of the city of Colombo. The Khan Clock Tower in the Main Street at Pettah and the Crippled Children's Ward in Ward Place in the Cinnamon Gardens of Colombo have been erected in their memory.

Mention must also be made of the awards to the University of Colombo, namely the M. F. Khan Prize for Arts, M. F. Khan Gold Medal for Education and the Bhikhajee Khan Gold Medal for Chemistry.

It would also be appropriate at this point of time to state that the residence in which the caretaker at Jawatte Burial Grounds lives was donated to the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman in memory of Dinshahjee and Framjee Bhikhajee Khan by their sons on October 2, 1905.

On May 10, 1906, Framjee Bhikhajee and Company donated to the Parsi Anjuman the carriage, *gehan* (bier) and the building at Jawatte which houses them.

Pestonjee Dinshahjee Khan, who in Ceylon was accepted by the Parsi community as one of the most trusted members thereof, was during the latter period of the 19th century appointed sole trustee of the Ceylon Parsi Anjuman Burial Ground Fund which was the only Fund in existence at that time. Khan who was a most influential and popular figure among the people of this country, very thoughtfully acquired for the Parsis of Ceylon a permanent burial ground at Jawatte Road in Colombo in extent over two acres both for the burial of the dead of the Parsis and for all their religious purposes. The said land was conveyed by the Crown in the year 1885 to Pestonjee Dinshahjee Khan and his successors, the trustees of the said Trust; the same has ever since been used by the trustees of the same Fund as their sole and absolute property for the purposes for which it was acquired. Pestonjee Khan died in 1920.

It was unfortunate that P. D. Khan's death was followed by that of Munchershaw Khan in 1921 and Bhikhajee Framjee Khan in 1922. The only male members of the Khan family then left were Framji Pestonjee Khan, son of Pestonjee Dinshahjee Khan, and his cousin who was then only nine years of

Pestonjee Khan then became duty bound to take over the onerous task of looking after the firm of Framjee Bhikhajee and Company which he continued to do till his death. In this he was ably assisted by K. D. Choksy who had been long associated with their business.

All their activities were very ably managed by their honest and hard-working assistants. Their business was latterly run most profitably through the keen business acumen of their local attorney and general manager K. D. Choksy, who, for many years during his service in the firm, was their most trusted agent.

The firm had in the early stages the assistance of a group of Parsis who came over from India, for jobs at the Mills, with their families. They were all accommodated at the bungalows on Grandpass Road, in close proximity to the Mills.

The firm continued for many years but after the end of World War II, business became slack and the policy of the government in Ceylonizing businesses compelled Framji's son Pesy to wind up their business which had existed for over 100 years. This was really the end of an era. *To be continued*

BENEDICTIONS FOR BILIMORA

continued from page 29

out of their doorways decorated with chalk and torans, and headed for the newly built fire-temple. A congregation of nearly 1,500 Zoroastrians from Bilimora, Navsari, Surat, Valsad and Bombay were present on the occasion and enjoyed the lunch and dinner hosted by the founders.

At the centenary function too community feasting constituted the finale of the celebrations. Among the other activities organized by the energetic trustees of the Anjuman on a regular basis are get-togethers on Jamshedi Navroz and Khordad. In addition, monthly stipends, medical help, scholarships and foodgrain are distributed throughout the year. Tata Baug, Rustom Baug, chawls, doongerwadi and a vast tract of open land are some of the other properties managed by the Anjuman which was established in 1837 and registered in the year 1938. For the Gabba Adarian's 100th anniversary, the trustees were able to raise Rs 3,36,050 as donations, stated a press release. To preserve the assets of the Anjuman whilst honoring the legacy that is in their keeping is their main endeavor.

READERS' FORUM

continued from page 6

from December 31, 1999 to January 16, 2000 will commence with a jashan, an opening ceremony, followed by a New Year's Eve dinner-dance. Other planned events include: a day at the Race Course on January 1 at the local equivalent of the Ascot races where you can rub shoulders with Calcutta's Who's Who, the bold and the beautiful and the glitterati; a Pagal Gymkhana in which everyone, regardless of age, can participate; other sporting games and competitions. For those keen on wildlife and adventure, there could be an overnight trip to the Sunderbans to see the Royal Bengal Tigers; a campfire evening and dinner and, of course, the Club's most popular event, the annual Children's Fancy Dress Contest, combined with the Seventh Annual Grand Parsee Bazaar to showcase the community's talents in crafts and gourmet's delights — like only Parsis can prepare! All these to bring back memories of "those were the days, my friend..." We have extended the celebrations over 17 days and three weekends so that we are able to accommodate as many of our visitors as possible. Even if you spend seven days with us, you will be able to attend three or four functions and meet most of your friends.

Sounds exciting, interesting fun? Why not join in — all of you out there, somewhere, who have been earlier in Calcutta, be it for a day or for years? We remember you and miss you. No other single event will offer the unique opportunity to meet so many friends who you may not have met for 20, 30 or even 40 years.

Those of you who wish to come, please get in touch immediately with Bahadur S. Postwalla, Off tel: 91-33-2471875/2479410, Res tel: 91-33-4767339/4767284, Off fax: 91-33-2477832, e-mail: posty@vsnl.com or ratanpostwalla@hotmail.com or Zarin D. Rustomji, Res tel: 91-33-2810125, Off fax: 91-33-2881616, e-mail: zdr@usiscal.ernet.in

BURJOR F. MODI

President, Calcutta Parsee Club

The second coming

The advent of Behram Shah Verzavan Saheb is heralded at the end of this or the beginning of the next century. Zoroastrians gird your loins. Movements are afoot to usher in the new era.

Some have called it the second com-

ing of the Master Christ. Some others... the Kalki Avatar, Jehova, the Mahdi. Each faith shall recognize him as its very own. Thus have their psyches been molded over the ages with the folklore of each faith. Each eagerly awaits that great event, before the onset of which are variously prophesied... the upheavals, the deluge, the cataclysms... Armageddon, the scenes of the last battle between the powers of good and evil. People in each century have awaited it at the turn of the new. And, we still wait.

That the New Age of Aquarius, the water bearer of the Zodiac, is dawning is an accepted fact. Its signs around the globe are apparent — the age of intuition, fluidic, has dawned and, although the Piscean Age, the age of intellect whose brilliance man has hitherto witnessed, is not yet over, it is gradually giving way to the intuitive era. Men of science and technology therefore will more readily grasp intuitively the truths in nature and shall now be able to solve the riddles that had stalled and hampered their researches earlier. They will discern solutions more readily, making faster advances in technology. Mankind shall benefit tremendously through new remedies and better rates of cures of diseases that have plagued them.

Await not the advent with folded arms but be steeped in work in the right direction. Meditation can be of tremendous benefit. Individual meditation for progress of the self into the over-self, group meditation for the upliftment of the masses, for peace on earth through love-consciousness. These shall usher in the New Age and get us ready for the great event prophesied. NOSHIR B. MANA

Karachi, Pakistan

Marry young

Your magazine clearly supports intercaste marriages and avoidance of old tarikats. The need of the day is to educate all to marry within the community. I have solid proof that our religion does not permit intercaste marriages. We should impress on our youngsters to marry young and have at least three children instead of creating confusion among the members that the community is getting smaller in numbers.

ROHINTON P. JAMBUSARWALA

Bharuch

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

The pulse of philanthropy

Hutokhshi Cooper

Give Me A Bombay Merchant — Anytime! The Life of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Bt. 1783-1859 by B. K. Karanjia. Published in 1998 by the University of Mumbai, Mumbai 400032. Pp: iv + 84. Price: Rs 95.

The slim volume penned by Burjor K. Karanjia is as reverential a biography of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy as any, perhaps more so because it has been brought out to mark the 150 years of functioning of the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsee Benevolent Institution.

Also, Karanjia must have considered his impressionable audience — his version of Jejeebhoy's rags to riches to philanthropy story is aimed at students. For them, as Dr Snehalata S. Deshmukh, vice chancellor of the University of Mumbai, says in her foreword, Jejeebhoy must be a role model worthy of emulation. So Karanjia takes pains to convey his deep admiration of Jejeebhoy and advises his young readers at every turn to learn from Jejeebhoy's life. To that end the format of the book reads like a conventional text book with a context, the main body and recapitulating of major characteristics in each chapter.

Jejeebhoy's rise to great business success and wealth is chronicled in detail. The opium trade, the author notes, was the source of his wealth. Opium dealing in that era was legitimate and countless individuals, companies and nations made their fortunes in this trade. Missing from the book is Karanjia's critique of the ill effects of drugs. While Karanjia states the facts of Jejeebhoy's business, he does not emphasize to the students its negative impact on people.

We also get an insight into the evolution of his charitable impulse. Jejeebhoy started by giving alms to the poor — from bags of money he carried

in his horse carriage every evening. He lived according to the rules of the time and contributed his money and services to a society sorely in need.

Slowly also, he started consolidating his position through public activities. He was one of the first Indian jurors, a justice of the peace, and an honorary president of the Bombay Association, an organization that brought the grievances of Indians before the ruling British.

On the Zoroastrian community front he was a trustee, albeit a critical one, of the Parsi Punchayet for 35 years. Perhaps the generous donations he made to build agiaries inspired future industrialists to do the same for the community in the years to come.

He may be among the first Indian fund-raisers. He raised money and contributed to activities promoting the civil rights of Indians.

Gradually, he turned his attention to

the improvement and development of the infrastructure of the city and surrounding towns. The Mahim Causeway, named after his wife who promoted the project, was a major one. It was preceded and followed by many others.

He also supported many causes, both communal and non-communal, and contributed to relief efforts for people who were the victims of natural calamities. He also endowed educational institutions and hospitals. Most of these institutions are in existence more than 100 years later.

What strikes me is that he was a man who liked a good time for all — his friends, the poor and even animals. He gave parties for all of them!

The character of Jejeebhoy was in no small measure molded by the positive reinforcement he received as a child from his parents. His family's relative poverty was never viewed as an impediment. Jejeebhoy carried with him this internalized view, rising from each of the calamities life visited upon him without much psychological damage. Unafraid of failure, he tried again and again until he made good. When his fortunes lessened, he continued giving without fear.

Organized charity as we know it in India seems to have at least one root, if not more, in the ideas and institutions initiated by Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. By institutionalizing his charities, he perpetuated them.

Jejeebhoy's charities are enumerated at the end of the book. Karanjia's concise biography should be valuable both to the younger readers, at whom it is obviously aimed, and to adults who wish to have a quick but inspirational overview of the life of this great Indian and great Zarathushti.

Overall, the book would serve as a starting point for discussions on the man and what he stood for in his time, as also the challenges facing every individual who dreams of acquiring wealth and doing charity.



Jejeebhoy with son Cursetjee

Illustration: B. K. Chavan

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 20 and 22 years, the arithmetic mean — the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides — being 21 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 23 and 30 years, averaging at 26 years.

As per the data collected by *Parsiana*, there were 67 deaths in Bombay in July 1999 as compared to only four Zoroastrian births. Eleven victims were above the age of 80 of the 29 who fell prey to heart disease. The other killers were cancer and pneumonia/lung disease (seven each), septicemia (three) and hypothyroidism (a group of symptoms caused by a deficiency of thyroid secretion), hemiplegia (paralysis of one side of the body), general debility/

old age, diabetes, brain disease, anemia and bronchitis (two each). Urinary tract infection, intestinal obstruction, haematemesis (vomiting of blood), burns, gastro-enteritis, head injury, kidney failure and hypertension were the isolated cases registered in July. The youngest to breathe his last was a 30-year-old male as compared to the eldest: a 96-year-old female. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for July, 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 par-

ticulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by four hospitals — births in suburban hospitals and private nursing homes are not included unless individuals send us information together with a copy of the birth certificate. There may be an inadvertent repetition of names in the marriage list when a civil marriage precedes a religious ceremony. In the breakup of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

If readers have any births/marriages/deaths they would like published, some proof to ensure the veracity of the report would be required. We are sure our readers would appreciate this requirement and cooperate with us.

Nawaz Burjorji Mistry (75), Umrigar Bldg, Chikalwadi, Grant Rd, 400007; July 7
Tehmina Behramji Panthaki (94), C/o Keki B. Panthaki, K/4, Cama Park, Andheri (W), 400058; July 8

Perin Behram Vandrewala (68), D38/3, Godrej Hill Side Clny, Vikhroli, 400079; July 9
Keki Ardeshir Gilder (79), Gilder Villa, 17, Perry Cross Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; July 10

Sohrab Rustomji Pavri (79), T/8, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 10

Goolcher Cursetji Surti (92), Dastoor Bglw, Naigaum Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; July 10

Aloo Ratanshaw Marolia (78), Salamat Mans, Old Roda Bldg, 15, Low Level South Frere Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; July 11

Mani Behram Gazdar (65), 1, Daruwalla Bldg, South Frere Bridge, Grant Rd, 400007; July 12

Manijeh Sorabji Italia (82), A/10, Godrej Baug, Off Napean Sea Rd, 400036; July 12

Erach Pestonji Deboo (74), 13/12, Lentin Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; July 13

Tehmi Sorabji Kakalia (83), Yusuf Mans, 204, Khetwadi Back Rd, 400004; July 13

Feroze Hormusji Mahernosh (79), 15, Calcuttawala Bldg, 124, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Parel, 400012; July 14

Banoobai Hormusji Patel (85), Malegamwala Bldg no 1, Chotani Rd, Mahim, 400016; July 14

Cawas Nusserwanji Siodia (80), C-13/9, Rituraj Bldg, LIC Clny, Borivli (W), 400103; July 14

Coomie Manek Engineer (86), Vande Mataram, 10th Rd, Chembur, 400071; July 16

Framroz Dinshawji Boga (73), 5, Sai Shakti, Shastri Ngr, Old Dombivli Rd, Dombivli (W), Dist Thana, 421203; July 17

Perviz Godrej Jadashapur (64), 3, Narielwala Bldg, M. M. C. Rd, Mahim, 400016; July 17

Roda Dhun Dhanjibhoy (82), Chellaram Hse, Carmichael Rd, 400026; July 18

BARODA

MARRIED

Mahafrin Vesuna, daughter of Yasmin and Hector, and *Neville Jambusarwalla*, son of Amavaz and Hoshang on January 28, 1999

DIED

Rustomji Hormusji Patel (84), husband of Khorshedbanoo and father of Rohinton, Aban and Nozer; May 14

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, *Parendi*, to *Firanghish* and *Jehangir Gai*; April 28

A boy to *Maharokh* and *Pauruspasp Magol*; July 5

A boy to *Prochi* and *Dara Elavia*; July 23

A boy to *Aftab* and *Kerman Damania*; July 27

A girl to *Shaheen* and *Hormuz Irani*; July 29

MARRIED

Delnaz Behram Contractor and *Arzan Minoo Pithawalla*; July 11

Sharmin Jangoo Printer of Aurangabad and *Firdos Keki Irani* of Poona; July 25

Mahkushid Kersi Kutar and *Hushang Merwan Mazdayasna*; July 30

DIED

Khorshed Faramroze Bacha (61), residing at 35, Jame Jamshed Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; June 30

Behram Pestonji Sahiar (81), 4/11, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; June 30

Dolly Phiroze Daruwalla (66), 14/6, Tata Clny, Ratan Tata Marg, Tardeo, 400034; July 1

Eruchshaw Rustomji Katila (77), 15/A-2, New Khareghat Clny, Babulnath Rd, 400007; July 1

Byram Bomansha Noble (45), Noble Bldg, 151, Nanubhai Desai Rd, Khetwadi, 400004; July 1

Dinshaw Kershasp Sinor (49), 724, P. C. A. Co-op Hsg Soc Bldg, Dinshaw Master Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 1

Burjor Byramshaw Taraporewalla (Tarapore) (85), 82-A, Empire Est, 147, August Kranti Marg, 400036; July 1

Dara Dinshaw Vania (89), 86, Sunita, Opp Colaba Post Office, S. B. Rd, 400005; July 1

Roshan Kaikhushroo Kotwal (76), 682-A, Kapadia Bldg, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 2

Fakirji, Shavaksha Bhansali (92), 6/4, Panthaki Baug, H. S. Rd, Andheri (E), 400069; July 3

Banoobai Billimoria (79), Room no 21, 133, Petit Widows' Chawl, Mody St, Fort, 400001; July 3

Mani Hormusji Damania (62), 678, Laxmi Villa, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; July 3

Aloo Savak Talavia (85), 668, Desai Bldg, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; July 3

Edulji Hormusji Baria (77), A/38, Bharat Ngr, Grant Rd, 400007; July 4

Freny Pessy Contractor (83), C-15, Neel Shanti Niketan Co-op Hsg Soc, Vidyanaagari Marg, Kalina, 400098; July 4

Hilla Peshotan Dukandar (91), 19, Dawoodi Mans, Shankerseth Rd, 400007; July 4

Tehmina Kersasp Lala (88), 14, Tarachand Block, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; July 4

Minoo Bhikaji Tarapore (68), 3/46, Bapai Mans, Dr N. N. Shah Lane, Chira Bazar, 400002; July 4

Baji Pirojsha Mehta (75), 613, Dinshaw Bldg, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 5

Putlan Nariman Dallas (88), B/14, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; July 7

Gool Rustom Tata (94),
604/B, Laxmi Sadan, Dr B.
Ambedkar Rd, Dadar, 400014;
July 18

Homi Ardeskar Wankadia
(77), C-19, Pushpakunj Co-op
Hsg Soc, Santacruz (W),
400055; July 18

Gool Minoo Fitter (85), A-32,
Jer Baug, Dr Ambedkar Rd,
Byculla, 400027; July 19

Dhanjishaw Burjorji
Kerawalla (65), Aziz Bldg,
Tardeo Rd, Tardeo, 400034;
July 19

Mehrwan Nowroji Mehta (82),
Firuz-Ara, 160, M. Karve Rd,
400021; July 19

Cooma Pestonji (Pesi)

Unwalla (78), Meherbai
Wadia Bldg, Chikalwadi,
Tardeo, 400007; July 19

Banoobai Pirosha Divecha
(96), 6, Contractor Bldg,
Sussex Rd, Byculla, 400027;
July 20

Tehmina Jehangir Engineer
(89), 7, Jehangir Baug, Juhu
Rd, 400049; July 20

Coomi Maneck Vaid (75), C/o
Beji F. Doctor, Maskati
Corner, 37, Altamount Rd,
400026; July 20

Gool Adi Mulla (73), Gowalia
Tank Bldg, 46A, August
Kranti Marg, 400036; July 21
Najoo Sorab Toddiwalla (83),
14, Jamas Tata Bldg, Tata
Blocks, Off Turner Rd,
Bandra (W), 400050; July 21
Purandokth Jehangir Irani
(69), Durlab Bhavan, Jalbhai
St, Charni Rd Jn, 400004;
July 22

Fredy Hoshang Merchant
(30), A-2, Rosary Hse, 2nd
Gunpowder Lane, Mazgaon,
400010; July 22

Nariman Dhumjisha Sethna
(87), 141, Sealord B, 17,
Cuffe Parade, 400005; July 22

Pestonji Nariman Contractor
(75), 10, Rubans Apts, Setal-
wad Lane, Off 30, Napean
Sea Rd, 400006; July 25

Najoo Dinshaw Bode (84),
618, Jami Lodge, Jame
Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny,
Dadar, 400014; July 26

Khorshed Nowroji Mehta (81),
623, Marker Mans, Parsi
Clny, Dadar, 400014; July 26

Thrity Darabshah Mehta (71),
69, Sea Glimpse, Worli Hill
Rd, 400018; July 26

Freny Jahabux Haivoy (72),

MATRIMONIAL

Required a nice, highly qualified doctor, engineer or a well placed businessman for a slim young girl, age 26, ht 5'3½", fair, good looking graduate (B.Com) now helping her father in their family business. Irani and Parsi boys are welcome to apply. Boys from abroad can also apply. Please forward your complete bio data and photograph (returnable) to:

The Advertiser

Parsiana, Matrimonial (Sept/23-99)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

*Please make sure the reply envelope bears the reference number cited here.

MATRIMONIAL

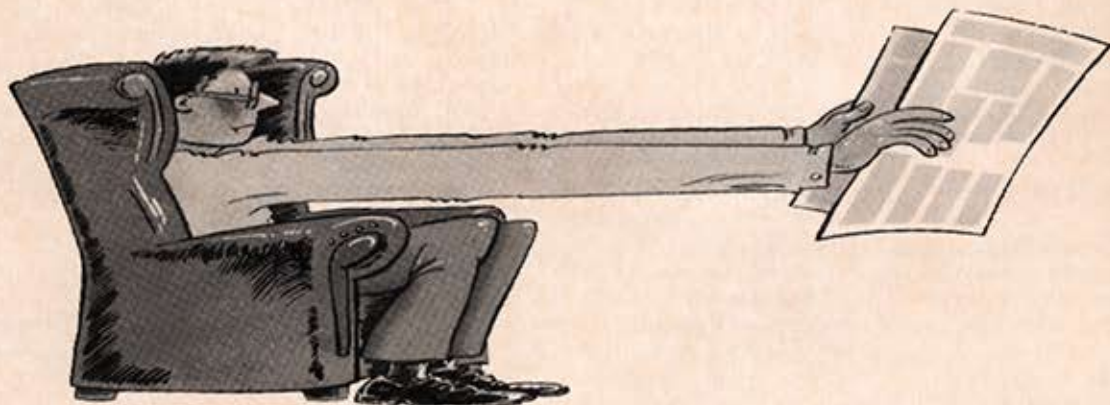
Alliance invited for a 34-year-old Zoroastrian male, 5'8", B. Com, working in Calcutta with a reputed private firm for the last nine years. Girl must be educated, good-looking and home-loving from a good family, working/non-working. Please reply with photo (returnable) to:

The Advertiser

Parsiana, Matrimonial (Sept/24-99)*
GPO Box 892, Bombay 400001

*Please make sure the reply envelope bears the reference number cited here.

Difficulties in reading?



It's time you saw a professional optician.

It's time you came to Baliwalla & Homi.

One of the finest optometrists and contact lens practitioners



Baliwalla & Homi
Private Limited

OPTOMETRISTS

Flora Fountain: 365, Dr. D.N. Road, Bombay 400 001 Tel: 287 4916, 287 1762 • Dhobi Talao: 614, J.S. Seth Marg, Bombay 400 002 Tel: 201 4906
Fax: (022) 206 4363 • Parel: J. Merwanji Street, Parel, Bombay 400 012 Tel: 412 6051

17/D, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculia, 400027; July 27
Behli Rustom Sepoy (59), B/13, U. P. Ngr, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Bandra (W), 400052; July 27

Naju Nariman Mehta (85), 3, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; July 28

Gool Jehangir Writer (86), P/7, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; July 28

Nargish Phiroze Badhni (82), B/8, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; July 29

Gool Framroze Bharucha (59), A/13, Nowroz Baug, Dr S. S. Rao Rd, Lalbaug, 400012; July 29

Gool Savak Irani (66), 2, Kismet, Opp Sassoon Dock, Colaba, 400005; July 29

Sheila Adi Sahar (70), 62, Neel Kamal, Peddar Rd, 400026; July 29

Dhuni Dady Batliwalla (74), 409-C, Libra, Lower Kharodi, Malad (W), 400095; July 30

Darra Edulji Billimoria (87), Empress Bldg, 13, Nusserwanji Petit St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 30

Kavas Fram Byramji (72), 4, Petit Block, Mehla Patel Agiary St, Grant Rd, 400007; July 30

Perin Soli Desai (78), A-11, Indian Hotels Soc, N. Dutta Marg, Four Bglws, Andheri (W), 400053; July 30

Phiroze Khurshedji Palkhiwala (80), A6/11-23, LIC Clny, Jeevan Bima Ngr, Borivli (W), 400103; July 30

CALCUTTA
 DIED
Keki Sorabji Avari, husband of Roshan and brother of late Dinamai Khambatta and Putlamai Mehermash; June 4

DELHI
 BORN
 A boy, *Rayan*, to *Arnaz* and *Vistasp Bhagwagar*; May 1

POONA
 DIED
Phiroze Hataria (73); January 26 (cremated)
Dhunjishaw Hormusji Mehta (84), 872, Dastur Meher Rd, 411001; June 15

Sheroo Rustomji Driver (75), Shalimar Chowk, Daund, Dist Pune, 413801; June 16

Bahi Jal Sabawala (82),

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*						
	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	1999*	This issue	1999*	This issue	1999*
BIRTHS						
Boys	3	45	1	7	2	10
Girls	2	43	—	—	1	9
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	3	130	1	7	3	6
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	9	—	—	—	1
Females married out	—	4	—	—	—	—
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	26	280	6	60	3	19
Females	43	307	6	47	4	17
CREMATED						
Males	—	2	1	1	—	—
Females	—	2	—	—	—	—

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

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

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

Canopus Apts, Boat Club Rd, 411001; June 25

Banoobai Ardeshir Patel (87), 24, Pushpak Soc, Kalyaninagar, 411014; June 26

SURAT

DIED
Khushroo Jehangir Bharucha (78), Room no 205, Devchaya Apt, Shahpore, 395003; July 1

Nozer Jamshedji Panthaki (49), Dadabhai Park, Vakil St, Shahpore, 395003; July 2

Darabshaw Hormusji Patel (79), Perin Villa, Adagra St, Nanpura, 395001; July 12

Meherbai Darabshaw Ichhaporia (82), Vakil St, Shahpore, 395003; July 14

Ratamai Bejonji Chacha (88), Mota Mohallo, Rustompura, 395002; July 20

Roshan Yazdi Bhagat (40), Village Adajan, Dist Surat; July 26

AUSTRALIA New South Wales

DIED
Pilloo Jal Sidhwa, mother of Sohrab, in Sydney; June 3

CANADA

Ontario
 MARRIED
Rinawaz Shroff, daughter of

Mehr and Murzban, and *Nariman Vatcha*, son of Shireen and Cawas; July 2
Zahleh Comissariat, daughter of Anita and Homi, and *Rooshad Golwalla*, son of Sarfaraz and Feroze; July 23

KENYA

DIED
Manchershaw Hormasji Deboo (82), father of Homi, Earuch, Cawas, Manek and Aban Sutaria, in Mombasa, April 10

UK

Berkshire
 DIED
Khorshed Peter Lilley (59), Rolphton, Island Farm Rd, RG7 4EB; July 5

London

BORN
 A boy, *Sam*, to *Ashraf* and *Farokh Falahati*, brother to Nikzad; May 12
 A boy, *Zal*, to *Jenaz* and *Javid Canteenwala*; May 16

MARRIED
Kashmira Mistry of Middlesex, daughter of Silloo and Jal, and *Homyar*

Fanibanda, son of Homai and Noshir of Leicestershire; May 22

DIED
Minoo Shawakshaw Chothia (75), 14, Stonecroft, Shrewsbury Crescent, NW10; June 8

Middlesex

DIED
Adi Ashburner (84), Sherezaade, 26, College Rd, Isleworth, TW7 5DW; June 16

Surrey

DIED
Roshan Dehnugara, Corrigan, The Chase, Coulsdon, CR5 2EG, May 31

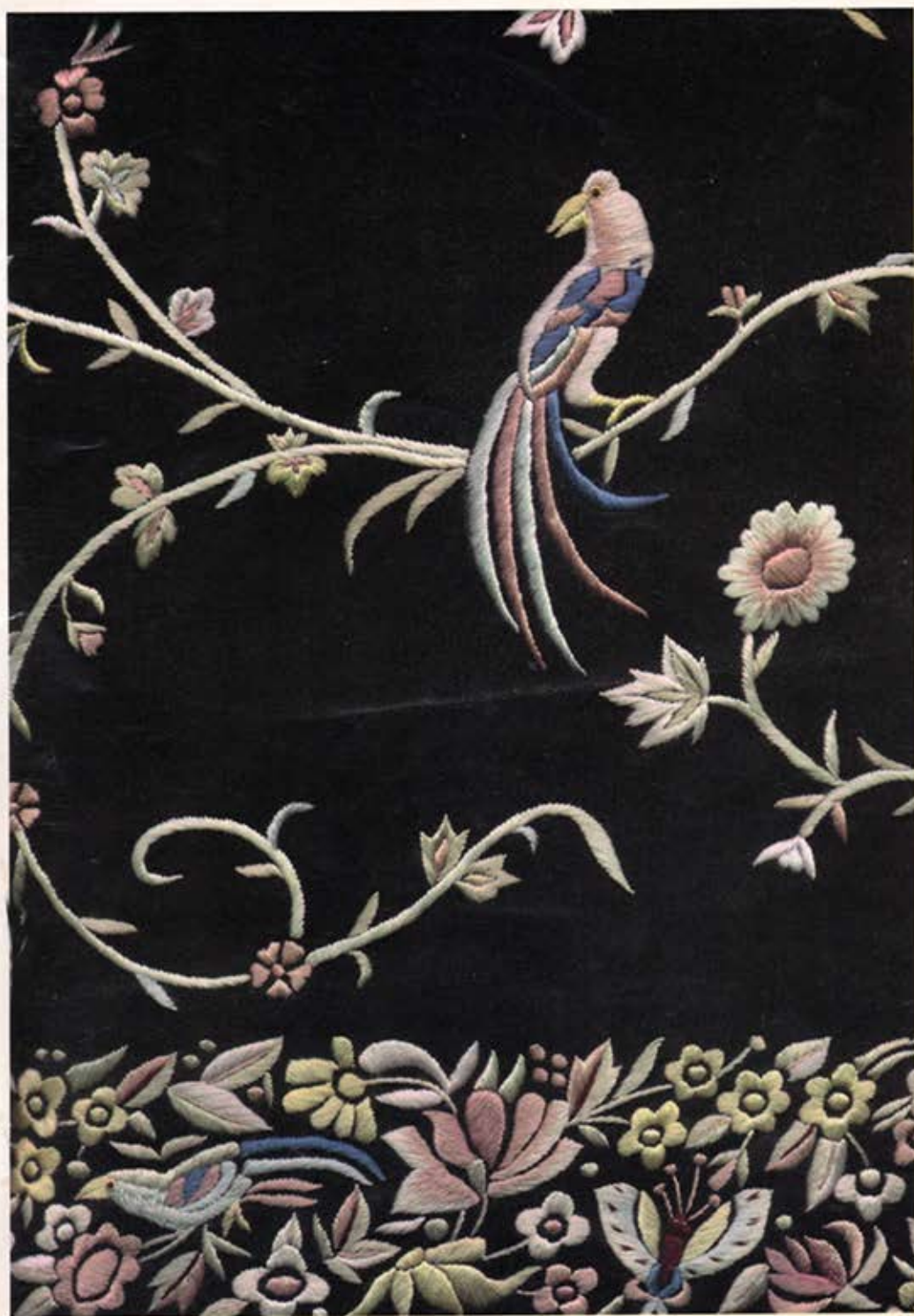
USA California

DIED
Perviz Bejan Malbari, sister of Khurshed Kotwal; July 4

Texas

BORN
 A girl, *Katie*, to *Sharmeen* and *Percy Master* in Houston; July 7

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver



Armayesh

We Have Designs
on You!

Armayesh can
hand-embroider
your fantasies on to
sarees, dupattas,
ghagras, cholis,
jackets, vests, hand
bags, cushion
covers and other
products.

(Exquisite Parsi
Garas are our forte.)

An Armayesh
creation is a duet
between needle
and fabric, labor
and love, for we
are a world-leading
manufacturer-
exporter of
the finest
hand-embroidered
designs.

International quality
and timely delivery
are our hallmarks.
In our case beauty
isn't skin-deep.

Armayesh
hand embroidery
lasts!

The Finest Hand Embroidery - Forever

Please telephone Ms NILOUFER IRANI or Mr ARMAND N. AGA on 3084283/3072330 to
finalise the date and time of your visit to our Design Studio and Showroom.

Armayesh Fashions Pvt Ltd. Design Studio and Showroom, 513-Veena Killedar Estate, Pais Street,
Byculla (W), Mumbai 400011 Fax: (91-22) 3003139, E-mail: Armayesh@bom3.vsnl.net.in



Seen in all the right circles.

Serve it with pride.



Rasna International, the premium instant drink with real fruit powder.

Available in 3 flavours (Orange, Mango and Pineapple) & 3 sizes (500 gm., 250 gm. and single serve sachets).