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Parsiana

October 2000
Volume 23 Number 3

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2 Readers' Forum

8 Events and Personalities

14 Zoroastrians Abroad

18 The Federation and minority rights by Arnava S. Mama

23 Matrons of medicine by Dr Mridula Ramanna

28 Madras: Fanning the flame of devotion

40 Leopold Cafe: A lasting landmark by Parinaz Gandhi

42 Books

58 Milestones

Cover: The Bomanji Edalji Albless Obstetric Hospital

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 Unsigned letters or those without an address will not be published.

"A burning need to..."

Once again, Kayomar Patel has raised the bogey against the merger of agiaries which are not frequented by too many devotees ("A burning need to merge," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 2000).

He questions my "motive behind suggesting such a preposterous scheme of merging consecrated holy fires." There is no personal motive nor any "hidden agenda" behind this proposal of mine which is based on demographic and economic details. Does Bharuch, with a population of under 150 Parsis, need six agiaries? Surat, with a population of under 2,500, has two atash behrams and nine agiaries.

I am not at all suggesting the extinguishment of the fires. On grounds of sanity and economics, I am only suggesting their mergers. The structures in which the holy fires are lodged can be put to a different use and the monies can be put to the continuation of the consoli-

dated (merged) fires. The balance amount can be put to other very worthy causes like medical aid and education.

As regards education, the monies could be used towards supporting very bright students who can't afford to pay capitation fees for entry to medical and engineering colleges. The monies could also be used to grant loan/gift scholarships to very bright students going abroad.

As regards medicare, there is a lot of sickness in the community which has to be seen to be believed. Cancer, diabetes, septicemia and heart attacks are the four biggest killers (of the Parsis) in Bombay. It's high time we set aside our sentiments and fads and conserve our community's resources, rather than fritter away those on agiaries which are visited by an average of 10-20 devotees. Patel's mention of another "sister community where people are still managing to secure huge funds to build temples, mosques, churches, etc" is totally irrelevant to our microscopic community.

BEHRAM T. DASTUR

"Sanctity of the dokhmas"

I am in full agreement with Dinshaw K. Tamboly's views in "Sanctity of the dokhmas" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, August 2000) as one should not consider change for the sake of change. There should be validity and rational reasoning for change to take place.

The opinion of the majority is not the criterion to decide the future of the dokhmenashini system. It is not the intelligent but the wise who are few in number who need to decide on the welfare of the Parsi community. Democracy does not mean merely numbers but the right course. And in order to preserve the valued culture, traditions and sanctity, the Parsi flag of consistency should prevail over a demagogue or prejudice of the masses.

DORAB PHIROZSHAW PATEL

Our method of disposing of the dead is ecologically unimpeachable and well suited to the needs of small communities of farmers in the remote mountain valleys of Persia or in rural Gujarat.

What now has to be thought about is whether it is suitable for the mega cities of the 21st century.

KHORSHED R. K. S. GHANDHI

A Gandhian 'General'

My congratulations to *Parsiana* for the excellent account on the life of 'General' Manchershaw Avari of Nagpur (*Parsiana*, June-July 2000) by Dilnavaz Bhagwagar.



Avari: the humble, national patriot

He was an icon of my youth. We followed his activities with breathless interest and I can still remember the tension that prevailed when he entered his fast unto death. As I have said, I

have heard of him from childhood but I never knew he sacrificed a grand career just to serve the nation as a humble patriot. And what suffering he went through in the process.

Bhagwagar has done a true service to the community with her incisive and well-researched account of the life of this Parsi patriot. I have no doubt that 'General' Avari stands out as a Parsi of whom we all can be proud.

Bhagwagar's well-documented account of his life has placed it forever in the panel of history. K. F. RUSTAMJI

"Of fire, faith and..."

I was quite perturbed and aggrieved to read Dilnavaz Bhagwagar's article "Of fire, faith and friends" (*Parsiana*, June-July 2000).

Our Nagpur Parsi Anjuman gives medical aid to the needy Zoroastrians of Nagpur on receipt of their applications duly supported by bills/vouchers, etc whereas in the case of Kaizad Taraporwalla, leaving aside all norms and without observing any formalities, we spontaneously gave away Rs 10,000 on the specific understanding that it was an interim amount and whatever extra expenses he may incur beyond the donations he receives from elsewhere will be finally made up by the Anjuman. This, notwithstanding the fact that the boy is not in our employment as a mobed nor was he performing the said jashan on behalf of the Anjuman on that day.

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Till today we are not aware how much expenditure Taraporwalla has incurred nor how much monetary help he has received from all over the world. As per our estimate it has far exceeded his actual expenses, so much so that he made an announcement in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* asking people not to send any more aid.

Under the circumstances the statement by the writer that the "Nagpur Anjuman fell woefully short of expectations" is nothing but blasphemy and a malicious attempt to tarnish the image of our Anjuman. You should not have published it without ascertaining the facts from us.

In future also we would be grateful if you could verify the facts from us first if any wilful write-up is sent to you defaming the fair name of our Nagpur Anjuman.

DINSHAW F. BAPUNA

President

Shree Nagpur and Kamthi Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman

Dilnavaz Bhagwagar replies

That the Rs 10,000 given by the Nagpur Anjuman fell short of expectations was the widespread sentiment within the community.

"Kisseh-Houston"

With reference to "Kisseh-Houston," (Zoroastrians Abroad, *Parsiana*, June-July 2000) giving details for the exclusion of Dr Ali Jafarey from speaking at the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (7WZC), it appears that the chief antagonist against Jafarey's inclusion is Khojeste Mistree whose main reason for doing so, amongst others, is that Jafarey was not born a Zarathushti and is advocating conversion. His other reasons for debarring him are that Jafarey has sought to think low of our clergy and has denigrated some of our rituals.

To begin with may I remind Mistree that none of us was ever born a Zarathushti but was converted to the faith by Zoroaster from whatever religion we were then following in Iran.

Secondly, Jafarey's low opinion of



Taraporwalla: won stoic support

our clergy is shared by most enlightened people in the community. Unlike the Christian priests or the Jewish rabbis or Buddhist monks who have spent long years, not only in studying the religion, but also theology and philosophy, our priests in general, except being able to repeat our prayers by rote, are not learned enough in the real sense of the word, and have thus failed to impart the true

meaning of our religion to members of their congregation. How else can one account for members of our community going in droves to visit shrines of Sai Baba of Shirdi or Meher Baba of Nagar, or Khwaja Pir of Ajmer, or the St Michael's Church at Bombay? Thirdly, regarding demeaning some of our rituals, Jafarey was referring particularly to the presence of a dog being present at our funeral ceremony, and consumption of our consecrated nirang (bull's urine). He is quite right on both counts. In the days before the advent of the stethoscope and brain scans, a dog was brought in to ascertain whether the man was really dead. However, to continue such a ritual now seems bizarre. Similarly, in the days before the advent of antiseptics like Listerine or Dettol, perhaps a bull's urine was used for the purpose. However, to continue this today seems repugnant.

Fourthly, according to Mistree, Jafarey is not adhering to 'classical' Zoroastrianism as practiced over the millennia. What he forgets is that Zoroaster gave us his religion to serve man, but God did not create man to serve religion. It is therefore necessary for religion to bend to serve the needs of man in the time he is living in, and not vice versa. It is for this reason that this ancient of all religions must never be allowed to get outdated. By burying our heads in the sand without any new ideas coming in, what is the torch we propose passing on to our future generation (which is an item on the Congress agenda) if there is no light at the end of it?

Lastly, regarding Jafarey, the man, although he was not born a Zoroastrian, if there is anyone amongst those opposing him who has more knowledge of the true Zoroastrian faith, or who leads a better Zoroastrian life than what Jafarey

does, let him then cast the first stone at that man.

Brig NOSHIR GRANT

Poona

Grace for the Congress

Millennium 2000 has a religious event very important —

Of a Zarathushti odyssey —

Zarathushtrian Congress at Houston, Figure seven has a religious fervor, and it is a Zarathushtrian Congress, The whole world will look, whether it is with discipline and grace.

Every celebration must be with the Zarathushtrian spirit, At a very high cost, it should not prove only a gathering of discredit. There is an opinion: 'Parsis quarrel, when in dozens they meet.' What will happen at Houston, when in thousands they meet? Naturally delegates will be there from the world over, With different motives, opinions, customs and flavor. We had six such meets at various cities before. We fail to procure solid solutions with results sure.

Speakers, orthodox and reformist, add to the disadvantage, Where dialogs and controversies extend on stage; We require sound unity, a festive reunion in the fold. To bring back the glory of our pilgrim fathers' tenets old.

The entire program in the Congress is worth compliments, Awards, scholastic competitions, art and entertainment, Legacy exhibitions of Zarathushtrian artifacts, books, fair, Workshops, Zarathushti orchestra, video of the festive air.

Sports, business forums, 20th century time capsule underground; Legacy for the future generation, logo of the Congress from the units all-round. Such activities will enhance sure the Zarathushtrian fervor at Houston. If successfully achieved, the whole world will say, "Well done!" May it prove in this millennium a memorable event! With laurels from the world over, with sound achievement Let us join to make this event an ever



Jafarey: true to his faith



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Aid Damanwala Dispensary

The Sheth M. C. Damanwala Charitable Dispensary was founded by the Udvada Anjuman and has completed 133 years of its existence. The Dispensary gives free service not only to the priests tending the Iranshah but to all Parsi inhabitants including those living in surrounding villages, as also all Parsis who come to Udvada to pay their respects to our sacred fire-temple.

The Dispensary has been doing yeoman service by giving medical treatment despite the rising cost of medicines and other items, and an increase in the salary of the staff. The Dispensary is managed by collecting donations from charitable institutions and Parsi donors. Our trust is recognized under section 80(G) (5) of the Income Tax Act.

Donations may be sent by cash, cheque or demand draft in the name of "Sheth M. C. Damanwala Charitable Dispensary" to K. S. Dastur, Tardeo Chambers, Flat A-19, Kashinath Road, Tardeo, Bombay 400034, Tel 4940375

or Z. M. Dastur, honorary secretary, Damanwala Dispensary, Dr D. N. Road, Udvada 396180. In case of donations of Rs 5,000 or more please mention in your covering letter, "Please accept the cheque for the Dispensary corpus account and utilize the income therefrom year after year for the administration and objects of the trust."

K. S. DASTUR

President, Sheth M. C. Damanwala Charitable Dispensary, Udvada

Igatpuri's appeal

The agiary and dharamshala in Igatpuri were established in the year 1888 when there was a large Parsi population in Igatpuri. Both the agiary and dharamshala were well frequented and were self sufficient financially.

Today there is only one family in



The dharamshala in Igatpuri

Igatpuri and the agiary is being maintained from the interest earned on the corpus built through donations. The dharamshala is in a sad state of disrepair and we the trustees wish to renovate and restart it but are short of funds.

May we therefore appeal to the Zoroastrian community for donations of any denomination which will be gratefully accepted? Cheques may be issued in the name of "The Igatpuri Zarthosti" *continued on page 48*



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worry. In fact, with so much value for money, I've decided my second cupboard will also be a Godrej Storwel. There are so many

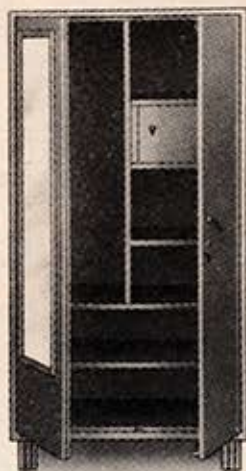
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Events and Personalities

Musical bonding

The World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) made its presence felt in Bangalore in April 2000 when its founder-president Dr Homi Dhalla was among the speakers invited to address the gathering on "Meeting of minds — Religion and spirituality in the new millennium." This was on the opening day of the World Festival of Sacred Music initiated by the Dalai Lama in order to bring together people of diverse backgrounds and traditions through the unifying power of music which symbolizes the yearning for harmony — with oneself, with others and with nature, notes a press release.

The meet served as a cross-cultural expression of spiritual fraternity. Representatives of different faiths stressed on the need to overcome racial, ideological and religious barriers. The Dalai Lama then presented all the speakers, which included the former President of India R. Venkataraman, winner of the Magsaysay Award Dr Ariyaratne, scientist Dr Raja Ramanna, a specially de-

signed replica of a 14th century gold manuscript, according to the release.

The Petit Zoroastrian Choir, comprising 15 students of the Bai Avabai Petit Girls' High School of Bombay led by well-known musician Kersi Mistry and Jaloo Bhesania, presented seven Zoroastrian devotional songs at the Music Festival. The Choir is reportedly one of the projects of the WZCF.

They were also invited to perform at the Bangalore Anjuman's Kothari Hall on April 15 when Dhalla presented a collection of about 325 books on Zoroastrian history, religion and culture to the Anjuman for a new library. To start libraries in different parts of India is one of the projects of the WZCF, notes the release.

Career and health savvy

The mind-boggling advances in information technology have transformed business paradigms and the job market throughout the world, commented Dadi Engineer, president of the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO-India) at the inauguration of the "Careers in Computers" workshop on August 5, 2000. Conceived by the WZO's joint honor-

ary secretary Dara Marfatia, a crowd of 105 Zoroastrians, most of them in the 12th grade, were able to widen their horizons when personnel from the Aptech computer training institute made lucid presentations on the enchanting cyberworld, writes WZO member Dr Hufrih Suraliwalla.

Those who passed the aptitude test conducted at the conclusion of the daylong workshop at the Indian Merchants' Chamber were invited to attend a free career counselling session at Aptech between August 6 and 12, 2000. The Institute also promised to give discounts to those who joined their courses as a result of this seminar. When Engineer recommended that WZO should subsidize the training fees of needy and deserving applicants on a loan basis, Marfatia announced that to raise funds WZO had organized a charity concert by ghazal queen Peenaz Masani on October 7.

A week prior to the computer workshop, the Youth Wing of the WZO arranged a seminar on physical fitness and nutrition. Nearly 150 Zoroastrians, varying in age and comportment, participated in the session at the Cusrow Baug

Below (left): Dalai Lama with Dhalla and (right) the Petit Zoroastrian Choir





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Engineer (left) and Zarthoshtimanesh at the WZO-sponsored seminars

pavilion on July 29 to benefit from the expertise of Zubin Zarthoshtimanesh and Mickey Mehta, mentions Suraliwala in a report of the proceedings.

After 10 years of teaching Iyengar yoga and learning and traveling with his guru B. K. S. Iyengar, Zarthoshtimanesh is an acknowledged instructor today. His breathtaking asanas, instead of leaving him breathless, evoked queries from the gathering which he answered effectively, notes the report.

The much sought fitness celebrity Mehta, who has earned a mention in the *Limca Book of Records* for teaching swimming in 24 hours, emphasized the importance of vegetarianism and healthy living, impressing upon the dhansak-loving community to opt for fibrous foods, fresh fruits and vegetables, avoiding dairy products as well. Known to have trained several beauty queens who have gone on to win world titles, business barons and politicians, Mehta's techniques also involve prayers. He explained how the phonetics of prayers and religious chants can be soothing to troubled minds. "We hope sessions like this will help make our Parsis a healthier and fitter clan," writes Suraliwala.

Bring mobeds to Navsari

The first dar-e-meher in India with a full-fledged *nankhana* (for the training of priests) was consecrated and established in Navsari in 1142 AD. The atash behram in Navsari which was consecrated in 1765 has at present only three mobeds, one aged above 70 years, another above 60 and the third aged 32 years. This atash behram is today "in



dire need of money and mobeds. As no incentive was given to the mobeds previously, they have either migrated to distant lands for better living conditions or have switched over to another profession," notes an appeal from the trustees and committee members of Navsari Atashbehram and Vadi Dar-e-meher Trust Fund.

"Navsari, which was considered a 'citadel of religion' about 60 years ago and its *nankhana* bursting at its seams with 40 or more young kids undergoing navar/maratab initiation rituals every year, did not have a single navario this year," mentions the appeal giving in detail a comparative figure of the number of religious ceremonies performed in the decade 1955-65 and those performed in 1999-2000. The count for *ijashni* (which once averaged 100 a month), *vendidad* (five a month), *navar* (15 a year), *maratab* (10 a year), showed a nought last year. Due to non-availability of pucca mobeds, concerned families have to avail of such facilities at Surat or

Bombay, mentions the detailed appeal issued by the office bearers: president Dastur Meherji Meherjirana, secretary Ervad Homi Kotwal, joint secretaries Ervads Rusi

Navsari Atash Behram: "citadel of religion"

Desai and Keki Desai, honorary treasurer Ervad Firoj Panthaky, and trustees Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, Ervads Noshir Kotwal, Meherji Vajifdar and Kaikhasroo Dastoor.

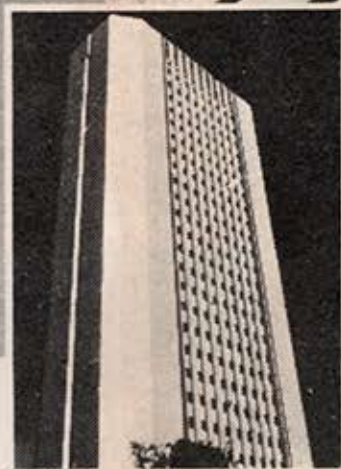
They further state that the annual income from the corpus in 1999 was Rs 1,01,900 as against Rs 68,050 in 1991. But while the yearly emoluments to mobeds and subsidy to widows of expired

mobeds totalled Rs 61,700 in 1991, last year they expended Rs 1,05,600. The three boiwallas are now paid Rs 2,200 per month each, the Doongerwadi mobed Rs 1,000 per month and the four widows, Rs 300 per month, each. As against their present corpus of about Rs 10,00,000 they are targetting a corpus of Rs 35,00,000 whereby they can engage five mobeds and pay them monthly emoluments of Rs 5,000 each plus continue with the sustenance for widows, thus enabling them to expend Rs 3,50,000 per annum.

The present boiwallas, in pairs have to start their day at 4 a.m., perform the *Ushahin gah* ablutions, fetch fresh water from the well in the atash behram premises, and ready themselves for the *Havan gah* boi which requires 11 recitations of *Atash Nyaish*. The boi in the four other *gahs* require nine or seven recitations of the *Atash Nyaish*. Each of the bois may last from one-and-a-half to two hours, their arduous duties are explained.



Reaching for the Sky



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"Please do not feel at all embarrassed to send in your donation, however small it may seem to be," states the appeal. Donations by cheque or draft favoring "Navsari Atashbehran and Vadi Dar-meher Trust Fund" may be sent to Meherjirana, Ward No 8, 1226, Dastoor Street, Mota Falia, Navsari 396445.

Redeveloping a baug

Briefly addressing a large and enthusiastic audience at the Birla Matushri Sabhagar on June 10, 2000, Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Dinshaw Mehta said he believed baugs could be the saviors of the community with regard to preserving Parsi identity. Chief guest at the 54th annual cultural program of the Nowroze Baug Play Centre, Mehta stated: "It is in the nature of a colony for boys and girls residing there to marry within the colony," thereby reducing the incidence of intermarriage.

Exhorting the audience to carefully read his message in the souvenir brought out on the occasion, Mehta made a forceful appeal to the tenants of Nowroze Baug, the first Parsi baug built in Bombay, to seriously consider the possibility of redeveloping the 94-year-old baug by demolishing the existing dilapidated buildings and utilizing the additional FSI (floor space index) available to the colony under the new government guidelines to house an additional 650 families in addition to the 358 families already residing there. "Nowroze Baug, the oldest of the BPP's colonies, has outlived its span and has been repaired twice in the past and is overdue

for one more major overhaul. Despite the collective effort of the tenants and the BPP sharing the expenses 50/50, there is only the bottomless pit taking away good monies... A total of Rs 85 lakhs has been spent (so far) on maintaining old and dilapidated buildings whose life span is almost over. Is it prudent to squander valuable funds to maintain such old properties when the more attractive proposition of reconstructing and redeveloping all these buildings with brand new RCC (reinforced cement concrete) structures is now available?" he queried.

Endorsing Dinshaw Mehta's message, the president of the Play Centre, Nariman E. Mehta stated that the cost of repairs is estimated at Rs 40-Rs 50 lakhs per building, out of which half will have to be borne by the tenants. "This, to my mind, is not possible. Under such circumstances, we would be without a roof..." With reconstruction, the trust will be able to accommodate all the existing tenants in new buildings at the present rent and taxes and in the same carpet area, and accommodate... on ownership to generate funds for construction and corpus," he asserted.

"May God bless the soul of Jerbai (the late Jerbai Wadia who built the baug in 1906 in memory of her husband

Nowrojee after whom it is named) and may the residents reap the benefit of the humanity and charity she showed in her lifetime," declared Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the BPP. "Vibrate at a common wavelength, but make your own individual contributions as well," asserted BPP trustee Rustom Tirandaz.

With a total of 1,495 members, the Play Centre, which is a registered trust, has a range of activities. It encourages indoor and outdoor sports like carrom, table tennis, cricket, football, etc and has recently constructed a floodlit badminton court at a cost of Rs 80,000, states the souvenir. It sponsors a well-patronized, cosmopolitan inter-school elocution competition annually in English, as well as drawing and painting competitions. It provides merit scholarship, school and college tuition fees for deserving students, distributes free exercise books, etc. A medical aid scheme (allopathy) and free homeopathic scheme have been in existence for over 20 years. The Centre also assists in diagnostic and hospitalization expenses for the needy.

Camaraderie in the colony is promoted with picnics, camps, etc, enumerates the souvenir. For the year 1999-2000, Homi E. Mehta is the vice president, Adi Mogrelia and Parveen Chaina the joint general secretaries, and Pervez Dee and

*From left (Top row):
Guzder, Nariman Mehta,
Tirandaz; Second row:
Dinshaw Mehta
(standing) and colorful
pageant*

Photos: C. C. Gandevia



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7WZC's sporting prelude

The nearly 244 individuals who have signed up so far for the Seventh Zarathushti Games (December 26 and 27, 2000) include spectators, informs Rustom Khosravian who, together with Artemis Javanshir, coordinates the Games that precede the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (7WZC) in Houston at the end of the year. Khosravian and Javanshir respectively represent the Zoroastrian Association of Houston and the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA)—the two organizations conjointly spearheading this international get-together of world Zarathushtris.



Khosravian: sports enthusiast

Photo: Amavaz S. Marna

With eight to nine volleyball teams, seven to eight basketball teams and nearly 25 individuals enrolled for table tennis, the elimination round on the first day of the Games promises to be a crowded affair. Swimming with 17 entries so far, track enthusiasts numbering nearly 35 and nearly as many for shot put and discus throw are scheduled for the second day, says Khosravian. Volleyball, basketball and table tennis are concurrent items, so participants can sign on for only one. The same applies to swimming and track events, he notes.

While some participants from India, Pakistan and Australia have registered, the maximum enthusiasts hail from North America. So far Khosravian says he has no idea about participants from Iran and they are still looking for sponsorship for the first, second and third prizes for each event.

The events are slated to be held at the Klein Middle and High School whose gymnasium, track and field and indoor swimming pool are within walking distance of each other. The sports complex, however, is nearly a 40-minute drive from the J. W. Marriott Hotel and a bus service is being organized for the athletes each day.

While the competition will be broken up by age and sex, there is no specific event earmarked for veterans. There will

be friendly races for the under nines but Khosravian was not yet ready to spell them out.

The Games will begin with the lighting of a torch from a flame kindled by a mobed and are scheduled to start each day at 8 a.m. and end at 6 p.m. The registration packages will be ready at the Marriott Hotel on December 25 and may be accessed between 6 and 10 p.m. While fresh information will be available on the FEZANA website, the final deadline for sports registration ended September 30. "After that it will depend on how many we can accommodate," Khosravian told *Parsiana* in the course of an interview on September 18, 2000.

The sports awards ceremony is scheduled for December 30 at Houston's Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center following the entombment of the time capsule on that property, with a disco nite rounding off the proceedings.

It is the Iranian Zoroastrians who have been the strongest proponents of Zarathushti sports in North America, beginning in California in the late 1980s, Khosravian informs us. The Sixth Games had been held in Los Angeles in June '99. Then and now non-Zarathushtris married into the community and their children are welcome to participate, he adds.

A scion of the famed Kyani and Company of Bombay, Khosravian eliminated his own first name Khodamarad to call himself by his father's name, Rustom. After his masters in chemical engineering at the University of Florida followed by an MBA at the University of Kansas, Khosravian settled in Houston with his wife Nasreen (an ex-Xavierite from Bombay like himself), where he works for the software development company Simulation Sciences Incorporated. Their twin children Daryush and Delnaz were born there 14 years ago and were duly navjoted in Bombay in 1985.

The nearly 16 members of the enthusiastic Houston Zoroastrian Sports Committee which Khosravian chairs has been meeting regularly every month to hash out details. Now, with the deadline drawing closer they meet in smaller groups more often, he says. "We understand each other (and) we don't deal with politics." Beyond that disclaimer Khosravian will not be led into the con-

troversies circumscribing the Congress.

Chicago's new board

At its annual general meeting on June 11, 2000, 16 members of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago (ZAC) offered to serve on the board of directors (2000-2002) and were unanimously elected, notes the ZAC newsletter of July 2000. Hosi Mehta heads the team as president with Amavaz Elavia as vice president, Dinaz Weber and Sohila Parsinejad as treasurer and assistant treasurer respectively. Dr Kersey Antia, the Association's respected head priest, continues as ex officio member of the board.

The 11 directors at large are Dilshad Antia, Freya Dhunjisha, Darayus Elavia, Jim Engineer, Rashna Ghadialy, Kayomars Mehta, Roxana Mehta, Keikhosrow Mobed, Roshan Patel, Minoo Press and Farida Sharyari.

The positions of secretary and assistant secretary remain open as no nominations were received. It is expected that the executive committee will deal with the secretarial functions as required for the time being, says the newsletter.

The Chicago Chapter of the Zarthusti Chamber of Commerce (ZCCCC) includes 18 business and services providers to date. The areas covered include financial planning and investment services — long and short-term — insurance (including medical insurance); pensions; estate planning and its management, tax and other accounting services including payroll management for small businesses; computer hardware and software; consultation for manufacturing industries including productivity and profitability enhancement; auto repair; franchise business; medical and health care; hairstyling; jewelry; and catering services with a variety of cuisines on offer.

The ZAA team

The executive committee of the Zoroastrian Association of Alberta (ZAA) for the period June 1, 2000 to May 31, 2001 is headed by Marezban Canteenwalla with Aban Hakim as vice president of the Calgary Chapter and Avaù Fast as vice president of the Edmonton Chapter, notes the ZAA newsletter of May 2000. Rashna Mehta as the immediate past president, also functioning as edi-



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tor of their newsletter, continues as ex officio member of the board. Ruby Master officiates as general secretary cum treasurer while former ZAA president and its current representative on the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (FEZANA) Firdosh Mehta is assistant secretary cum treasurer. Yasmin Irani and Fariba Tamboli were elected social secretaries of the Calgary and Edmonton Chapters respectively. Ninallee Irani is the ZAA youth representative.

ZAPA directory

The directory of members of the Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (ZAPA) lists 37 entries of which 13 are single member households. Eight couples, an equal number of households with two children, three households with one child each and four with three children sum up the community members there. These include a few intermarried families among the less than 100 Zarathushtris there.

Hutoxi Contractor heads the ZAPA board for the 2000-2001 season. Other team members are vice president Farhad Cama, secretary Meher Dastur, assistant secretary Zenia Ayton, treasurer Khushru Kadwa and assistant treasurer Meherji Siganporia. The six directors at large are Behram Kapadia, Neville Dastur, Jerroo and Kaizad Kadwa, and Zarin and Dilshad Balaporia.

The Mazdayasnan Order

Based in Springfield, Oregon, the Mazdayasnan Movement has reintroduced itself to *Parsiana* with a letter dated August 27, 2000.

Established in 1969 as per the literature forwarded to this publication, its spokesperson Sarvar Mobed Parthava writes, "We are hopeful that someday our holy land Iran (mother Iran) would be free again for all the followers of our dear Prophet Zarathushtra." The "21 principles of the International Mazdayasnan Order and the Mazdayasnan Movement" accompany the letter.

Rejecting the names Zoroastrians, Zarathushtrians or Zarathushtris, the introduction to the Mazdayasnan Movement states, "Nowhere in the holy *Avesta* does Zarathushtra refer to Zoroastrians, Zarathushtrians or call himself Zarathushti. Rather, he simply calls himself a Mazdayasni meaning one who worships 'Mazda,' the Supreme Creator. Yet we find that over a period of time,

the followers of Prophet Zarathushtra in Iran adopted the Christian term 'Zarathushtris' to refer to themselves. And those followers of Prophet Zarathushtra in Europe adopted the term 'Zoroastrian' to refer to themselves. By doing so, each of these groups have unknowingly adopted a fundamental part of Christian doctrine (where Christians have named themselves after their prophet)." Mazdayasna is declared as "the sacred path of 'God-worship,' or the worship of 'Ahura Mazda,' the Supreme Wisdom of the Universe.

The order is centered round family life, viz the "relevant tenets of the International Mazdayasnan Order give priority to the rights of the family to encourage the promotion of marriage and the healthy stability of family life. Mazdayasnan(s) believe that relationships between men and women should be based on love, purity, righteousness, piety, work, optimism, and the values of truth, beauty and goodness. Those relationships should not be based on material pretension and the satisfaction of capricious desires.

"Family life, in the principles of the Mazdayasnan Order, is also considered to be the center of education for Mazdayasnan children and youth. Education is vital to the life of the Mazdayasnan Movement for a number of reasons. First, language and culture are primarily transmitted in family life and other educational and cultural settings. Second, tomorrow's leadership of the Mazdayasnan Movement are found in today's children and youth; family life and other educational settings are where they can receive preparation for this role."

Nonetheless the "principles of the faith" declare, "Although the International Mazdayasnan Order has provisions for the education of the children and youth of Mazdayasnan members, it hastens to mention that no one is born a Mazdayasni. In fact, all who become members of the International Mazdayasnan Order must do so by their own conscious choice. Those who do choose to become members of the Mazdayasnan Order should attempt to attain the personal state of fulfillment and well-being that is true of the sacred path of Mazdayasna."

The Movement notes that there are nine levels of fulfillment beginning with good thoughts, words and deeds and then including the six amesha spentas defined

as Haurvatat, health and happiness; Vohu Mana as conscience, good mind and discipline of mind; Asha Vahishta as truth, righteousness and understanding of the cosmic law; Spenta Armaiti as humility and loving kindness; Kshathra Vairya as the selfless use of power, self-control and preservation; and Ameretat as realization and immortality.

Decrying any form of coercion, the 'principles' declare, "The International Mazdayasnan Order is distinct from... any religious sects or cults because it is a spiritual movement with its membership based upon the ethic of free choice and not based on any form of deception. The principles and teachings of Prophet Zarathushtra cannot be fulfilled by practices that limit the personal freedoms of choice and movement."

Unequivocally reasoning that "at the present time the Center of Mazdayasnan is in the United States, and out of respect for the people of this land, Mazdayasnan(s) are deeply interested in contributing to the social and economic betterment of the people of the United States," they underscore the "non-abusive use of technology and industry, as well as the advocacy of a need for the ecological protection of land, animals, and people (as) conducive to the welfare of the people of the United States," adding, "Of course, all of these ideals are applicable on a world scale under the principles of Mazdayasna."

The Order believes its strength lies in its ability to accept Iranian members committed to these ideals though not born into the Zoroastrian faith. "Other groups, such as the Zarathushtris, Zoroastrians and Parsis cannot hope to accomplish the above ideal because the very nature of their closed membership precludes many Iranian people who were not born either Parsis, Zoroastrians or Zarathushtris."

Though the declaration notes that "Mazdayasnan(s) can hope to once again see the sovereignty of the Iranian people revived along with their ancient and sacred teachings found in the wisdom of Prophet Zarathushtra,... the door is open to all people of the world community, Iranian and non-Iranian alike, because Mazdayasnan(s) clearly see the value of the Prophet's teachings for humanity. Hence, the International Mazdayasnan Order is truly international... (It) must work diligently to end forever human starvation, sickness, ecological imbalance

continued on page 52

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The Federation and minority rights

An increasing desire to openly deliberate community problems was evident at the FPZAI's Madras meet

Text and photographs: Arnavaz S. Mama

"The time has come when the Federation should at least provide a platform for awareness, tell the Parsi fraternity that we do not wish to push (problems) under the carpet," Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman president Nariman Mogrelia indicated the direction in which the host Anjuman would aim to propel the deliberations of The Federation of the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI) even as he welcomed its executive council members to the two-day meet, July 15 and 16, 2000.

The delegates who congregated at the Hotel GRT Grand Days in Madras after attending the morning jashan at the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher in celebration of its 90th anniversary were treated to a couple of addresses that had not been slated on the day's agenda. Tata Steel chairman and managing director Dr Jamshed J. Irani, who was to be the guest of honor at the Anjuman's evening function, spoke extempore, reliving experiences in Nagpur, Jamshedpur and London and received a standing ovation. Nadirshah Unvalla, Bangalore high priest and the Federation's doughty critic, who attended the session as the Madras Anjuman's guest after performing the jashan at the Dar-e-Meher, also addressed the council, albeit as a "high priest whose duty is to bless everyone" and not as Bangalore's representative. At his insistence the meeting was adjourned and the Parsi Press had to agree not to note and report his speech.

This was the second time Unvalla attended a Federation meet in Madras, the first having been in 1985 when along with the late Behram Sidhwa and Farrokh Bamji of Bangalore he had accepted the Federation's invitation to debate the is-

sue of Bangalore's membership of the Federation. Despite cajolements and promises from the Federation, he had then advised the Bangalore anjuman to abjure the Federation and to this day Bangalore remains outside its fold.

Shortly after lunch Unvalla complained of chest pain, was rested in the private room of one of the delegates and eventually hospitalized. A bout of stomach infection prevented Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Silloo Kavarana from attending the rest of the meet which began on the second day with a recitation of tandurasti for Unvalla and Kavarana by Delhi's Ervad Rustom Gae on Mogrelia's request.

The sticky situations reported by the Surat Parsi Panchayat (SPP) and the Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman of Secunderabad and Hyderabad (PZASH) found the Federation's member anjumans united in support. The SPP is faced with a requisition order from the Gujarat government on a major part of its dokhma lands. Resolving to help the SPP protect community trust property the delegates advised SPP president Dr Sam Bhacca to opt out of an earlier proposed sale of a fraction of this land which has been legally contested by a part of the Surat community and to use the land to cultivate bawal trees in the interests of the kathi needs of fire-temples in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

PZASH has been fighting a rearguard battle with its former president Bazun Dittia ever since the latter was voted out of the presidentship in the early 1990s. A retired member of the Andhra Pradesh (AP) cadre of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Dittia has allegedly used his influence with the local bureaucrats to clamp the Anjuman under the

government's Endowment Department, suspend the trustees and appoint Dr F. D. Vakil, a relative of Dittia, as sole trustee. The Anjuman has sought relief from the AP High Court where Dittia has proposed the alternative that the Anjuman's properties be administered by the Federation. It has been particularly galling to the Anjuman that Dittia has been a special invitee at all Federation meetings hitherto. Appreciating the anjuman's stand, the executive council resolved to withdraw its blanket invitation to Dittia to attend Federation meetings.

The problems facing the dokhmenashini system of disposal of the dead were explained to the delegates at some length. In response to Bombay's perennial housing problem, Darayes Dalal, a Bombay man who had sought and found a better life in Madras, suggested that the community in general and the BPP in particular invest funds in other locations to create the amenities that would lure Parsis away from Bombay.

Led by FPZAI president and BPP chairman Jamshed Guzder the delegates mourned the passing of stalwarts Sohrab Godrej, chairman of the House of Godrej and social worker extraordinary, and Bakhtavar Lentin, retired judge of the Bombay High Court, whose courage in the face of political power had done the community proud.

Happily accepting Irani's invitation to "the one city in India named after a Parsi," the delegates will meet next in Jamshedpur, December 1-3, 2000.

From Nagpur to Jamshedpur
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L to R (1st row): Beginning with a prayer; Mogrelia and J. J. Irani. (2nd row) Guzder; Gandhi and Sethna; E. Irani, Tamboly and

Bhacca. (3rd row) Keku Parakh, Kavarana and Mani Clubwala; Daisy Irani; Darius and Maharookh Forbes. (4th row) B. and S. Heerjee;

Nargolwala and Unvalla; Gae, Wania and Marazban Wadia. (5th row) Cama, Karanjawalla and B. Irani; Gool Kias and Master

ethos. Recalling his grandmother's collection of photographs of queens and empresses, he noted she "would have been scandalized if I'd married out!"

Arriving in Jamshedpur from his conservative hometown, Nagpur, Irani recalled how at the first paidust he attended there "a non-Parsi caught up with me for sezdo!" Over the years he said he "found that we (the Jamshedpur anjuman) did the navjotes of Parsi women's children also."

A Tata man to the core — Irani's father and grandfather had worked in Tata Mills — Irani grew up in a Tata school, was educated in the UK through them and returned to devote 35 years to Tata Steel. He recognized Mogrelia as part of the Tata fraternity ["Nariman came to (Madras) with Tatas (and) prospered in this place"] and referred to Venkatachary Tata, a true-blue Tamilian who had adopted this surname "since his father and grandfather were associated with Tatas!"

As a 20-year-old in London in the late 1950s, Irani was told to register with the Parsi Association in UK. He says he went there to find "20 in the Parsi club... all shouting at each other." The image has persisted. Addressing the Federation delegates with a smile he noted, "Knowing Parsis, there will never be any agreement... We believe in disagreement!" He qualified his statement however by exempting the Jamshedpur anjuman from its embrace.

"Our numbers are shrinking. My great grandfather had 11 sons and 11 daughters through two wives. My grandfather had 10. My father had only two. We have three... True, Parsi families can't afford more than two children. If the two children of (an) intermarried family are stopped (from becoming a part of the community) we'll fade out... We'll be facing extinction like the dinosaur in more ways than one..."

"We Parsis in general have something to contribute. (We are a) decent community. (There is) no reason why we should allow ourselves to become extinct."

Taking heart from the "resurgence in Zoroastrianism" which he observed during a recent visit to the Boston and New York areas where his son conducted him to meetings, Irani noted the rekindling of interest as people "drive hundreds of miles to attend functions and gahambars. Keep contact with them," he counseled. "It may lead to the community increas-

ing in time to come," noted the optimistic Irani, even as he hoped that "those stricter in religious matters will not take offence" at his statements.

Land acquisition in Surat

"Share our unhappiness," Bhacca began his narration of events in Surat: "Uncontrollable" trespassing and zopadpatties had made the land around the Surat

"You have a vociferous community. They have come down to the streets to safeguard trust property"

dokhmas hives of encroachment. After consultation with dasturs and scholars the SPP decided to sell off some of the estates on the outer periphery of the dokhmas to the Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) in 1992. The agreement to sell concerned 42,044 sq yd in Umarwada and 15,759 sq yd in Karanj, permission for which was obtained from the charity commissioner, notes the press release circulated by the SPP.

Some Parsis of Surat who had contested the decision to sell the land then appealed to the Gujarat Revenue Tribunal where the case pended for eight years. Before the case could be decided by the Tribunal, the Market Committee used the method of land acquisition by government, claiming 1,76,176 sq yd which includes the earlier agreed parcels of land and more.

The SPP has already filed its objections with the land acquisition officer and the matter has been taken up by Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) president Lt Gen (retd) Adi Sethna in his position as member of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM). The SPP has argued that the APMC has sufficient unused land area within its control and that other vacant land contiguous to it is readily available. Hence the APMC does not need to deprive a minority trust of its right to property guaranteed under the Constitution of India.

The opposition from the vocal fraction of the community to the initial sale agreement has now snowballed into "rallies and dharnas at the collector's office," noted Bhacca, anticipating similar scenes before the SPP office and his

own home. Poona's Eruch Irani viewed the situation positively: "You have a vociferous community. They have come down to the streets to safeguard trust property. You should take their support. We are willing to help you to preserve the property... If there are no restrictions (from donors) convert it into a forest."

"If only they had grown bawal there over the past 15 years, no government would have taken it for the market. Even now (they can) grow bawal there for themselves and for Bombay," added Hoshang Wania of Nargol.

Federation joint honorary secretary Keki Gandhi interpreted the event as a lesson for all anjumans to grow bawal on available land. Urging the SPP to "drop the property sale and grow bawal" instead, he assured Bhacca, "We are here to support you. The Federation is solidly behind you and the SPP." Noting that the matter had been taken up by the NCM with the Gujarat government, Sethna contended that the issue mattered to three of its five minority communities — Parsis, Christians and Muslims "because we use land for the disposal of the dead differently from the majority community... The (Zoroastrian) community must stand together in Surat and outside... The sanction of law is in our favor if we use land for the purpose for which it is assigned."

Secunderabad imbroglio

"The trustees and the members of the managing committee of PZASH want Jehangir R. Bisney to speak for about 15 minutes on the affairs of the PZASH with special emphasis on the... role being played by B. F. Dittia, who incidentally happens to be a regular special invitee at all Federation meetings. Kindly allow a special time slot for this purpose and please ensure that Bisney is allowed to speak freely without any objection or intervention from anyone present," wrote PZASH honorary secretary N. F. Nagarwala to the Federation secretariat on May 29, 2000. A documented version of Bisney's submission was received by *Parsiana* on July 21, 2000.

PZASH, a religious trust which owns the Dar-e-Meher, the tower of silence and the nassakhana, was established in 1941. Its 12-member managing committee includes five trustees from among whom is elected the president of PZASH. Up to 1966 it was governed by the Hyderabad Endowment Regulations until the AP Charitable and Hindu Reli-



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gious Endowments Act came into force. Being a non-Hindu religious institution PZASH was not included in the list of institutions to which it applied. Nor was PZASH included when the 1966 Act was repealed and a new one introduced in 1987, notes the press release from the Anjuman.

For the first time the Endowment Department called upon PZASH to submit accounts in 1994. "On legal advice, we took the stand that the provisions of the Endowment Act did not apply to our trust. It may be mentioned here that if the Act is made applicable to our

trust, all our activities, finance, etc will come under the control of the Endowment Department... This would also have a snowballing effect on other anjumans all over India," notes the write-up.

"After some correspondence on this issue and without determining the nature of our trust, the assistant commissioner suspended the trustees of PZASH and appointed Dr F. D. Vakil as the sole trustee. We filed a writ petition and obtained suspension of the order. Our stand all through has been that we are a religious institution and not governed by the Act. The Department contended that we are a charitable institution. We have also taken the stand that any charity done by us is incidental and an integral part of our Zoroastrian faith...

"The writ petition of the PZASH was argued by Mr Parasaran, former attorney general of India and ultimately heard by a division bench of the AP High Court who pronounced judgment on June 21, 1999 that:

- "An enquiry has to be held u/s 87 by the deputy commissioner to determine whether PZASH is a religious or charitable or a mixed institution.

- Parsi is a religion.

- The deputy commissioner has to follow the procedure of a civil court

- Pending the enquiry, the trustees are to continue exercising their duties.

"PZASH had filed the application on February 18, 2000 before the deputy commissioner, Endowment Department."

"We have nothing to hide from the Endowment Department," iterated Bisney. Several legal opinions taken by

**"We have taken
the stand that
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faith..."**

PZASH have shored up the Anjuman's belief that it does not fall within the purview of the Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowment Act 1987... At the special general body meeting of PZASH held on April 9, 1995, called to (apprise) the members of the action taken by the

Endowment Department a unanimous resolution was passed expressing full confidence in the trustees of PZASH and their management of the trust. We function in a democratic manner under the declaration of trust. We collect contributions from our members and they

have a right to vote and express their grievances, if any.

"We feel that if any member has any grievance, it should be settled within the anjuman itself. An institution is larger than an individual and no person should use his official contacts to cause loss and damage to the institution," said Bisney.

Quoting from Dittia's counter affidavit of March 20, 1997 to the AP High Court Bisney noted, "Since some supervision over the management of these institutions is a must, it is necessary that if not the government, then some other inbuilt safeguards against management malpractices are required to be provided. We have in India what is known as the Federation of Parsi Anjumans of India (sic). In a sense, it is the mother body of all anjumans and should in my opinion look where necessary into the affairs of the anjuman. If the Hon'ble Court is pleased to concur with this suggestion, then... the State Government can be persuaded to exclude the Parsi community in future from the ambit of the Act... provided a worthwhile alternative like the Federation of Parsi Anjumans of India are (sic) ready and willing to step in and take up the responsibility."

The delegates tabled their sympathy and support to PZASH. Gandhi's proposal that the executive council rescind the decision taken in Calicut to invite Dittia to its meetings was carried unanimously.

"Dittia has exceeded his brief," noted Mogrelia. "It should not invite Dittia to its meetings and tell him 'This is not acceptable'... Ask why Andhra is doing something that has not been done by any

continued on page 33

Matrons of medicine

The efforts of a few crusaders resulted in pioneering lady doctors who could minister to the female patients

Dr Mridula Ramanna

The colonial government in India became concerned about health issues in the 19th century when epidemics threatened their officers and soldiers. The professionalization of medical practice in Bengal took place only towards the end of the century. In Bombay, Indian initiative and financial support had been instrumental in the establishment of the Grant Medical College in 1845. However, the acceptance of western medicine was a gradual process.

Fears of ritual pollution caused the initial reluctance to accept vaccination of children against smallpox, and it was the efforts of western educated Indian doctors that enabled the authorities to propagate vaccination and thereby control the frequency of epidemics; and to manage them when they did occur.

Social barriers were even more inhibiting with regard to women. It was the high mortality rate during childbirth that led to the establishment of a professorship of midwifery at Grant Medical College, but objections to being treated by male doctors persisted. In the 1870s midwives were trained. As the 1882 Education Commission observed, whatever efforts were made in the field of women's education were due to private stimulus. Thus the establishment of medical education for women and separate medical facilities for them was also the contribution of public-spirited individuals in Bombay.

The first effort to provide medical facilities for women was the

Obstetrics Institution set up in 1850, attached to J. J. Hospital, founded in 1845 with the munificence of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. This Institution was meant for the "poorer classes" and provided practical experience in gynecology to students of Grant Medical College. Donations by the Dowager Lady Jejeebhoy made possible the instruction of four Indian women as midwives from 1870.



Clockwise from top: Motlabai Wadia, Jirbai Wadia and Jilla Wadia

Photos: Parsi Lustre on Indian Soil

However, there were objections to the training being provided only in Marathi and not in Gujarati.

Two of the women who had received certificates of proficiency turned

out to be incompetent. Yet the class progressed, with instruction being provided free in Marathi and Gujarati by Drs Sakham Arjun and Cowasji Pestonji (Naigaumwala), both graduates of Grant Medical College. Funds for stipends were provided by Cawasji Jehangir, Bai Perojbai (daughter of Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy) and Ardesir Wadia, all patrons of western education.

The establishment of full-fledged medical courses for women was thanks to the efforts of Sorabji Shapurji Bengallee and George Kittredge, a Bombay-based American businessman who set up the Medical Women for India Fund in 1882. Bengallee was a reformer, educationist, justice of peace, member of the Legislative Council and involved in the intellectual life of the city. Inspired by an article in *The Contemporary Review*, written by Dr Elizabeth Frances Hoggan, describing a new medical department in England managed entirely by women, Kittredge was convinced that "for success in India, women must be recognized as the equal of men in the medical care of their own sex." He consulted Bengallee, Jaffer Cummoo Sulleman, Javerilal Umiashankar Yagnik and Mohamed Ali Rogay, all of whom had been associated with reformist efforts in the city. The committee of the Medical Women for India Fund was constituted, with Kittredge as chairman and Bengallee as secretary and treasurer.

At the first meeting of the Fund, chaired by municipal commissioner, E. C. K. Ollivant, the insufficient accommodation for women at J. J. Hospital was noted. The scheme that evolved had four objectives:

- to secure permission for Indian, Anglo-Indian and European girls to attend medical courses and qualify for university degrees;
- to employ qualified women doctors from Europe or America;
- to establish a hospital for women and children conducted by women; and



Murzban (seated sixth from left) with other delegates of the Parsi Chief Matrimonial Court, Bombay, 1895 and (below) Tehmulji Nariman

to open a dispensary for treatment of ailments which did not require hospitalization.

The Fund collected donations through the sustained efforts of Bengallee, ably assisted by Harkisandas Narottamdas and Muljibai Jevraj, ranging from Rs 10 to Rs 1,000, totalling Rs 40,238 by 1885. However, Bengallee got the impression that few were convinced of the feasibility of the scheme. Kittredge contrasted the apathy in supporting the cause of women's education with the enthusiasm of Hindu grain and cotton merchants for an animal hospital!

The Fund applied to the Bombay University for admission of women to the Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery degree (LM and S) and to the Grant Medical College for the granting of government diplomas to women hospital assistants and apothecaries. There seems to have been some initial reluctance on the part of professors to teach certain subjects to women. The University responded in 1883, offering medical degrees to matriculates who pursued a five-year course; and the College offered a certificate three-year course to non-matriculates. The candidates were required to be 18 years of age. Medical classes

commenced in 1887.

The first Indian woman LM and S was Freny Cama in 1892. Between that date and 1915 (when the MBBS degree was awarded) 31 Parsis, 17 Indian Christians, eight Hindu and two Jewish women secured the LM and S.

An attempt to disseminate medical knowledge was made by R. A. Malabari, referred to as a student of Grant Medical College, through a popular lecture on sanitation in 1889. With the help of diagrams, she explained the situation and structure of the lungs and their physiological functions. She showed that overcrowded and badly ventilated buildings and schools caused injury to health and emphasized the need for exercise. She pointed out the harmful effects of tight clothes which could lead to deformities and cautioned against Parsis imitating Europeans, and Hindus the Parsis, in adopting fashions.



The Medical Women for India Fund accomplished the other objectives through the establishment of the Cama Hospital and the employment of women doctors there. It was the generous donation of one lakh rupees by Pestonjee Hormusji Cama, increased by a further contribution to Rs 1,64,300, that made possible the foundation of a separate hospital for women and children. Cama had been a businessman in China and had established the first Indian business house in London.

Bengallee had to stall the move of the

staff of J. J. Hospital to divert the donation to their institution. The government wanted the proposed women's hospital to have women doctors under "the instruction and guidance of male superior staff." While there had been a few women involved in medical work in Madras and the north-west through zenana missions, there was not a single woman doctor in Bombay.

The government was expected to take the first step but, as Kittredge observed, "It had neither the money nor faith in

the ability of medical women." There was the assumption that it was impossible to dispense with male doctors, while women were required to help only in cases where a sense of delicacy or custom was involved. However, the latter's services were not used by all, for Kittredge records that one of his Indian friends lost his favorite daughter due to lack of timely female medical aid. In the face of the strong objections of Bengallee, Kittredge and Cama, government conceded that the institution would be managed by women and undertook to bear the cost of the hospital.

Kittredge selected Dr Edith Pechey, MD, for the post of senior medical officer. Pechey, the daughter of a Baptist minister from Essex, was one of five women, including Sophia Jex Blake, who fought to be admitted to the University of Edinburgh as a medical student. The outstanding academic performance of these women apparently hurt male egos and the University expelled them! Pechey and Blake subsequently received their MD from the University of Berne. They were responsible for the founding of the London School of Medicine for Women. Pechey had practiced and lectured at Leeds and Vienna. On appointment at Cama Hospital her salary of Rs 500 per month (pm) was paid from the Fund. She was also provided a house in Cumballa Hill and first class passage from England. She arrived in Bombay in December 1883 and subsequently learnt Hindustani. Dr Charlotte Ellaby, MD, was appointed her assistant the following year. Pechey not only established her professional competence but



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also took part in the social life of the city and thus secured recognition for the work at Cama Hospital.

The government allotted a site on the Esplanade for the Cama Hospital. While it was being constructed, Pechey started her work in a small bungalow at Khetwadi. There seems to have been some initial reservations over surgical operations being conducted at a place away from home. Pechey undertook visits, for which she charged the same Rs 10 as her male colleagues. Some of the committee members wanted smaller fees for the 'middle classes.' Pechey agreed to attend free all those patients recommended to her by the members. As a result of a misunderstanding caused by this incident, Bengallee resigned from the Fund.

Sulleman's donation of Rs 20,000 established in 1886 a dispensary attached to Cama Hospital. Sulleman is mentioned as a furniture dealer of Girgaum. The municipal corporation initially spent Rs 500 pm on its maintenance, public donations making up the difference when expenses proved excessive.

The building of Cama Hospital was completed in 1887. It was designed by Muncherjee Murzban who had built the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Parsi Benevolent Institution, Alexandra Native Girls' English Institution and J. N. Petit Library. The Hospital had 52 beds, with two detached pavilions for special cases. By the end of the year, the patients treated included 12 Europeans, 13 Eurasians, 31 Hindus, 52 Muslims, 23 Goans, three Portuguese, nine Parsis, six Madrasis and one Chinese.

It is noteworthy that while no Muslim women took to medical education in this period, medical facilities were availed of and the Hospital benefited zenana women, particularly since Hindu and Parsi women were being treated by male doctors. This marked a change for Dr Rukhmabai had observed in 1883 that while women in purdah were unapproachable to the male doctor, even the average Indian woman would not allow herself to be examined for diseases peculiar to women. At the Cama Hospital, patients in general wards were required to pay Re 1 per diem. Pechey was designated physician-in-charge, on a salary of Rs 700 pm, and Ellaby, the resident surgeon on Rs 400 pm.



Pestonjee Cama and the Cama and Albless Hospital and Sorabji Bengallee (below)



The Bomanji Edalji Albless Obstetric Hospital was added to Cama Hospital in 1890, designed specially for obstetric cases. In the two institutions, 100 beds were available and 2,026 patients were treated in 1908 as against 1,076 in 1891. Eight thousand outdoor patients availed themselves of the facilities at the Jaffer Sulleman Dispensary.

The Medical Women for India Fund had been dissolved in 1888 and Kittredge could well claim for Bombay the credit for the first non-official and non-sectarian female medical relief in India.

On Queen Victoria's suggestion to provide medical facilities for women, the Lady Dufferin Fund was established and generous public subscriptions were made to this Fund on the occasion of Lady Dufferin's visit to Bombay in 1884.

It was suggested that the Dufferin Fund should pay the salaries of a small number of European lady doctors who should train Indians. This Fund supported a training school for nurses and midwives attached to Cama Hospital, which opened in 1887. By 1907, 225 nurses including candidates from the native states and other parts of the presidency had been trained.

In 1892, the obstetric wards of the J. J. Hospital were replaced by the Bai Motlabai Wadia Obstetric Hospital and the Sir Dinsha Manekji Petit Hospital for Women and Children; and an outpatients' department was provided by the

Dwarkanadas Lalubhai Dispensary. They jointly provided accommodation for 60 women and 20 children and were used as institutions for the training of students of the Grant Medical College in midwifery and gynecology. While 686 indoor and 5,703 outdoor patients were treated in 1892, the number was 1,848 and 8,171 patients respectively by 1908. With the donation of Jerbai N. Wadia, the Home for Nurses at J. J. Hospital was started. A few women with infectious diseases were admitted to the hospital at Arthur Road, established in 1892.

Medical facilities were also established for women of specific communities; thus the Parsi Lying-in Hospital was founded in 1887 as a maternity home by Tehmulji Bhicaji Nariman. Bai Moolbai Peerbhoy Charitable Dispensary provided medical aid to Khoja women and children. In 1908, 24,111 patients were treated in these exclusive institutions for women and children.

The hopes of the founders of medical education were realized in the first batch of women graduates of Grant Medical College who served at these institutions. Among the Parsis who constituted the majority were Meherbai Khareghat who was attached to the Parsi Lying-in Hospital; Avanbai Manekji Mehta, Cama Hospital; and Gulbai Doctor, a municipal doctor. Dhunbai Hormusji Wadia practiced at Ahmedabad; Dossibai Dadabhoy at Cama Hospital and later became the first Indian woman Member of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) and Member of the Royal Col-



lege of Surgeons (MRCS); Jerbanu Mistri did a special study of infant and maternal problems, her findings contributing to the reduction of mortality rates; and Jerbanoo Karani became a member of the Nagpur Municipal Committee and president, All India Women's Conference.

Women pursued postgraduate studies in midwifery, gynecology and medicine — the first MDs being Peroja Daruwala and Mehra Dalal in 1928. The 1930s saw a woman army doctor, Phiroza Davar, and a dental surgeon, Banoo Jilla, LDSC (Licentiate in Dental Science) from the Nair Dental College set up in 1933.

The entry of women into the medical profession did not dramatically improve the status of women in society. However, more women went to these doctors because they were women. This also led to more children being treated and immunized. Infant and maternal health were neglected by the government which tackled public health mainly when confronted with killer epidemics.

In Bombay, the foundation of Cama Hospital had been a successful private effort, providing facilities for women and children. Nevertheless, prejudices remained, for it was observed that women doctors were called upon mainly to attend on respiratory and other such cases only in the outpatients' departments. In the wards they mainly confined themselves to gynecological and obstetric cases. Pechey petitioned the government for the creation of a medical women's service to work at these institutions financed by Indians, but women doctors remained low on the list of government priorities.

Most of them, however, were successful professionals, economically independent and at the same time connected with women's organizations and reformist activities. Tehmina Cama was one such woman doctor of Bombay in the 1920s. Doubtless medical women were few, but a beginning had been made in a vital area of social change.

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It was a combination of amateur dramatics and freestyle dance. The audience in the crowded Phiroj Clubwala Hall was delighted with their rendition of the Zoroastrian boat people of the 10th century seeking asylum on Gujarat's shore; of the opposition they converted to acceptance by their promise to sweeten the milk of India's kindness; of the story behind the chance discovery of atash (fire) that became a cardinal principle of faith... But what the 21st century audience really applauded was the sheer presence of so many youths — energetic, enthusiastic and pervasive — in a community that views itself as standing on its demographic head.

The two-day celebrations of the 90th anniversary of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher in Madras (July 15 and 16, 2000) had commenced with a well-attended jashan on the morning of July 15. Led by Nadirshah Unvalla, high priest of Bangalore, the Madras Anjuman's special invitee on the occasion, the jashan also witnessed the participation of the popular Madras panthaky Ervad Kai-khushroo Laskari, a former staffer of *The Bombay Samachar* and the youthful Ervad Yezdi Ghadially who had been initiated as a navar a couple of months ago. The first navar in the Madras Zarathoshti community in 70 years, the youth has won a special place in the affection of his coreligionists.

The 90-year-old place of worship had been specially spruced up for the occasion. The Rs 10 lakh repair and renovation package included a Rs 17,000 refurbishment of the super-sized portrait of Zarathushtra. Other pictures and portraits, especially of the Clubwala family, marred by seepage of water between the picture and the glass front, were all expertly touched up at the School of Art as noted Zarin Mistry, joint honorary secretary of the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher 90th Year Celebrations Committee. The gleaming walls, polished doors and sparkling afargan attested to the zeal of the local community in maintaining the only consecrated fire in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

In his welcome address Nariman Mogrelia, president of the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman and chairman of the Celebrations Committee, briefly recounted the history of Parsi settlement in Madras, elucidated in some detail in

Fanning the flame of devotion

Love and piety
have sustained the
Jal Phiroj Clubwala
Dar-e-Meher in
Madras for 90 years

Arnavaz S. Mama

the brochure commemorating the event:

It was in 1795 that Heerjibhai Kharas came to Madras accompanied by Framji Rudibaina, Mobeds Ruttondaroo and Jamshedji Aderbadan, Sorab Mehta, Bhikhaji Botu and Jamasji. According to Mogrelia, they came on a mission from the Raja of Coorg, settling on a plot of land they purchased opposite the Catholic Church in Royapuram. A year later Jamasji passed away and was buried nearby.

When Rustomji Cama and Cowasji Nowroji arrived is not documented, but in 1799 they purchased "24 grounds" of land on a 99-year lease from the Madras governor and the United Company of Merchants, England. A "fresh lease" was entered into between the same parties in 1814. The Parsi contingent then also included Hormosji Bomonji, Hormasji Panday and "others of Parsi religion." In 1822 Edulji Khambatta constructed a block for ceremonial and religious purposes thereon but the Parsi Punchayet of Madras (PPM) was only formed in 1876: a managing committee of five members were elected by the 11 members present, with Dinshaw Panday

elected its first president and Sorabji Framji its first secretary. Seven years thereafter a system of monthly subscription from its members was accepted and a committee of six elected to draft rules of the anjuman which were codified and passed within two and a half brief months! Shortly thereafter the anjuman agreed to the formation of five groups of four members each to officiate as voluntary pallbearers.

The year 1893 saw Cawasji Panday installed as the first Parsi sheriff of Madras (to date there have been three Parsi sheriffs: Mary Clubwala Jadhav, MBE, Padma Vibhushan, in 1956 and Jehanbux Taraporewala in 1963). A year later was recorded the nuptials of Maneckji Pawala and Motibai Malegamwalla in Cannanore — the first Parsi marriage in Madras presidency.

Though Sir Dinshaw Petit donated Rs 3,600 and Sorabji Framji, then president of the PPM, contributed Rs 1,000 towards a plot of land on which to erect an atash dagdah, the attempt was aborted as the land lay within 50 yards of the aramgah (as against 300 as per the Vendidadic injunction).

The PPM was renamed the Madras Parsi Zarthosti Anjuman (MPZA) in 1900, becoming witness to several sad and glad occasions in the community in the 20th century.

Jal, the 13-year-old son of Phiroj Clubwala died in 1906 and Phiroj Clubwala donated Rs 2,000 to the Anjuman to pay for a serving mobed at Rs 40 per month, Ervad Dosabhai Pavri being appointed to the job.

By 1910 the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher was consecrated by the grieving father in memory of his young son, gifting the edifice to the community which had collected a sum of Rs 30,000 towards its maintenance.

When five navjotes were performed in the Taraporewala family in 1911 — a record for Madras — little did the community know that two of the navjotes — Arjasp and Jehanbux — would grow up to be shining lights of their settlement and its honored benefactors.

In 1926 Phiroj Clubwala celebrated the wedding of his son Nogi (Khushru) and Mary Rustomji Patel of Ootacamund and the community rejoiced and feasted for four days. The next year Phiroj Clubwala died in Ootacamund and from the



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Clockwise from top: Jashan time at the 90-year-old Dar-e-Meher; M. and N. Mogrelia, Guzder, J. Clubwala, K. Parakh and M. Clubwala; Guzder presenting shawl to J. Clubwala

funds collected in his memory the Anjuman purchased a bungalow with a large compound in Royapuram and the Phiroj Clubwala Memorial Hall was declared open by his widow Shirin in 1930. The same year also saw the establishment of the Madras Parsi Associa-

tion (MPA) to promote social and cultural interest among its members. His son Nogi also donated a building in Royapuram to the Jal Phiroj Clubwala Dar-e-Meher in memory of his father in 1931. Four years later Nogi, aged 31, died on his way to Europe, leaving behind his widow Mary, young son Phil and mother Shirin, all of whom consistently supported the Dar-e-Meher and other Anjuman properties throughout their lifetimes, both monetarily and in terms of personal service. Phil, a bach-

elor, died at the age of 43, and Mary succumbed to cancer a year later. Thus ended this particular line of the Clubwala family.

However, Nogi's cousin Jehangir and his redoubtable wife Mani have carried on the Clubwala tradition of devotion to the community and other social causes, repeatedly spearheading celebratory events like the golden jubilee of the MPA (in 1980), the platinum jubilee of the Dar-e-Meher (in 1985), the bicentennial of Parsi settlement in Madras (in



Center column (from top, L to R): Darius and Tehnaz Bahadurji, Darayes and Kaaty Dalal, M. Clubwala and Kurush Mistry, Bhote and M. Mogrelia; right column: Z. Mistry, Ratnagar, Ghadially and Badrinath



Left column (from top, L to R): Guzder, Mogrelia, Sethna; Wadia and Mehta join the Madras ladies in Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathoshti; enacting Dastur Nariosang Dhaval and Jadi Rana. Alongside: discovering the marvels of fire

1995) and this 90th anniversary of the Dar-e-Meher. In recognition of her untiring efforts Mani Clubwala was presented the Anjuman's coveted F. B. Taraporewala Award. A long-serving





Four generations of the Clubwalas. L to R: (top) Mancherji and Kolibai; Phiroj and Shirinbai; (below) Jal; Nogi and Mary; Phil

secretary (1970-85) of the MPA she has championed the cause of the visually impaired and embraced the poor and downtrodden by her devoted service. "Her winning ways have won the hearts of the entire community," notes Mistry.

The K. K. Razi Scholarship awarded each year to the student aggregating highest marks at the Higher Secondary Certificate examination was claimed on this occasion by Urzanna Byramshaw with a score of 96 percent.

The presentations were made by chief guests Jamshed Guzder, chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) and president of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India and Dr Jamshed Irani, managing director of Tata Steel who had been welcomed with a traditional achumichoo ceremony. Mogrelia presented them and MPZA patron Keku Parakh with shawls of honor. Others to be so honored were Lt Gen (retd) Adi Sethna, Delhi Parsi Anjuman president and member of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM), and Dar-e-Meher trustees Mogrelia, Jehangir Clubwala, Russi Dastur (who

donated Rs 10 lakhs to its coffers), Byram Byramshaw and Jamshed Madan. But it was Jehangir Clubwala to whom the gathering awarded a spontaneous standing ovation for his long, devoted service. Also honored were senior citizens Dilnavaz Nalladaroo, Goolamai Marphetia and Sorab Mulla for their exemplary lives that community youths could emulate. Gold Zarathushtra coins were presented to Dastur Hormazdiar Noshirwan Dastur of Poona and to Unvalla, in absentia, and to Laskari. On the second night Ghadiyally was presented a similar coin at the hands of famed ophthalmologist Dr S. S. Badrinath, an honored guest of the Anjuman.

The souvenir published on the occasion was jointly released by Guzder and BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly. A brief address by Sethna highlighted the problems faced by the community in various parts of the country which were referred to the NCM. The talk was followed by an audiovisual created for the UNESCO project on the Parsis where Sethna's daughter Dr Shernaz Cama is coordinator, zealously compiling the history of the community in India. In keeping with ancient Zoroastrian traditions Sethna admonished community members seeking to oust a mongrel who had sought refuge in the hall from the rain pelting

the compound: "Don't be unkind to him; he's the guardian of our race."

The second day's entertainment, a variety review of gags and songs organized by Madras impresario Noshir Ratnagar, was followed by dinner hosted by the patrons of the celebrations committee.

Thirty people had got together on March 21 to constitute the Celebrations and Fundraising Committee, informed a tired but exhilarated Mistry at the end of the show. Grouped to tackle individual heads like accommodation, fund-raising, catering, brochure, etc, Mistry noted that the lion's share of the work and the greatest motivating force among them was Mani Clubwala. Current MPA president Darius Bahadurji led the fund-raising subcommittee. Accommodation and transport remained the purview of Tehnaz Bahadurji and Kaety Dalal while Darayes Dalal and Mahiar Shroff bore the brunt of organizing meals for the proverbially hungry Zoroastrians.

The two days' entertainment cost the Anjuman Rs 30,000 for lights, music, costumes and professional choreographer Jeffery Vardon even though it was Perviz Bhote, vice principal of Vaisnava College, who conceptualized the dramatization of Kisseh Sanjan as well as the Zoroastrian concept of Fire.

continued on page 56

THE FEDERATION AND...

continued from page 22

other state government," he recommended. Gandhi agreed, proposing a vote of censure against Dittia — which was passed unanimously — adding that he had written to Dittia that this matter would be debated.

A letter from Dittia received in Madras noted that he was attending a retreat cum reunion function of the 1950 IAS batch. Dittia wrote, "Although I am unable to attend the meeting of the Federation, I am anxious that the matter should not be kept pending until the next Federation meeting."

Indore president Bomi Heerjee sounded a note of caution. "Any resolution we pass should be all embracing so that there are no repeats elsewhere," advised Sethna suggesting that it be framed within the ambit of the law for minorities.

Interface with officialdom

Heerjee reiterated the requests recorded in the resolutions at the Madhya Pradesh (MP) anjumans meet: a proposal to create a central zone of the Federation and to lobby to amend the MP State Minorities Commission to include a Parsi member. Currently the Commission only has Muslim, Christian and Sikh representatives. He urged Sethna to take up the matter with the chief minister of MP.

While Gandhi informed the gathering that the NCM chairman had written to the MP governor asking for a Parsi to be co-opted on the state board, Sethna further noted that the reconstituted NCM which took office in January was of the view that the states had "not done their duty." The legal and technical issues had to be sorted out with the chief ministers, said Sethna, noting how the Tamil Nadu board included a Jain member although the Jains are not classified as a minority in the Indian Constitution. (A decision of the Rajasthan High Court has since held Jains as a religious minority community in India, according to a report in *The Times of India*, September 17, 2000.) He sought demographic figures and representations from the community to strengthen his case.

Merely having representation or sitting on district level bodies was not enough, according to Gandhi who sought feedback on the circumstances in various places. Sethna noted how the NCM tended to dismiss the Parsis with the single sentence in its report: "Parsis have

no problems." Heerjee referred to problems in areas where Parsi properties exist though the community may have moved away.

Delegates had contradictory experience of the implementation of the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (PMDA) in their areas. While the district court in MP has decided to take cognizance of

Ensure that all
houses are numbered
now because only
those so indicated
will be visited by
census enumerators
next year

the PMDA for the first time according to Heerjee, Allahabad's Capt Homi Dandiwalla has found that while Parsi marriages in his area used to be registered under the PMDA earlier, officials there "now say they do not know who Parsis are." Agra's Hosang Debara said he had ascertained from Bapsy Khodaiji of Lucknow that all marriages can be registered at the civil court.

Since July 1, 2000 the *Gujarat Express* from Ahmedabad has been stopping at Udvada, informed Sethna. Regarding designating Udvada a "Pavitra Yatra-dham," the matter will be taken up only after the NCM visits Gujarat, he noted.

Sethna was more concerned about the national census due to be held February 2-28, 2001. Terming it of great importance for all minorities, Sethna added that the ± 2 percent fluctuation in the figures, acceptable for large populations, would make a sizable difference to the Parsis. He appealed to all the anjumans to ensure that all houses are numbered now because only those so indicated will be visited by census enumerators next year. Give regional directories of Parsis to senior members of the census directorate," he urged.

Heerjee recalled his experience in the home ministry when dealing with the census that most people hesitated to mention their religion and most enumerators "had never heard of Zoroastrianism!" But Sethna informed the gathering that for the first time the enumerators have been instructed to take the signature of the head of the household or whoever provides the information. This would give each householder a chance

to ensure that the data is correctly recorded. If not counted in February, apply to the Helpline which will be advertised on TV, cable and Internet, he added.

Dokhmenashini

Surat's woes over its dokhma land became a springboard for a discussion on dokhmenashini and problems facing its implementation in the 21st century. The disappearance of vultures has extended the time required for the disposal of bodies leading to complaints of stench, specifically from the residents of Bombay's Spenta building facing the Doongerwadi and the contiguous Godrej Baug, acknowledged the BPP trustees.

"All (seven) trustees support dokhmenashini and have signed an affidavit on oath that we're committed to strengthen it," declared BPP trustee Dinshaw Tamboly. He noted that they have identified four different areas to do so: An air blowing plant has been installed to mask the odor; a herbal cum chemical powder is being sprayed on the bodies to accelerate decomposition; the construction of an aviary to breed vultures in captivity is under examination; solar panels to increase the heat to 200°C to enable the drying out of bodies in nine to 10 hours is under experiment in Bulsar and Baroda.

Speaking as an athornan from Navsari, Gae voiced his reservations. Basing himself on a *Times of India* report that vultures are disappearing from the skies of India, Gae wondered how the BPP would procure the 200 vulture chicks required according to the report of UK based specialist on birds of prey, Jemima Parry-Jones. Also, to create a dome over three dokhmas to enable the fledglings to thrive on the dead bodies would be prohibitive in economic terms. Other suggestions like moving the dokhmas out of Bombay was as impractical as creating an aramgah on Doongerwadi's rocky ground, noted Gae. As for solar panels, a representative from Bulsar had spoken of 600°C being required to dispose the bodies. This would be impossible with the high humidity during the monsoon season, reasoned Gae. He feared that a public interest litigation would put the BPP on the mat and urged the high priests to suggest an effective remedy to the Punchayet. According to Gae's reasoning, electric cremation might need to be adopted if no other avenues are workable.



From left to right: 1. Marzban Mehta, Paghdiwalla and Yezdi Motiwala; 2. D. Mistry and Khurshed Bhesania; 3. Ronny Dick, Dinshaw Patel and Jehangir Mandwiwalla; 4. Homi and Shireen Dandiwalla; 5. D. Debara, Giara and Seher Kolah; 6. Sarosh Poonawalla and Palsetia; 7. Hormazd Dastur and Z. Mistry; 8. Bisney; 9. Yezdi Pithawala; 10. Hoshedar Patwa and Talati; 11. Laehremet Mistry and Sarosh Palkhiwala

Noting that the BPP follows the trust deed of 1874 whose main clause is the management of the Towers of Silence, Tamboly said the BPP trustees have been "told by legal experts that we can't avoid (the responsibility of maintaining the dokhmas), even if we want to." Aware that the vulture population is declining, the optimistic Tamboly nonetheless declared that the BPP planned to meet the Prime Minister to get permission to breed vultures, get the chicks and grow them. "God willing we may even release some in future," he added. He also noted that the BPP had imported 600 truck loads of earth and clay from Madras with the help of Godrej to proceed with the greening of Doongerwadi. The BPP may register a 40 lakh rupee loss on the Doongerwadi account this year, he noted.

"Is there any possibility of growing flowers at Doongerwadi to mitigate the loss?" asked *The Bombay Samachar* columnist Marzban Giara. Flowers and fruit may lead to income, agreed Tamboly, but they led to encroachments on the property. Neither did he favor bawal trees as their thorns fall on the ground, making it risky for nassessalars. "We need trees where birds can nest," he observed.

Regarding the licences that would be required for the rearing of vultures the BPP had written to Sethna, attorney general of India Soli Sorabjee and member of the Rajya Sabha Fali Nariman. Sethna told them they were treading a minefield; Sorabjee urged them to be very careful while Nariman suggested they meet and discuss the subject.

Group medical insurance

Wania, a chartered accountant who sponsored the idea, has been steadily working on the project along with Maneck Dastur of the United India Insurance Company Limited, noted Gandhi. However, the Insurance Regulatory Bill passed since the Mhow meet decrees that the formal approval of the General Insurance Corporation is mandatory for private insurance companies floating group insurance schemes. This has resulted in foreign companies shying away, explained Wania. Also, whereas earlier group insurance schemes accepted a child at birth and even 90+ individuals were considered insurable, under the new requirements a child must be three-plus and the upper age limit stops at 70 years. "Thirty per-

cent of the community will be eliminated," noted Tamboly. Added Sethna ruefully, "It's the 70+ group that needs insurance the most."

Whereas earlier group policies covered existing diseases, under the new dispensation they would be covered only after three years of insurance, an embargo that may extend to five years, noted Wania. Nor does group insurance include maternity and dental treatment.

At the first paidust
he attended in
Jamshedpur "a
non-Parsi caught up
with me for sezdo!"

To add to the problems is the question of administration as the BPP does not have the manpower to deal with the community at large. According to Wania, United India Insurance works through a claims settling agency where the group involves over 25,000 people as in the group policy of Godrej. Also, while the insured individuals will be given a card and will not have to pay bills, the B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital will require a special fund to absorb costs until the insurance money is realized, reiterated Wania.

The future of the scheme rests with Wania as Gandhi told the delegates, "You will have to address the community and sell the idea and forward to the Federation secretary the names and addresses of people who want to avail of the policy. (It is) up to you to collect the premium, etc."

Anjumans

Dandiwalla spoke of land in Allahabad, gifted to Surat's Nariman Home according to the will of the late Kaikhushroo Gandhi, which had not been officially transferred to the SPP. However, now there were indications of development with trees being removed, plots being demarcated and offers being made in the name of SPP. There was no response to Dandiwalla's statement from the delegates.

Agra is maintaining 128 graves in one of the oldest aramgahs in the country, noted H. Debara. The tiny anjuman is said to be spending up to Rs 40,000 annually on the upkeep of its dharamshala which is nonetheless consistently ignored by Parsi travellers. When Adil Nargolwala of

Delhi suggested a tie-up with the Travel Corporation of India or Guzder's Indrtravels, Dolat Debara noted that Dini Travels had agreed to help but nothing has emerged so far. Sethna assured them that the hotels in Agra face a similar problem: "The train communication between Delhi and Agra is so good, no one wants to spend a night in Agra." While Guzder offered financial support up to Rs 30,000 annually for three years towards the dharamshala's maintenance, Gae suggested they file an application for cy près if necessary.

Jhansi, with its population of 45 aged Parsis, at last has a pucca road to the aramgah built by the cantonment authorities.

Very few, very old people now remain in Saronda, according to Homi Palsetia. Their 105-year-old adarian with a 10-lakh rupee corpus sustains an annual expenditure of Rs 1,00,000. They share the Tower of Silence with Nargol but the bungli there is in poor shape, reported Palsetia.

The BPP, Bombay's largest private landlord, sustains an annual deficit of Rs 1.25 crore on maintaining its 4,500+ flats, informed Tamboly, yet the waiting list for housing numbers 2,024 applicants. In a deal recently concluded with Nirlon 90 more flats will be forthcoming and allotments in two buildings in Andheri may begin shortly, he added.

"Is the BPP obliged to find accommodation for everyone?" asked Baroda's Baman Cama. "We are obliged to give what the community needs," responded Tamboly, adding, "We are trying to put them on the fast track despite being the favorite whipping boys of the Press!" He was referring to the BPP's earmarked one crore rupees for medical education, foreign educational funding for 57 individuals and Rs 50 lakhs disbursed in self-employment opportunities to eight persons.

When Guzder complained of Parsi tenants who pay Rs 13 per month even though 20-30 percent of them have imported cars, Giara noted "We have pampered the community too much." Giara was conscripted by Tamboly to make the community aware of this failing. He took the scribe to task regarding non-cooperation from his fellow tenants in Dadar where the BPP wanted to build 40 additional flats. According to Tamboly,

the Panchayet had offered to relocate the tenants in the same locality while the work was underway and had promised to pay penalty if it was not completed on time.

Referring to the Parsi concept of Bombay as the "be all and end all of the world," Dalal said, "I came to Madras because I couldn't get a flat in Bombay." He urged the BPP to strengthen opportunities and amenities for young Parsis in other parts of India to break through the community's "Bombay or USA" attitude. He also suggested that the Panchayet confiscate flats locked up by NRIs (non resident Indians) but Tamboly informed him such action was not permitted under the Rent Act. Dalal suggested rents be pegged as a percentage of income. Tamboly noted that the BPP was now giving flats with security deposit on leave and licence basis where the process of eviction takes two to three years but some people had gone to court. Whereas the Panchayet used to spend on legal fees in earlier days (when it took up to 22 years for the case to come up) it now accepts 40 percent of the price of a flat in payment by cheque to effect a change of residents on its rolls. According to Wania, however, *pagdi* is legalized only for private landlords, not for trusts who need to take the charity commissioner's permission.

The Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman (IZA) defrayed Rs 70,72,000 in medical and educational aid last year, informed its representative Behram Irani. Of its 1,500 acre inheritance only 900 acres are in IZA control, while 400 acres' income has to be given to the local panchayet according to the terms of the court judgment, he noted.

With two buildings nearly complete the Poona Parsee Panchayat (PPP) will have about 120 flats ready for occupation by December, reported its trustee-secretary E. Irani. No forms have been handed out however pending the formulation of a system of allocation between the PPP and its donors.

As the fence surrounding Doongerwadi is regularly broken by trespassers, the PPP intends to build a stone compound wall to secure the property, E. Irani informed the delegates.

Sethna, who represents the Federation on the Srinagar anjuman board referred to its beautiful aramgah in the army

area. In good shape except for some broken gravestones, the aramgah's retaining wall, which had fallen, was repaired by the army, reported Sethna.

On the 75th anniversary of the DPA the community was viewed through non-community eyes — former Indian high commissioner to UK Dr L. M. Singhvi and Prof Lokesh Chandra, director of the International Academy of Indian Culture, among them — Sethna said.

Though the liberal Delhi Parsis are

"If any member has
any grievance, it
should be settled within
the anjuman itself"

not bound in controversies like their cousins elsewhere, the 600+ members of the DPA "don't want to respond to messages from the Anjuman, Why?" wondered an anxious Sethna.

Other anjumans said they had nothing significant to report.

Youth

The BPP Youth Club now has 227 active members. They produced their first newsletter *HP Youth Speak* in 1999, organized a millennium treasure hunt, picnic and barge party, noted Zelda Mistry. A spin-off of the BPP's Holiday Programme for Youth (HPY), the Club's membership is restricted to HPY alumni. The 14th edition of the HPY was held in May 2000 when the participants cleaned four agiaries as part of their social work program, said Mistry.

Delhi youths meet informally and remain in contact via Internet, noted Nargolwala. The DPA's platinum jubilee celebrations absorbed their energy earlier in the year. The Farohars (aged three to 17 years) organized a day-long fête, the proceeds being diverted to charity in Gujarat.

The HPY does not suit north Indian timetables, noted Sethna. However during Dussera-Diwali, the DPA itself hosts seven to eight youths from other locations, taking them to institutions and places they would not normally go to, he added, and offered to share the DPA's experience in education-by-play method of the Farohar Club with interested anjumans. The pre-navjote books of

Piloo Jungalwalla were also available with the DPA, he said.

Baroda's Bomi Talati referred to organizing functions where speakers like Noshir Dadrawala and Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw were invited to address the youth. An inter university meet between Surat, Ahmedabad and Baroda was another highlight of recent months.

Congratulating the youth of Madras on their splendid entertainment program at the Piroj Clubwala Memorial Hall the previous evening, Farzad Siganporia of Borivli admitted candidly, "Consistency is not our forte vis-à-vis activities." A pep talk from Borivli and Suburban Zoroastrian Association (BASZA) president Noshir Paghdwalla had led to the formation of a youth committee and the organization of various social events where the accent was on fun and frolic, noted Siganporia. Collecting and selling old newspapers to keep themselves financially independent, Borivli youths have taken to tutoring backward students, he noted.

Intercity football, a jashan and their annual sports camp for everyone between the ages of three and 35 occupied Poona youth, according to Rayomand Mistry. Other highlights were a picnic to Bushy Dam and an audiovisual on agiaries and atash behrams presented by Rati Wadia, former principal of Bombay's Queen Mary School.

FOZYA (Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations) president Porus Karanjawalla informed the gathering that when Unvalla had been their guest speaker at the 14th all-India youth conference, he had promised to organize a youth seminar in Bangalore in conjunction with the agiary's 90th anniversary celebrations in January 2001. Responding to earlier queries regarding FOZYA's commitment to social service Karanjawalla declared that the organization is formulating guidelines for help to the aged.

E. Irani noted that FOZYA should have sufficient funds to sponsor a youth to the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress (7WZC) in Houston. He wondered why FOZYA, which had a seat on the Federation's executive council, failed to present a copy of its accounts to the Federation.

It transpired that the subject of

FOZYA's accounts had been discussed with Gandhi the previous day when Karanjawalla had agreed to put up the proposition at its meeting later that evening. He now told Gandhi that the secretary and treasurer having been absent from the meeting, he could not proceed until he had spoken to them. While a patient Gandhi wanted to know how long it would take, an irate Eruch Irani demanded, "Is FOZYA autonomous?"

Though Mogrelia disallowed the question, Gandhi confirmed FOZYA's independent and autonomous status even as he advised the youths that as a public body it was desirable to make their accounts public and project their work through an annual report. "Our accounts are posted on the Internet," noted Karanjawalla.

Shireen Heerjee of Indore suggested the youths try an experimental living program between anjumans to increase awareness of problems elsewhere. It was noted that FOZYA's 14 years of existence had netted 15 marriages.

7WZC

On the issue of sponsoring youths to attend the 7WZC in Houston Guzder noted, "There are more applications than we can afford." (At the time of the Federation meeting the BPP's official carrier had quoted Rs 70,000 as return airfare to Houston. Since then Raj Travels have taken over the group booking, quoting the return airfare at Rs 49,500).

BPP senior executive Sheroo Master, who is the Congress liaison along with Homai Modi, told the delegates that they had received 49 applications which were shortlisted to 25 of which about 15 students have been partly sponsored and four fully sponsored on the basis of five lakh rupees sanctioned by the BPP and five lakhs donated by Guzder. There had been no response from other anjumans towards sponsorship, she noted, nor from FOZYA.

"Those going to the Congress must contribute by making the Indian presence felt. (They should attend) coaching camps to prepare for the Congress, not just expect *khai, pee né majah* (food and frolic). Preparation is most important," stressed Sethna.

DPA vice president Dadi Mistry suggested that the BPP urge those who have established themselves on trust funds to now reciprocate. Master replied that it had taken the BPP 10 years to collect nine

lakh rupees for education from such people, adding, "It was a colossal task."

Venture capital

The BPP has taken the lead in registering the Centre for Promotion of Entrepreneurship and the Zoroastrian Investment Corporation Private Limited and

"Those going to the Congress must contribute by making the Indian presence felt... not just expect *khai, pee né majah*"

donated Rs 20 lakhs towards its corpus which, with community donations, is expected to be two crore rupees, informed BPP secretary Mehli Colah. Though they have written to Parsi industrial houses, only Nusli Wadia had raised queries. No anjumans have responded, he added. "Without funds we cannot proceed," he noted.

D. Mistry believed the Parsi Press had not sufficiently enlightened the community on the facilities available to entrepreneurs. He said no Parsi had sought

to avail of the facility for up to rupees 10 lakhs for renovation of production facilities at 12 to 13 percent from banks and institutions available without collateral during the two years he served on the national commission of the Confederation of Indian Industry. "Five years ago we had to provide collateral. Not today," he added.

Gandhi recalled that the late Homi Taleyarkhan had also provided forms and souvenirs but there were no takers. "People get turned off when referred to the punchayet or anjuman. Our grassroots are turned off from the leadership," observed Sethna.

Miscellanea

Unearthing more historical and cultural information about the Parsis, Sethna, who is actively involved with the UNESCO project, said he was planning a trip to Hyderabad to see the impact of Urdu culture on the community. He had heard of monajats in Urdu from that area. He urged delegates to send in pictures of old jewellery and artifacts and spoke of Rustam Vakil of Ahmedabad whose body was given a guard of honor on its way to Doongerwadi circa 1919.

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Stambh is almost complete but work on the boundary wall is held up as funds promised at the last Federation meet have not been received, informed Palsetia.

According to Mahrukh Noble and Cama, the Save Udwada Committee's work is finished but the shore continues to be depleted thanks to local people harvesting the sand.

Those attending the Federation meeting were: Hosang and

Dolat Debara from Agra; Porus Karanjawalla and Hormazd Dastur from Ahmedabad; Capt Homi and Shireen Dandiwalla from Allahabad; Baman and Roshan Cama, Bomi Talati and Hoshedar Patwa from Baroda; Jamshed Guzder, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Tamboly, Sheroo Master, Mehli Colah, Gool Kias and Zeldia Mistry from Bombay; Noshir Paghdwalla, Marzban Mehta, Yezdi Motiwala, Rohinton Siganporia and Farzad Siganporia from Borivli; Marazban Wadia from Davier; Lt Gen Adi Sethna, Dadi Mistry, Keki

Gandhi, Adil Nargolwala and Yezdi Pithawala from Delhi; Bomi and Shireen Heerjee from Indore; Behram Irani from the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman; Khurshed Bhesania from Jamshedpur; Ronny Dick from Jhansi; Nariman Mogrelia, Keku Parakh, Jehangir

Clubwala, Dadiba Dalal, Darayes Dalal, Daraius Bahadurji, Jamshed Madan, Rusi Dastur and Byramshaw and Freny Byramshaw from Madras; Hoshang Wania

from Nargol; Darius and Maharookh Forbes, Eruch Irani, Sarosh Palkhiwala, Lachremet Mistry and Seher Kolah from Poona; Homi and Roshan Palsetia, Jehangir Mandwiwalla, Sarosh Poonawalla and Dinshaw Patel from Saronda; Jehangir Bisney from Secunderabad; Mani Clubwala representing the south zone and Dr Sam Bhacca from Surat. Nadirshah Unvalla, Jamshed and Daisy Irani and Rustom Gae were special invitees. The Press was represented by *The Hindu*, *The Bombay Samachar* and *Parsiana*.

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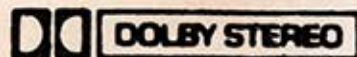
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Leopold, a lasting landmark

Parinaz M. Gandhi

A favorite eatery in Bombay, Leopold Cafe and Bar accommodates a potpourri of diners

There is a single red rose on each of the 34 tables. The walls of the restaurant bear images of well-known sites in different corners of the world with a prominent farohar on the northern wall overlooking a picture of the Gateway of India. In fact there is a garlanded portrait of Zarathushtra at their 70-seater bar on the mezzanine floor too. The entire southern wall of their spacious premises on Colaba Causeway is covered with an artist's impression of Leopold Cafe and Bar, gifted to them by one of their regular Chinese customers from Hongkong.

The credit for introducing this change in decor, the willingness to improvise and the transformation of the image of a traditional Irani restaurant in Bombay frequented by the working class and office going crowd should go to Gustad Dehmiri (who came down from Iran in 1985 to assist his father Framroze) and his partners: elder brother Rashid, and the Jehani brothers Farhang and Farzad.

"Sixty to 70 percent of our clientele must be foreigners" staying in the different hotels and lodging houses in Colaba who come to savor the nearly 300 items listed on the menu, not counting the hot and cold beverages and fruit juices, says Gustad. Parsis must be accounting for five to 10 percent of their diners with their preferred options being tandoori and Chinese dishes, he adds.

Open from eight in the morning till midnight, the tourists find it convenient to start their day with breakfast here and drop in for other meals at timings suitable to them. The cafe offers tasty and non-spicy food at digestible rates. In fact, the overseas customers are willing to try out the other gastronomic delights on offer too. Among the most popular items on their menu card, strategically sandwiched between the tablecloths and the glass topping on each four-seater table, is the chicken tikka priced at Rs 150 for a full helping and the chicken tikka masala at Rs 200, reveals Gustad.

He has also known of some of his die-hard patrons carrying these items with them to Europe or the Gulf. Their chicken roast fry (Rs 150), chilly beef (Rs 85) and the butter nan (Rs 15) are a hot favorite too, mentions Gustad.

The positioning of the menu card is the only common factor this restaurant must be sharing with the other Irani establishments in south Bombay. According to the Dehmiris, Leopold does not face any competition with the other Irani restaurants down the same one kilometer stretch on Colaba Causeway which may attract customers with their speciality sizzlers or juke box. They are content to be listed under the "Cafes in South Mumbai" in *Mumbai This Fortnight*, a useful guide for every tourist where Leopold is introduced as: "This 100-year-old cafe is another (Bombay) landmark and extremely popular amongst all tourists. Continental, Indian and Chinese food is included in an extensive menu. It has an elaborate fresh juice bar and offers breakfast mueslis. The Leo's Square (the bar) is as popular and can also be hired for parties. Credit cards accepted. Average meal costs under Rs 150 per head."

Since almost all their waiters are conversant in English and a few can speak Persian and Arabic too, Rashid says that usually there is no communication gap with their customers. Many of their staff members have put in many years of service and in fact a few waiters and cooks have returned to their jobs after trying their fortune in the Gulf, notes Rashid. Unlike other restaurants which prefer to hire them on a temporary basis to avoid the hassles of provident fund, insurance, etc., Leopold likes to keep their staff on a permanent basis.

It is not only the staff, the proprietors too have to put in shifts to ensure good management. While the restaurant is open from morning to midnight, the bar, where local youth constitute 90 percent

of their clientele functions from 1.30 p.m. till midnight. The only holiday they permit themselves during the whole year is Jamshedi Navroz on March 21. They have a jashan at the restaurant in the morning, then distribute gift packets to the staff after which everyone disperses to spend time with their respective families, reveals Gustad.

Leopold, named after a Belgium king, was started as a drug store and wine mart by Rustom Azarbadi in 1871. It was converted into a restaurant about 40 years later with three new partners joining him: Framroze Dehmiri, Aspi Azarmi and Shehryar Jehani, Gustad gives the details. For the next seven decades it was run like the other Irani restaurants in Bombay until Gustad arrived on the scene. Joined by Rashid who came to India three years later, they went about introducing many changes in the next six years to transform the image and attract a sophisticated crowd. Until then the brothers only had experience running the family's department store, Parsees, in Tehran which now lies closed although the brothers continue to frequent their homeland where ancestral property is still retained.

They reminisce of Navroz being celebrated in Iran where children enjoy 13 days of holidays. Restaurants and offices remained closed for three days. "The celebration is very much the same even today," says Gustad. Both the brothers had initially schooled in Yazd before they were brought to Bombay where Rashid was sent to the Holy Name School and Gustad to St Xavier's night school. To this day, conversation between the brothers is mainly in Persian and Dari.

Rashid's family residing with him in Bombay includes wife Homa, and son Meherzad and daughter Mojgan. Eldest son Meherdad is living in the USA and married daughter Mehernaz is settled in Canada. Gustad's family includes wife Thrity, college going son Rustom who



The interiors of Leopold Cafe and Bar with the partners (from left) Rashid Dehmiri, Farhang Jehani, Gustad Dehmiri and Farzad Jehani (Far right) A 1923 calendar of Leopold and Company



LEOPOLD & Co.

helps out at Leopold and married daughters Morvarid and Jehan. Both Rashid and Gustad are in favor of Zoroastrians marrying within the community with Rashid clarifying, "We should guide our children." On the issue of accepting converts to the faith, the brothers preferred to withhold their comments.

They are happy when members of the community seek their advice on running an eatery. So far around five Iranis have consulted them making Rashid comment, "It is good if a Zoroastrian name comes up. No Parsis have come to us. Iranis who run a restaurant in the city are more hardworking than Parsis."

The brothers may not have time to socialize with family and friends but

they do enjoy their holidays and travel. And even though they may not participate in sports or games they are happy to sponsor sports events organized by Cusrow Baug, Rustom Baug, Parsi Gymkhana and Dadar Parsi Colony, says Rashid.

Their bar which accommodates a small dance floor is frequently patronized by the youngsters from the Dadar Colony and Cusrow Baug with Gustad commenting that group bookings at the bar are encouraged for parties and festivities. Since admission is free, they prefer couples coming in rather than singles walking in which might involve trouble as was their experience a couple of years ago when they denied admis-

sion to an African girl fearing she did not have a companion, earning in the bargain the wrath of the Press.

These minor irritants notwithstanding, the Dehmiris feel their efforts are rewarded when their premises are chosen as the locales for television programs on MTV and CNN. And imagine their surprise when one of their German customers told them that he had already seen Leopold on the screen back home. Satisfied with their lot and happy with the customer feedback, for the present the Dehmiris are not planning to introduce any new changes, content that diners of different hues and denominations come here to experience the warmth and flavor of Bombay as a melting pot.

Images of an industrialist

It was Naoroji (Naval) Godrej's enterprise which gave Godrej a strong brand image, states Burjor Karanjia in his new biography

Hilla P. Guzder

Veteran thespians Gerson da Cunha's sonorous voice and Sabira Merchant's clear, crisp accents brought to life Burjor Karanjia's word pictures: "Naval was a celebrity and yet wasn't... essentially a very private person the fame that should have been his did not come to him in full measure. The reason was, simply, that he didn't care and had no time to publicize himself... Naval in his wisdom, had always known that glory and fame are passing shadows. He dreamt grandly, but lived like a simple, ordinary human being. And if at the end of his days he found himself rich beyond riches, it was in the love of his workers who were upon him."

"Naoroji (Naval) Godrej inherited his uncle Ardeshir's inventive genius and father Pirojsha's consolidating skills," Karanjia told a select audience of invitees at the PEN All-India Centre at the Theosophy Hall in Bombay on August 7, 2000, at the launch of his new book *Final Victory: The Life — and Death — of Naval Pirojsha Godrej*. "This is not a sponsored book or one commissioned by the house of Godrej," well-known columnist and compere Anil Dharker told the gathering. Karanjia penned the book and approached Penguin Books India for its publication, he added.

Present in strength at the function were members of the Godrej family, including Adi who became group chairman following his uncle Sohrab's sudden demise in May. Unable to attend were Naval's son Jamshyd and daughter Smita Crishna who were with their ailing mother Soonu undergoing treatment in the USA.

"The Godrejs are a singular and extraordinary family," said David Davidar, chief executive officer and publisher, Penguin Books. "Naval was a man of

heroic stature — a man who overcame tragedy, whose spirit did not descend into bitterness... a man who could extend and build on family heritage rather than be cowed by who went before."

Elaborating on the book's title, Karanjia explained that he believed the courts did not give Naval the victory he deserved, following the tragic incident of January 8, 1979 in which he was grievously stabbed, as were his pregnant daughter-in-law Pheroza and his aged mother-in-law Gulbai Dastur, by a disgruntled worker. The brain behind the attack (said to be trade union leader Dr Datta Samant who was himself, ironically enough, assassinated by unidentified assailants 18 years later) got off scot free, believed Karanjia. It was the Press who stood by, to quote the words on the dust jacket of the book, "one of those rare industrialists who had forged a legendary bond with his workers; he trusted their essential goodness, believing he could have no enemies." That, according to Karanjia, was Naval's "fatal flaw," one which cost him almost 12 years of suffering, "from the partial recovery to the inevitable, untimely and painful end."

In a discussion with the author, Dharker expressed surprise at the fact that Naval, a pioneer in the manufacture of Godrej machine tools, typewriters and refrigerators, had no formal higher education, having been chosen by his father to join the business soon after matriculation. "Pirojsha intuitively knew that Naval would be far better on the shop floor than at a college desk," opined Karanjia, considering that from boyhood Naval had a mechanical bent of mind, and had even as a child quietly dismantled and perfectly reassembled a watch — an act which earned him, says

the author, a smile and a pat on the head from his normally undemonstrative father!

In a touching tribute, Asha Sheth recalled her late husband Vasant's long friendship with Naval. Vasant, who was the managing director of the Great Eastern Shipping Company, and Naval were both passionate believers in free enterprise, yet had a great sense of nationalism. Both thought they were doing the best for the nation, she said.

To Dharker's query as to who was the greatest Godrej, past or present, Karanjia replied that he believed that it was the founder Ardeshir — with his "inventive genius and mind that took wings like a butterfly," making surgical instruments, locks, soaps and even purchasing a vineyard at Nasik to can fruit decades before the notion became popular.

Interspersed through the book are personal vignettes, sometimes twanging the reader's heartstrings, culled from Karanjia's reminiscences of Naval from their five-decade-long friendship, interviews with Naval's family, friends, associates and workers at Godrej, and his private papers. In a long list of acknowledgements, besides the family, Karanjia records his gratitude to senior advocate and chief prosecutor (in the stabbing case) P. R. Vakil for recounting details of the court battle, to legal luminary Nani Palkhivala and chartered accountant Fali Sarkari for their assistance and to a host of Godrej stalwarts like P. D. Muncherji, Pheroze D. Lam, K. R. Thanewalla, E. J. Kalwachia, Dr K. R. Hathi, M. D. Morawalla, Maneck Engineer, etc.

Naval had a streak of daredevilry in him which gave the family some anxious moments, writes Karanjia. As a young man he rode his Royal Enfield Bullet motorcycle to the Godrej *kar-khana* (workshop) at Lalbaug. The "vastness and timelessness" of the sea, its changing moods and colors fascinated



Naoroji Godrej: of heroic stature

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Sterling pound T/C.....	66.75	68.60
Euro T/C.....	37.65	40.10
Australian dollar.....	23.70	25.00
Australian dollar T/C.....	23.95	24.85
Austrian schilling/100.....	271.15	
Bahrain dinar.....	118.75	128.80
Belgium franc/per 100.....	92.50	
Brunei dollar.....	23.00	
Canadian dollar.....	28.90	30.95
Canadian dollar T/C.....	29.20	
Cyprus pound.....	66.60	
Danish kroner.....	4.95	
Deutsche mark.....	19.50	20.60
Deutsche mark T/C.....	19.65	20.40
Dutch guilden.....	17.00	17.95
Dutch guilden T/C.....	17.00	
Egyptian pound.....	12.50	
Fiji dollar.....	17.50	
Finland mark.....	6.25	
French franc.....	5.75	6.15
French franc T/C.....	5.80	6.10
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Hongkong dollar.....	5.65	6.15
Irish pound.....	47.35	
Italian lira / per 100.....	1.90	2.10
Japanese yen / per 100.....	41.15	43.85
Japanese yen / per 100 T/C.....	41.15	
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Malta pound.....	91.25	
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Norwegian kroner.....	4.65	
Oman rial.....	116.00	123.75
Pakistan rupee.....	0.50	
Portugal escudos / per 100.....	18.40	
Qatar riyal.....	12.25	13.40
Saudi Arabian riyal.....	11.90	12.75
Scottish pound.....	66.40	
Seychelles rupee.....	4.00	
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South African rand.....	5.35	5.75
Spanish peseta/per 100.....	22.15	
Swedish kroner.....	4.35	
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Swiss franc T/C.....	25.30	26.30
Syrian pound.....	0.70	
Thailand baht / per 100.....	101.20	130.10
UAE dirhams.....	12.15	13.10

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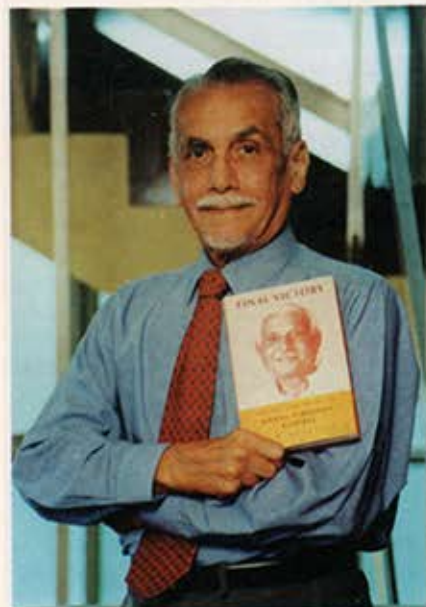
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At the launch (from left) Top row: Davidar, Karanjia, Dharker; younger generation Godrejs Navroze and Pirojsha (behind), Nyrika Crishna and Merchant. Second row: The author and his book; Adi and Parmeshwar Godrej, Vijay Crishna, Rishad Naoroji and Pheroza Godrej. Bottom: Asha Sheth, Jehangir Nicholson, da Cunha, Adi Godrej and Saleem Ahmadullah

Photos: P. P. Hirani



him. With Kerse Naoroji, accompanied by their respective wives, Naval sailed to Goa in 1952 in a yacht without any tindals or paid hands on board. There followed many voyages including one to Karachi and back in 1967 in his yacht *Tir* especially built in UK according to his own specification. Vacations often meant driving all over the country with wife and children, with Naval at the wheel or "walking holidays" with a trek to the Kolahai glacier in the Himalayas thrown in!

As a young apprentice on the shop

floor, Naval was never afraid to soil his hands, even pitching in sometimes to lift heavy machines while they were being fitted, writes Karanjia. Though short-tempered and impatient of inefficiency, Naval mixed freely with the workers and showed interest in their personal lives. His affinity for machines led him to develop the machine tool section and his presidentship of the Indian Machine Tools Manufacturing Association guided the organization through its fledgling years. He pioneered the international exhibition known as IMTEX, the show-

case of the machine tools industry, which was hosted seven times on the sprawling grounds of the Godrej complex, Pirojshanagar, at Vikhroli.

Naval initiated in the early 1950s the manufacture of Godrej typewriters, said to be the first not only in India, but in Asia as well. The 'soft touch' Prima typewriters introduced in 1983 provided the strongly entrenched Remington such competition that the foreign manufacturer finally shut shop in India in 1993, says the book. "It fell to Naval," narrates Karanjia, "to transform Godrej from the

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household name it was in the first half of the 20th century into a strong brand name in the second half," with the Storwels (steel cupboards), safes and refrigerators earning strong customer loyalty. But the shortage of steel in the Nehruvian era worried him, as did the "Licence Permit Raj" of social controls which often hampered production.

Never one to duck challenges, the "impulses and imaginings of his restless genius" saw him weather many storms, from the dispute over the excise levy on refrigerators to the unfortunate labor unrest at the factory in the 1970s.

In 1943, when the village of Vikhroli was put up for sale by the Commissioner for Accounts in the High Court of Bombay, Naval was declared the highest bidder, purchasing over 3,000 acres of what was then dense and marshy jungle. Naval was fully involved in its transformation into an industrial township, with well laid out factory sheds, cross ventilated employees' residential quarters and the ahead-of-the-time three Udayachal Schools for all levels of Godrej workers. From the leveling of the land to the laying of the pipes and cables, Naval wanted to see things for himself, on one occasion scaling a 35-

foot high tower via a vertical ladder with rungs one and a half feet apart to get a bird's-eye view of the garden township!

A large expanse of swamp was preserved in its original habitat, one of the very few such areas in the city under mangrove forest. This 1,800-acre tract is owned by the Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Trust (a cosmopolitan trust) named after Naval's mother who died in 1920 in Mussoorie at the young age of 30 following an influenza epidemic when her youngest child, Naval, was but three years old and the eldest Sohrab just eight.

One of the late industrialist's unfulfilled goals was the model township for the less privileged to be constructed in association with HDFC (Housing Development Finance Corporation) by the Soonabai Pirojsha Godrej Foundation, which unfortunately remained bogged down by an indifferent state administration under successive chief ministers, writes Karanjia.

Together with the late Vasant Sheth, Naval set up the Foundation for Medical Research in Bombay, in which about 30 specialized research scientists worked towards a cure for leprosy. One of Naval's pet philanthropic projects was the Mandwa Project (at Alibag) for the

Foundation for Research in Community Health where a primary health care center for the villagers was set up.

The Naoroji Godrej Centre for Plant Research was set up in 1992 for the conservation of threatened plant species, mass propagation of medicinal plants, etc. His love for animals spurred Naval into initiating the proposal for an electric crematorium, said to be the first of its kind in Asia, at the Bai Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Animals at Parel. However, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board dithered in clearing the project for as many as 14 years. The crematorium was finally established in 1997, seven years after Naval's death.

Known to be a liberal in his community views, Naval's decision to stand for election as a trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) in January 1985 took many by surprise. "The fact that my family name is known for an indelible mark on Indian industry and Parsi philanthropy is not enough for me. I would personally like to do what I can for the community... 30 percent of the profits of the Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Private Limited today go towards the various charities which have

continued on page 56



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READERS' FORUM

continued from page 6

Anjuman" and posted to The Igatpuri Zarthosty Anjuman, C/o Shri Gayo A. Kharadi, 703, Silver Cascade, 38, Mount Mary Road, Bandra, Bombay 400050.

D. F. ICHHAPORIA

Trustee, Igatpuri Zarthosty Anjuman Trust

Cancer caution

This is a true story about a young Parsi lady of 33, very beautiful, talented and well educated. Except for changing her name, I have not embellished any facts. At 31, Zenia discovered that she had a small pea-sized breast lump which was somewhat painful. Without waiting or being the proverbial ostrich, she went off to her gynecologist and quizzed her on the dreaded big question of cancer.

The doctor, one of the most reputed members of the medical fraternity, was kind, maternal and busy. Moreover she had had years of experience with women and their phobia of cancer. She patted Zenia consolingly and sent her off with reassuring words and an affectionate hug. A year later, Zenia still had the lump. The doctor again consoled her, and told her patronizingly that she was not to bother herself with medical problems; that was the doctor's job.

A second gynecologist also told her not to distress herself as this was a common problem in young women. After harboring the lump for two years or more, Zenia was beginning to get anxious. The lump had grown. True it was painful. True that she was young and in perfect health. True that Zenia had never felt better in her life. But why was the lump there? Why was it growing and why did she have a gnawing feeling of uneasiness?

Zenia decided to change doctors again. This time she went to an oncologist, a cancer specialist. The worried man ordered a few simple tests. He put a fine injection needle in the lump and examined the cells aspirated out from the breast growth. He also discovered another lump in Zenia's armpit.

The axe fell and hit not just Zenia, but Zenia's entire family. Zenia had breast cancer which had already spread to the glands in her armpit.

Why am I writing this story? Zenia is my niece. She has a husband and two small children. She is now going to face mutilating surgery, radiation therapy and chemotherapy. She will face the reality

of life as a cancer patient and worry about her young family and her chances of a cure. Zenia had not failed in her vigilance about her health. We in the medical profession had failed her.

Let me spell out my message loud and clear. Most breast lumps, particularly in young girls and young women, are benign and harmless. Most benign lumps are painful, and wax and wane in size with the menstrual cycle. Fortunately, very few young women get breast cancer. It is a disease of those aged 40 and above. But what about the odd young girl who does get breast cancer? Who can predict that she will be the exception and not the rule? It becomes even more important not to miss her diagnosis. After all, her only chance of a cure is an early diagnosis. No breast lump from womb to tomb is normal. Nine times out of 10 the lump will be benign and cause no problems. Yet get it seen to by someone trained for the job. Get a diagnosis or a label for the lump before waiting for it to spread and grow into a monster.

No doctor, as no human, is perfect and each of us errs in our careers. This one little failure to send Zenia to the right person trained in the job has caused a tragedy.

We Parsis pride ourselves on being educated, articulate and independent. So then, take charge of your own life.

Dr ROSHNI F. CHINOY

Prof and Head, Department of Pathology
Tata Memorial Hospital

Irrigation inspiration

I wish to share with readers of *Parsiana* a most revealing discovery of the unknown contribution of Zoroastrian irrigation systems to ancient India. According to *Dying Wisdom: rise, fall and potential of India's traditional water harvesting systems* edited by Anil Agarwal and Sunita Narain, Centre for Science and Environment, 1997, those systems were known as 'gobarbands,' which go back to Harappan times. In the ancient world, irrigation technologies' spread was as important as information technology spread now. When the Achaemenid, Darius of Persia annexed Sindh and Punjab in 526 BC, India came into meaningful contact with Iran. That contact grew in the Mauryan period (329-129 BC) when the first proof of a dam and irrigation system in India was established. The Junagarh inscription of King Andradaman makes specific men-

tion of a dam built here by Pushyagupta, the governor of Chandragupta Maurya, and the canals were built by Tushaspa under Asoka the Great (about 272-232 BC). The name Tushaspa suggests he was a Zoroastrian. Nice to recollect this first Indo-Iranian project, at a time when both countries are working on the prospect of a gas pipe line between the two nations.

According to E. Hughes Butler (1906) in "Gobarbands in Baluchistan" (Annual Report, Archeological Survey of India, Calcutta, 1903-4), 'gobarbands' were "dams of Zoroastrian fire-worshippers." The solidity and size of these store dams was proportionate to the steepness of the slope. The object of 'gobarbands' was mostly to collect "a layer of alluvial soil over dry and barren rock, combined with the retention and economic control of the distribution of flood water," in some cases as a reservoir. In Baluchistan, there was a system of 'gobrikarez' (underground water channels) which provided water supply and are also attributed to Zoroastrians. Those who have been to Iran may know of similar underground water systems still existing, from upland regions to towns and villages. Archeologist Gregory Possehl has observed 'gobarbands' formed a series of stairs, resulting in the formation of fields rich in alluvium and water. The insides were filled with rubble.

Any future Tushaspa? ASPI MODDIE

My "dada," S. R. Vakil

It has been a year since my grandfather S. R. Vakil expired. Many people may



Vakil: good head and heart

remember him as a great solicitor or a director of Tata Sons, but very few knew him as I did.

My early childhood memories are captured in photographs of my "dada" as I fondly called him, lying down on his bed with me balanced

on his stomach. I remember visiting him with my parents and younger sister every Sunday at his house in Cuffe Parade where we would all have lunch at the long dining table filled with the rich aroma of dhansak and other Parsi delicacies.

My dada loved having a head massage. He used to look forward to Sunday afternoons when we went to visit him. I remember as soon as I entered his room, he would sit up in his bed and ask me to sit behind him. Then, whilst he and my dad chatted over a glass of sherry, I massaged his head with cologne water.

Not many people will know this but my dada had an amazing sense of humor. He and I would often team up against my sister and tease her till she finally told him that she was not going to talk to him anymore. He would then give her a naughty grin and tell her, "Darling, I am sorry. This is all your brother's fault. He told me to tease you."

Another incident that I clearly remember was when my parents bought a mobile phone and showed it to him some years ago. He immediately took it and made a prank call to my grandmother in the next room pretending to be a boyfriend of hers. I still laugh aloud when I remember this incident.

I remember him and his racy jokes and songs which he used to recite to us on Sundays. We were amazed as to how he remembered each and every poem through the years.

I remember how tense he was just before my SSC results were declared. He was so happy when I told him that I had passed with distinction. He told me that I was the first Vakil to have got a distinction, and said that though he had stood first in his university exam, his percentage was only in the 60s.

He told me stories about himself and how he had to face various hardships, hoping that I didn't face any of the hardships he had faced. To this I often joked and told him to buy me a big flat in Bombay so that I didn't have to worry, to which he would jokingly reply, "If I buy you a flat, I will become flat." I will never forget as to how he convinced my mother to increase my pocket money when I entered college.

As I grew older, he became more of a friend than a grandfather. I could talk about anything to my dada. He was a very broad-minded person. We got to know each other very well in the last three-four years. However, I was saddened to see him in the last year of his life. It was exactly a year before his death, when my dadi expired. I saw a drastic change in him. He was lonely and depressed as he now lived alone

with only a servant to keep him company. I continued to visit him nearly every alternate day but was upset to see a man who always made me laugh look so quiet and depressed.

He expired on September 8, 1999. I miss him as a friend who would have been able to guide me through difficult times. I was really fortunate to have him as a loving grandfather and a great friend.

NEKZAAD N. VAKIL

Jokhi's genius

The Parsi community is fortunate to have a budding wizard in the making by the name of Minu Jokhi.

The other day he was invited on a show, *Humata, Hukhta, Hvarshata* produced by Frohar Films on Gurjari (a Gujarati) channel. He was asked to recite tables of 479, 617, etc which he did without hesitation.

In the good old days, our *mehtaji* (tutor) used to teach us tables (*aank*) which we were able to prattle up to 30, after much practice and with a good many pinches from the *mehtaji*.

When we want to dial a few telephone numbers we either refer to our personal diary or take the help of a

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telephone directory. Jokhi remembers nearly 500 telephone numbers by heart. He also shoots off logarithms in a jiffy.

Parsis who hold important positions on the committees of different organizations should invite Jokhi to test his prowess before their well-placed members. If Jokhi successfully faces the challenges, other organizations in India and overseas are bound to take notice and invite him. Thus, slowly, would Jokhi's name be known to a wider audience.

BHIKHAJI M. ADENWALLA

Surfing Surnames — III

Here is the third list of about 175 surnames added to the two already published ("Surfing Surnames," *Parsiana*, February-March 1997 and February-March 1999):

A: Aagaragar, Aagboatwala, Aazaadpur, Abtin, Adarbad, Afagh, Afinwala, Afrigani, Afsheri, Alhabadi, Alibadi, Anosheh, Anshkandar, Apoli, Aryana, Aryanfar, Aspandiyari, Azraami
B: Baarbhaya, Bajirao, Bakhtiyari, Bakshay, Bamasi, Bangaa, Behmardi, Bhatgara, Boi, Boomlawala, Bordiwala, Brass, Bustani
C: Chemi, Chipia, Choukuri, Chowdhary, Cowjiva, Cyrusi

D: Dahodwala, Dastyar, Davli, Dindaar, Dollyna, Dolton, Dusadwala
E: Elubudi, Elvaadwala, Ena, Estegomat
F: Falaadina, Faramarzian, Forogi
G: Gaaji, Gara, Godia, Goharzadeh, Goodarzi, Gostaaspi
H: Haataria, Holms, Hosieni
I: Ighani, Illu, Irandokht, Irawa
J: Jaardaa, Jaavidaan, Jaavraawala, Jahanbordiawala, Jangi, Javaanshir, Javanmardi, Jivaasaana, Jubaani
K: Kadkhodai, Kaikobadi, Kajaian, Kaamaakhan, Kapraadewala, Kashmiri, Kashnavi, Kayomarzi, Kazaak, Khaatibi, Kharanwala, Khashidari, Kherawala, Khodadadi, Khojiyaan, Khoramshahi, Khorshidian, Khosraviani, Khoveri, Khullar, Khunjeri, King, Kohidaroo, Kolet, Konkarawala, Kurus
L: Lakdi

M: Maachi, Maaswa, Maatbar, Majai, Makaabi, Mayan, Mazdayasna, Mazrekalamtari, Mehani, Meherezend, Meherzadian, Millwala, Mithuji, Munsif
N: Naamirian, Nadodwala, Nasiraa-baadwala, Navamanek, Noraara, Notia, Nureyazdaan, Nusiaan
O: Ookaji, Oshtori
P: Paimaan, Paneerwala, Parestani, Parsaai, Partov, Pateri, Peshtoni, Ponchaajina, Ponchiajina, Porewala, Pour-

behrani, Pourdehi, Presswala, Purveshi
R: Raamtaabaadi, Rahnamoon, Raina, Rashidi, Reader, Roshni
S: Sadaagat, Samson, Sarbh, Sarkaawala, Setalpurwala, Shaamerden, Shaaveri, Shahbaadi, Shahrzaari, Shaigara, Sheri-yari, Sunaiji
T: Tambaak, Tankshaalwala, Tatnaana, Tausiaan, Tejam, Tuketwala
U: Umarkachchwala
V: Vafaadari, Vaharwala, Vakshur, Varza, Vendor, Verchhawala
W: Welder
Y: Yaganegi, Yazdaani, Yazdi
Z: Zadah, Zandof, Zaq, Zarthoshtimanish, Ziatabari

BURJOR M. DABOO

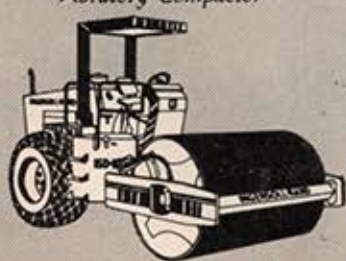
Ahmedabad

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

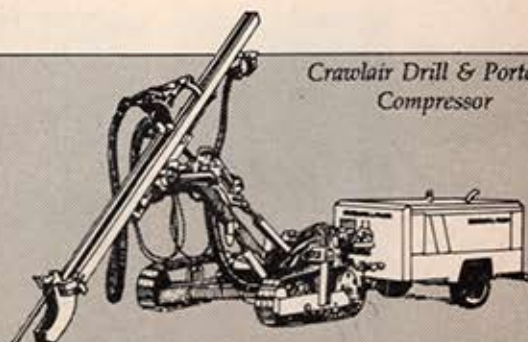
CORRECTION

Parsiana has erred in referring to Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Minoo Shroff as vice president of Raymond Limited in some of its recent articles. We apologize to Shroff who is vice chairman of Raymond Limited and all its group companies.

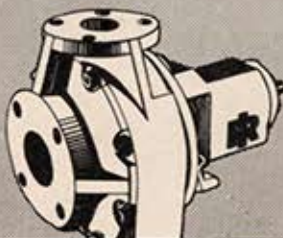
Vibratory Compactor



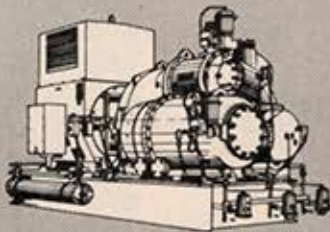
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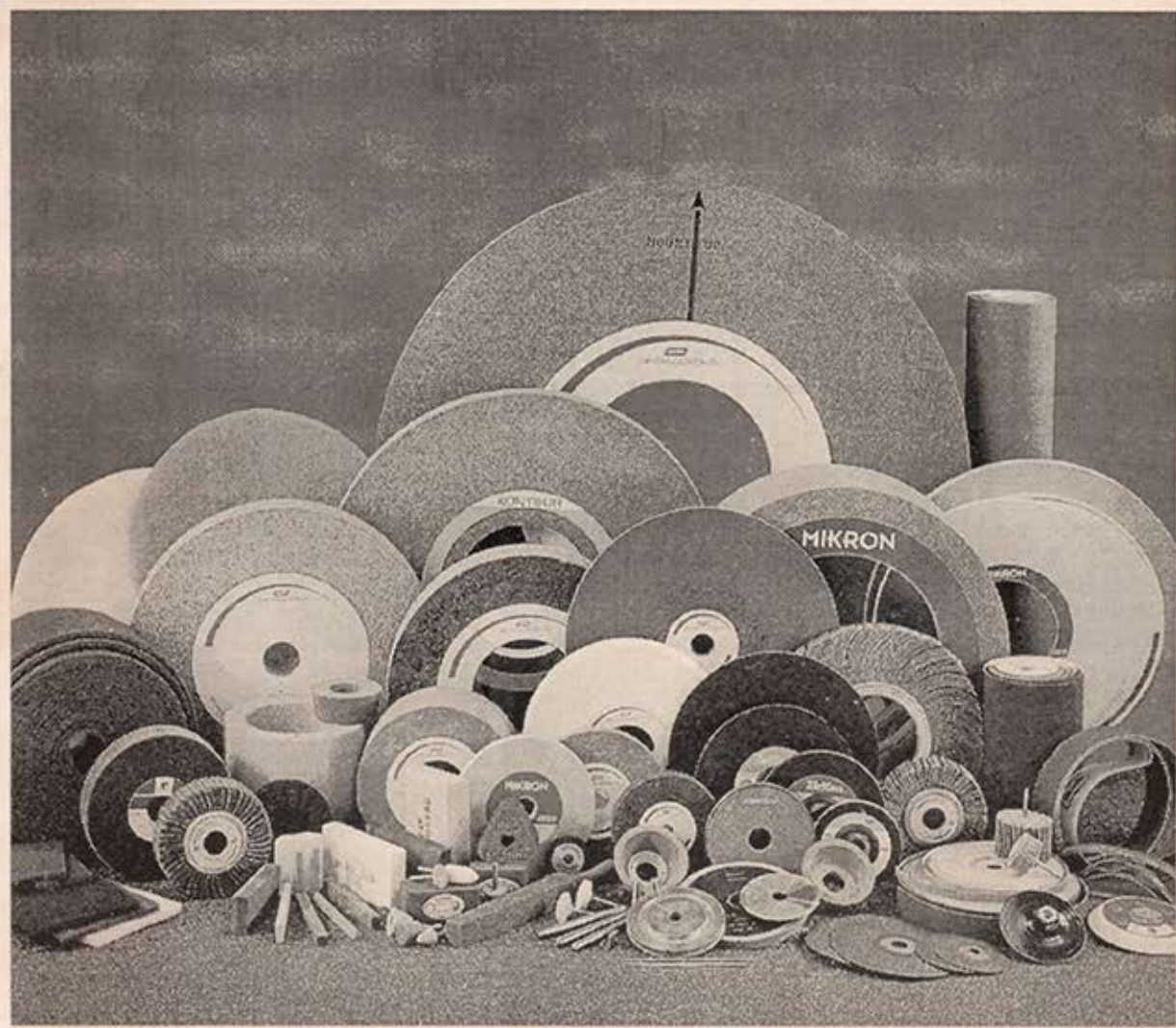


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ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 16

ance, economical-political unrest, and the threat of war. Thus, in Mazdayasnan they are firmly and unwaveringly committed to the creation of a new world order for the benefit of humanity, and all living things."

The 21 principles of the International Mazdayasnan Order

1 We believe in one Supreme Creator of the Universe, One God whom we know as Ahura Mazda; Lord of Matter, Lord of Life, and the Source of Truth.

2 We believe that all religions have an equal right to exist, and we further believe that religions should never use force, deception, or coercion, nor should any religion impose itself on others.

3 We believe in complete equity of worth and dignity for both men and women.

4 We seek to establish a basis of peace and love, of brotherhood and sisterhood, for all humanity.

5 We seek the unification and oneness of humanity, while yet respecting, upholding and protecting the right of every culture in the expression of its own form of cultural diversity and enrichment.

6 We believe in human self-betterment

through the cultivation and practice of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

7 We believe in a firm commitment to speak truthfully.

8 We believe in deep love and concern for our Mother Earth expressed through environmental protection: no pollution of Nature's elements of fire, water, earth and air.

9 We believe that there should be no intermediaries between God and humanity.

10 We believe in an independent study and investigation of all religions.

11 We believe in spiritually and environmentally sound solutions to economic problems to eliminate poverty, starvation and human degradation.

12 We believe in kindness and respect towards all animals.

13 We believe that there should be no animal nor human sacrifices.

14 We believe that there should be no infliction of needless suffering upon the body such as severe fasting; for a sound spiritually elevated mind needs a sound, healthy body.

15 We believe that Prophet Zarathushtra is immortal as are those who arrive at his level of spiritual attainment.

16 We believe that it is the duty of all Mazdayasnan(s) to educate themselves and their families, and, whenever possible, to help provide for the education of their friends, neighbors and communities as well.

17 We believe that it is the responsibility of all Mazdayasnan(s) to do missionary work for the religion of Mazdayasna, by teaching others about the reality of the Holy Prophet Zarathushtra.

18 We believe that all Mazdayasnan(s) may achieve harmony of religion and science by balancing the holy *Avesta* with the books of science.

19 We believe in the goal of a universal language upheld by a democratic world government.

20 We believe in optimism for and an involvement in the world community, with work and financial independence as essential goals for Mazdayasnan members.

21 We believe that all Mazdayasnan(s) should pray, meditate, chant and recite their mantras toward the birthplace of Zarathushtra — who was chosen by Ahura Mazda (God) as the Prophet for humanity — in Paraspā, Iran.

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

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EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 12

Keki Mehta joint treasurers. Subcommittees have their own office bearers and 10-year-old Parastaar Sutaria officiated as the child president for the function.

The souvenir acknowledges the magnanimity of several donors and sponsors of the entertainment program which saw a lavish display of color and costume, tracing man's evolution through the various ages right up to modern times, with the boys and girls of the colony parading and gyrating with vigor to choreography by Roomi Madon. The heart-stopping display of pyramids, directed by Cyrus Siganporia, saw little lads perched precariously on top of tall human pyramids. The extravaganza incurred a tilt of expenditure over receipts, with generous donors like Dinshaw Mehta and BPP trustee Dadi Engineer pitching in to cover the deficit.

Hilla P. Guzder

Recording her talent

To commemorate the 50th birth anniversary of the late pianist Hilla Khursedji, a concert was held at Bombay's NCPA Little Theatre on September 9, 2000. The artiste chosen for the evening's per-

formance was Ruskin Menezes, this year's winner of the Hilla Khursedji Memorial Award which includes a trophy and a cash prize of Rs 3,000, notes a press release from The Hilla Khursedji Memorial Trust.

"Though this Award was born out of grief, loss, pain and above all love, its main aim is to reach out to young musicians, to foster, nurture and encourage emerging talent, for them to have faith in their own abilities, to be dedicated and committed to consistently strive to learn and to perform to higher standards, to serve as a beacon of light to a rewarding and fulfilling career," it was stated at the function.

"It was most unfortunate that her sensitive gentle spirit was unable to withstand the pressures and strains which beset her...By the cruel hand of fate Hilla's young life was tragically cut short in 1983 when she was 32 and she left the musical world utterly devastated," it was added.

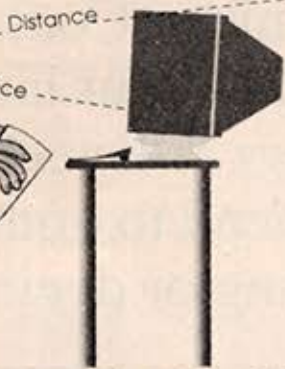
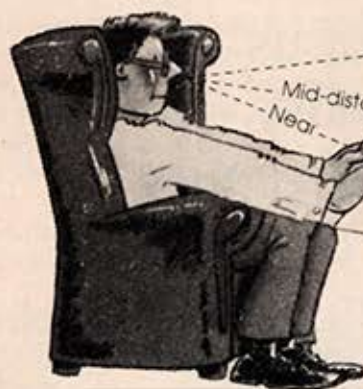


Khursedji: great future cut short

Khursedji, who as a child artiste had been commended for her "remarkable ear," and variously described as a "little Mozart" and "child prodigy," had gone on to win numerous scholarships and accolades as she studied piano at the Curtis Institute of Music in the USA. After obtaining a Bachelor of Music degree and a postgraduate certificate she was called upon to give solo recitals, and to play for chamber music concerts and the radio and television. She then left the States to make her home in London where she immersed herself in all musical activities, and was nominated as "young musician of the year 1977-78" by the Greater London Arts Association, states the release.

It was recalled how one morning in 1975 she surprised her parents Jeroo and Nariman when a *Times of India* reporter in London flashed the story: "Bombay Indian girl tops in UK music contest: In the Royal Overseas League competition open to young musicians from Commonwealth countries Khursedji, a Bachelor of Music from the US, was chosen for the semifinals from among 300 entrants from 13 countries..." Soon after her parents were thrilled to learn that at the final competition she was declared

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a winner.

She is also known to have been the first and the only Indian lady in a sari to play the Ravel concerto in Ravel's birthplace with the Toulouse Orchestra which earned her a standing ovation at the Jai Allai Theatre and five curtain calls. Thrilled, she wrote to her parents, "Sometimes I surprise myself. My only regret was you two and my dear brother Burjis (equally gifted) and my community and country were not there with me to share my joy."

The last of her memorable concerts was her virtuoso performance at Bombay's Tata Theatre where she showed her mastery at the keyboard, with critics and admirers referring to her as the "pride of our city," states the press release.

who describes her as "one of the most admired, ever willing, ever lively...active members of the Anjuman." Whilst gratefully receiving the Samanvaya recognition from the Sahityik, Samajik and Sanskritik Sansthan, Dhondy conveyed that to her, a greater reward lies in the beautiful letters and warm visits she receives from her past students, now holding important jobs and being settled with their own families.

A reputed teacher of English language and literature to ICSE and ISC students, Dhondy has been contributing articles, stories and verse on thought provoking subjects in magazines for more than 40 years. "Her teaching goes beyond her subject as she creates awareness (of) subjects like anti-communalism, religious harmony, the equality and status of women, and a feeling of compassion for the underprivileged," writes Dandiwalla. Empathizing with the youth, Dhondy is always ready to solve a teenager's problems, he added.

In one of her articles carried in *Woman's Era*, August (First) 2000, Dhondy writes, "Listening with interest is an asset, an art which numerous parents and elders lack, unfortunately. Scorning, belittling or brushing aside the young one's problems or suggestions is a grave mistake...Today's youth

Centenarian Mubarakai (right) and (top) with her 101-strong family

will not accept anything without questioning."

At the interfaith meets in Allahabad Dhondy is invited to speak on the Zoroastrian religion. She had once expressed, "Prayers are not meant only for petitions or appeals! Prayer is a direct link with divinity. It is a tonic and a refresher, and it helps you to glow and grow from within. A few minutes daily will enrich your mental capacity, making you a better person."

Recipe for longevity

Not only the family, the farmers and fisherfolk too turned up in droves to celebrate the 100th birthday of Shirinbai Hormusji Mubarakai of Dahanu on August 3, 2000. "She is blessed with a family of 11 children (three of whom have passed away), 29 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren with three more due by the end of the year, taking the score to 101," writes Dr Aban Irani of Poona.

Once a regular visitor to the Agiary built by her late husband nearly 50 years

Rewarding the teacher

This year Allahabad's 71-year-old Meher Dinyar Dhondy won her fourth award "for teaching and building the character of

Dhondy: guiding Allahabad youth

the youth," notes a press release from Capt Homi Dandiwalla, president of The Allahabad Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman,

ago, Mubarakai's only regret is that for the last couple of years she has not been able to pay her respects there. "Her physical faculties have weakened and she has to be supported while walking from her bed to the sofa in the drawing room where she pursues another of her favorite pastimes — meeting family and friends." Songs like *Rudy Savar* and *Khudavand-e-Khavid* she continues to sing daily with her friend Adi Sanjana. *Chhaiyé Hamé Zarathoshti* is another of her favorites which she gustily sings with her great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

Born to Sherbanoo and Hormusji Irani, Shirinbai did her schooling up to standard VI in Gujarati from the Panday School in Bombay. On marrying Hormusji at the age of 18, she moved to Dahanu where she started a school for toddlers which has now grown to a regular high school. Her love for gardening made her run a flourishing nursery, the proceeds of which went to charity, her biographical details were recounted for *Parsiana*. She would also assist her husband in his business and until the age of 75 she frequented Bombay nearly every alternate day, running errands for the house and business, and meeting relatives and friends. "Never known to waste a single moment, she would cook for the entire family, making masalas and seasonal specialties like *vasanu* and *patrel*, distributing them to relatives and friends," mentions a family source.

Her memory of past events continues to be commendable and she still retains a keen interest in her surroundings. She now tends to forget names "and we have to play guessing games from the clues she gives us," according to Irani.

Although perturbed by the rise in intercommunity marriages, Mubarakai realizes that with an increasing exposure to a cosmopolitan environment, intercommunity friendships are bound to be struck. She feels it is the duty of parents to instill moral values among their children and guide them to follow the *tarikats* of the Zoroastrian religion, praying with the children daily and taking them to fire-temples regularly.

Whilst expressing a keen desire to learn English, Mubarakai who shares her birthday with the Queen Mother attributes her long life to the four 'F's — faith, family, farm food and fresh air.

BOOKS

continued from page 46

been founded by the Godrej family... The twin facets of housing — new construction and repairs — would be engaging my urgent attention..." Naval had declared in his election manifesto.

"The amount of time he spent on the housing project (at Godrej Baug) was incredible," Jamshyd is quoted in the book. "From the ground breaking stage onwards, he would review the progress every Saturday. Right through his long illness... he desired to drive through Godrej Baug to see things for himself." But his one-and-a-half-year foray (as a BPP trustee) was less than happy, writes Karanjia, with Naval resigning "when he found he was unable to function." His backing of the controversial Athravan Educational Trust, which sought to ameliorate the condition of Parsi priesthood, was another example of his sturdy independence, believes Karanjia.

The hard cover book is published by Penguin Books India (P) Limited, 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110017. Priced at Rs 395, it is illustrated with 24 pages of black and white pictures and numerous anecdotes — Naval as a boy playing hide and seek darting in and out from between the front and hind legs of the horses of parked victorias, his early schooling at St Patrick's in Karachi where Naval and his siblings Sohrab, Burjor and Dosa had been sent to live with their maternal grandmother Virbaiji following their mother's death; his interest in reading Shakespeare or listening to classical music on his 78 r.p.m. records, his simple dress and lifestyle and advent into vegetarianism, his 58-year association with Godrej, the bestowing of the Padma Bhushan on the man whose business philosophy incorporated the belief that if one wasn't making mistakes, one wasn't trying hard enough!

This is the third of Karanjia's books on the Godrej family, the earlier two — *Godrej: A Hundred Years (Volumes I and II)* — having been published in 1997. Former editor of *Filmfare* and *Screen*, Karanjia has authored many other books, including *Portrait of a Citizen* (a biography of Rustom Masani) and *Give me a Bombay Merchant—Anytime!* (the life of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy). He has been chairman of the Film Finance Corporation and the National Film Development Corporation and has served on international film juries.

FANNING THE FLAME OF...

continued from page 32

Clubwala described Bhote as "used to handling children, (a) born teacher." She also credited the parents who attended practices with their children till late hours of the night.

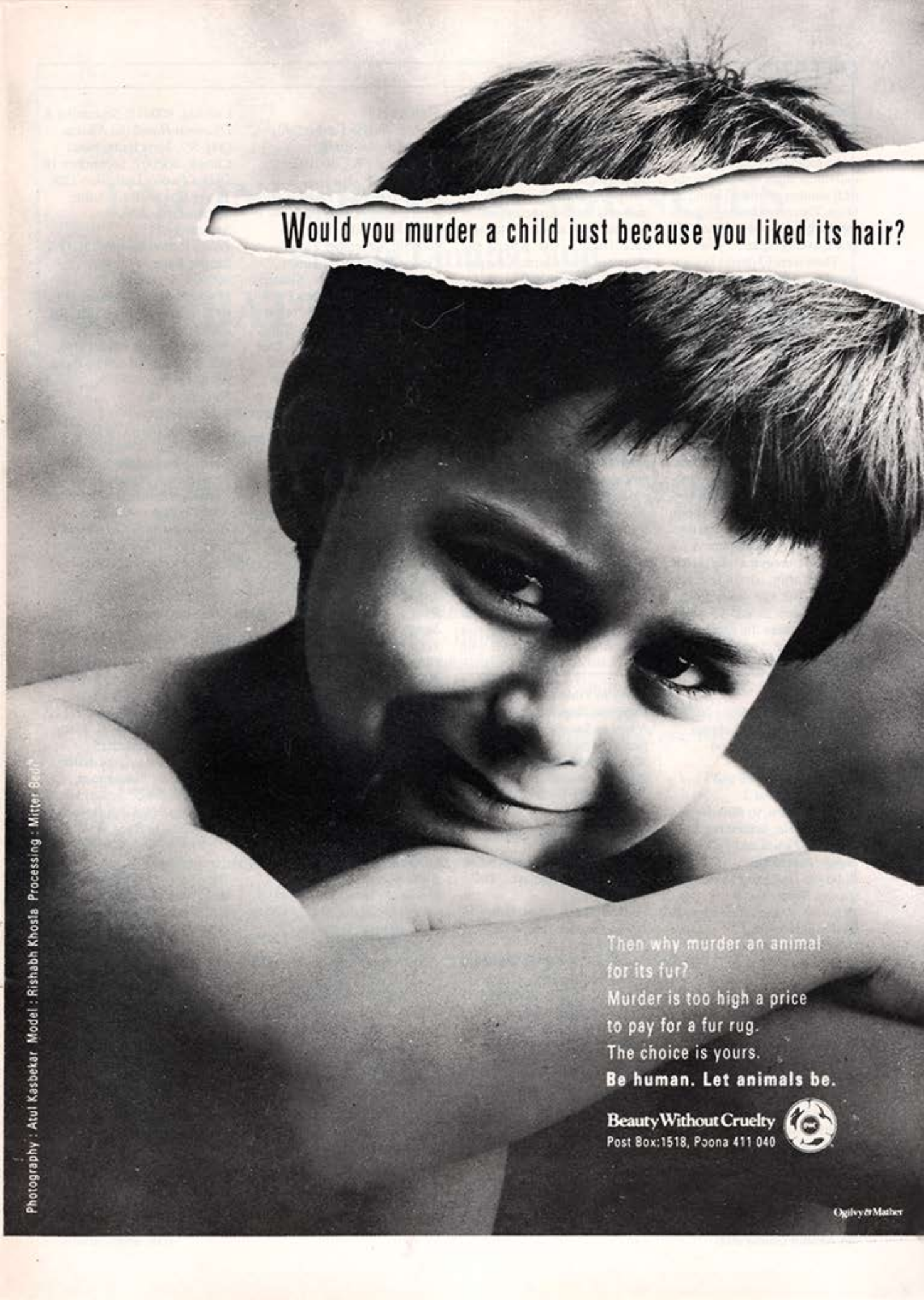
Much of the advertising for the brochure was thanks to the contacts of Jehangir Clubwala and Nariman and Mahabanu Mogrelia and of the outdoor advertising agency Selvel Vantage who put their staff at the Anjuman's disposal, noted Mani Clubwala. The committee members were also expected to bring in five advertisements each. Kali Billimoria of Kamrad News Advertising Limited designed the beautiful cover page of the brochure, folders, letterheads and invitations that fanned out not only to community members but to government bigwigs and the consular corps. For as Mani Clubwala explains, "We are a small community. We want to improve our image, make people aware of us because they still often ask, 'Are you Anglo-Indians? Are you from Europe?'" With the numbers of Parsi Zoroastrians inching up in Madras, such questions may gradually cease to be heard.

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MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 23 and 33 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 27 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 29 and 41 years, averaging at 33 years.

There were 63 deaths as compared to 16 births in Bombay in September. Twenty-eight Zoroastrians succumbed to heart disease of whom 13 were in the 80+ age-group. Pneumonia and lung disease felled nine patients while six fell prey to cancer. Falciparum malaria and general debility/old age took a toll of three lives each whereas two Zoroastrians each died due to hypoproteinemia (deficient protein in the blood plasma), kidney failure and septicemia. The isolated cases registered were diseases of the brain and liver, urinary tract infection, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, tuberculosis, uremia, asphyxia due to drowning, diabetes and asthma. The age range fluctuated between 20 and 95 years. The Zoroastrian life expectancy at birth for September, in Bombay, was 76 years.

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, *Hufrish*, to *Shehrnaz* and *Kaumarz Sethna* on July 3, 2000
A girl to *Khaneejeb* and *Vispi Patel*; September 2
A girl, *Nayomi*, to *Binaifer* and *Zarir Amaria*; September 5
A boy to *Firuza* and *Yezdi Bajan*; September 5
A boy to *Daizy* and *Cyrus Zaveri*; September 5
A boy to *Meher* and *Hormuzd Sinor*; September 7
A girl to *Persis* and *Shahzad Wadia*; September 7
A girl, *Jesica*, to *Rukshad* and *Kurush Pardiwalla*; September 9
A girl to *Peenaz* and *Tahemtan Dhamodiwalla*; September 18
A boy to *Kamal* and *Sam Katgara*; September 18
A boy to *Kainaz* and *Farokh Bharucha*; September 19
A girl to *Roshan* and *Burjis Pardiwalla*; September 20
A girl, *Arushi*, to *Parizad* and *Zubin Zarthoshimanesh*; September 20

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjumans in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjumans do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by two 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.

A boy to *Viloo* and *Jango Damania*; September 21
A boy to *Sanobar* and *Kersasp Patva*; September 26
A girl to *Azmin* and *Noshir Kaka*; September 28
A boy to *Shirley* and *Viraf Adajania*; September 30

MARRIED

Zena Minoo Master and *Yazdi Jal Mistry* of Middlesex, UK; February 12
Zenobia Adi Balsara and *Porus Khushroo Kapadia*; September 1
Shazneen Feroze Wankadia of Thana and *Farokh Ratansha Guard* of Thana; September 17
Huoxi Rustom Hansotia of Ajmer and *Rashid Furokh Irani*; September 29

DIED

Dina Edul Masani (65), residing at 8, Lady Meherbai Tata Bldg, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; August 31
Kaikhushroo Jehangirji Chinoy (71), 6-2, Spenta, Ridge Rd, 400006;

September 1
Phiroze Burjor Tantra (66), A/7, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102;
September 1
Piroja Jehangirji Dundas (89), K1/32, M. F. Cama Park, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; September 2
Cawas Hormusji Engineer (83), B-30, Gool Mhl, Sleater Rd, 400007; September 2
Khorshed Homi Malu (74), B Block, C Wing, Terresa Bldg, Plot 212, Bhayander (W), Dist Thana, 400601; September 2
Jehanbux Phirozshaw Popat (73), 1/B/17, Tata Mills Co-op Hsg Soc Ltd, Elphinstone Rd, Parel, 400012; September 3
Minocher Khurshedji Sethna (88), 10, Patel Bldg, Cama Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; September 3
Sheroo Darabshaw Dinshaw (72), Cooper Bldg, Marzban Clny, Bombay Central, 400008; September 4
Dadi Shapurji Gandevia (74), 286/C, Irani Bldg, Sopari Baug Rd, Parel, 400012; September 4
Tehmi Pheroze Sidhwa (90), Dina Bldg, 53, M. Karve Rd, 400002; September 4
Roda Keki Jasavala (72), Piroja Mans, Sir Ratan Tata Rd, Tardeo, 400034; September 5
Banoo Padam Pavri (81), 24/F, Dhun Bldg, Batliwalla Villa, Sleater Rd, 400007; September 5
Shirin Minoo Mistry (78), 17-B, Belvedere Court, Sane Guruji Marg, 400011; September 6
Hoshang Cavasji Dumasia (56), 4-403, Shangrila Bldg, Andheri (W), 400058; September 8
Nadersha Manekji Gandhi (83), Ashraf Manzil, 29th Rd, TPS III, Pali Naka, Bandra (W), 400050; September 8
Khodaram Sheriar Irani (52), 4/25, A. H. Wadia Baug Co-op Hsg Soc, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; September 8
Jerbai Burjorjee Khambatta (88), 659, Keki Hse, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 8
Dolly Phiroze Mehta (83), B. Subhadra Nivas, Cumballa Hill Rd, 400036; September 8
Freny Nariman Siganporia (72), C/28, Nowroz Baug,

Lalbag, 400012; September 8
Dhunmai Darabsha Kharas (84), 5/2, Ness Baug, Nana Chowk, 400007; September 10
Delzin Parvez Dadabhoy (20), Tower Garden Rd, Dhulia, Maharashtra, 424001; September 11
Tehmi Ruton Shroff (83), G-6, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; September 11
Minoo Hormusji Tampal (85), H-21, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; September 11
Nargish Nariman Patel (75), D/2, 12, S. B. Bharucha Baug, Andheri (W), 400058; September 12
Soonamai Framroze Daruwalla (89), C/o Dr Dossibai and Jehangir Ratanshaw Dadabhoy Charity Trust Home, Masina Hosp Compd, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; September 13
Homi Jamshedji Colabawalla (86), 12/18, Nawab Manzil, Wadia St, Tardeo, 400034; September 14
Jal Ratansha Kavarana (83), Villa Kavarana, 67, Scheme IV, Rd no 3, TPS IV, Bandra, 400050; September 14
Naval Hormusji Kamode (85), H-23, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; September 15
Coomi Gustadi Kapadia (81), 8, Sheridon Hse, A. K. Marg, 400036; September 15
Dhunjishaw Rustomji Mirai (75), Panday Sanatorium, Colaba, 400005; September 15
Tahemton Merwanji Bam (82), 8/3, Malcolm Baug, S. V. Rd, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; September 17
Pirojbai Pestonji Bhanja (81), R. C. Sethna Bldg, Golanji Hill, Parel Village, 400012; September 17
Jalamai Kekhashru Bacha (90), C/o Amy Noshir Daruwala, 10, Jaidev Hse, Dadi Santok Lane, Dhobitalao, 400002; September 18
Freny Adi Madon (65), B/5, Sanjay Co-op Hsg Soc, Opp Bengal Chemicals, Veer Savarkar Rd, 400025; September 18
Dolly M. Nadirshaw (74), F. S. Parukh Dharamshala, Hughes Rd, 400007; September 18
Homai Motabhai Contractor (81), Sugra Manzil, BEST Marg, 400039; September 20
Pervin Dosabhai Shroff (53),

27, Old Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; September 20
Freny Framroze Karai (74), The Goa Hindu Association Bldg, 358, Lamington Rd, 400007; September 22
Rustom Nusserwanji Dastur (86), 793, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 23
Nariman Dorabji Mistry (86), 19, Seth Jamsetji Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; September 23
Silloo Russi Patel (72), Windcliffe, 50-D, Peddar Rd, 400026; September 23
Perin Minoo Vakharia (80), C/o Behroze Z. Dadina, Lady Dorab Tata Bldg, Tata Blocks, S. V. Rd, Bandra, 400050; September 23
Dossan Pirojsha Gazdar (86), 7/2, Rustom Baug, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; September 24
Dali Dinshawji Mehta (68), 18, Munsif Bldg, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400036; September 24
Savak Cawasji Zaveri (94), Room no 405/406, 260/A, Kuka Sadan, Dr B. A. Rd, Parel, 400012; September 24
Homai Burjor Dalal (95),

Modern Flats, 128, Wodehouse Rd, 400005; September 25
Banoo Phiroze Gandhi (73), 804/B, Sai Niketan, Dr Ambedkar Rd, Dadar T.T., 400014; September 25
Homi Rustomji Irani (90), C, Wadia Bldg, Behind Wadiji Atas Bahram, Dhobitalao, 400002; September 25
Ratanshaw Dosabhai Bilimoria (81), 908, Cumballa Crest, 42, Peddar Rd, 400026; September 26
Rashid Ardesher Irani (48), Cama Baug Hse, Khetwadi, 14th Lane, 400004; September 26
Homai Jehangir Shroff (73), Mohammedbhai Mans, Kemp's Corner, 400026; September 26
Minoo Nusserwanji Taraporewala (72), 443, Matusadan, Urimal Anand Ashram Hotel, Chira Bazar, 400002; September 26
Perin Manek Daver (70), 6/B, Crown Mans, Forjett Cross Lane, 400036; September 27
Navroz Minocher Patel (66), T-16, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; September 27
Burjor Faramroze Doriawala (82), 658, Khorshed-Abad, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny,

Dadar, 400014; September 28
Keki Dadabhoy Guzdar (77), 62, Patanwalla Mhl, Patanwalla Rd, Byculla, 400027; September 28
Aloo Dorabji Panveliwala (77), 628, Turel Ter, A. B. Homavazir Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 28
Adi Pallonji Tavadia (71), M/24, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; September 28
Jer Savaksha Bhagalia (89), Yad-El, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; September 29
Aloo Cursethji Chandaru (78), Baite Zainab, Dadoji Konddeo Rd, Victoria Gardens, Byculla, 400027; September 29
Ratanbai Merwanji Chitalwala (89), 671, Boyce Bldg, Parsi

Clny, Dadar, 400014; September 29
Rusi Hormusji Daruwala (72), Dr Dossibai and Jehangir Ratanshaw Dadabhoy Charity Trust Home, Masina Hosp Compd, Victoria Rd, Byculla, 400027; September 29
Rati Burjor Pavri (80), Preyas, 20, Dadiseth Lane, Babulnath, 400007; September 29

CALCUTTA

DIED
Dali Rutonji Bhesania, husband of Dina and father of Zarin and late Sarosh; September 1

PARBHANI, MAHARASHTRA

DIED
Feroze Rattansha Parakh (71),

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husband of Nanki, father of Mehernaz Bapuji Chenai, Shirin Pankaj Jayant and Dinaz Darius Chenai; September 14

SECUNDERABAD

DIED

Mehernosh Homi Major (43), brother of Fali; September 4
Mehroo Karkaria (73), wife of Dara and mother of Marzban and Armin Cavas Deboo; September 22

SURAT

DIED

Alamay Pestanji Patel (92), Agiyari Maholo, Vesu; August 1
Jalegar D. Amariya (65), Village Ilav, Dist Bharuch, 394810; August 2
Parvez Firogasha Bhatena (68), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; August 2
Parinbanu Shapurji Kapadia (80), Gopalesur Row Hses, Tarvadi, Rander Rd, 395005; August 11
Baby boy of Khushru Nariman Tamboli (Mistry) (premature), 401, Park Avenue, Delah Maholo, Rustumpura, 395002; August 12
Sam Naoroji Daruwala (62), 5, Allahi Baug, Rustumpura, 395002; September 9
Soli Rattanshaw Mahoovawala (79), Nariman Home and Infirmary, Shahpore, 395003; September 17
Navroz Ardeshtir Vakharia (78), Yogi Smurti Apt, Near Parsi Library, Nanpura, 395001; September 17
Soli Burjorji Engineer (60), 7/192, Nagina St, Rander; September 19

CANADA

British Columbia

MARRIED

Nazanin Mehin and Hooman Darabian of France in Vancouver; July 22

DIED

Homi Amrolia (90), husband of Gool and father of Dinyar, Sheroo and Silloo Parekh in Vancouver; May 26
Shahryar Iranshad (77), husband of Banoo and father of Ardeshtir, Shahrokh, Farrokh, Kourosh and Shahram in Richmond; June 19
Baji Ghadiali (76), husband

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*						
	Bombay		India		World	
	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*	This issue	2000*
BIRTHS						
Boys	8	54	—	5	3	14
Girls	9	58	—	4	1	11
MARRIAGES						
Parsi	4	87	—	9	6	17
INTERCOMMUNAL						
Males married out	—	20	—	2	—	1
Females married out	—	19	—	1	1	1
DEATHS						
CONSIGNED						
Males	28	332	10	52	11	40
Females	36	346	3	42	9	32
CREMATED						
Males	—	5	—	—	—	—
Females	—	3	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-October 2000 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.

of Marion in Richmond; July 22

Ontario

BORN

A boy, *Hormuz*, to *Teenaz* and *Mahveer Javat*, brother to *Sherezade*; July 28
 A girl, *Alyssia*, to *Vicky* and *Kaizad Divecha*; August 20

MARRIED

Shireen Sethna, daughter of *Freny* and *Boman*, and *Farhad Shishbiradaran*, son of *Paricher* and *Sohrab*; July 2
Meena Kumari Radhakrishnan and *Richard Steckly*, son of *Betty* and *Irwin*; June 29
Jasmine Mistry, daughter of *Aban* and *Eruch*, and *Darayus Kanga*, son of *Dogdo* and *Minoo*; August 6
Roya Izadian, daughter of *Farangis* and *Rostam*, and *Farshad Khorrami*, son of *Parvin* and *Ardeshtir* in Toronto; September 1

IRAN

MARRIED

Nasreen Mazdapour and *Khodaram Foroughi Biuki* of Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Canada, in Tehran; March 30

NORTH IRELAND

BORN

A boy, *Armaan*, to *Radhika* and *Mehli Nazir* in Coleraine; September 7

PAKISTAN

Karachi

DIED

Sheroo Soli Dubash (73); May 2
Shirin C. Mehta (77); May 3
Shera Rustom Sethna (86); May 10
J. P. Confectioner (66); May 18
Jamsheed K. Irani (81); May 19
Aspi Dinshaw Aga (68); June 4
Minnie J. Vania (96); June 5
Noshir R. Minwalla (82); June 7
Minocher P. Confectioner (75); June 8
Faridoon K. Dadachanji (84); June 16
Khorshed Jal Sidhwa (76), mother of *Yazdi* and *Feroze*; June 17
Bacha N. Mobed (91); June 19
Soli K. Divecha (66); June 22
Sorabji D. Master (88); July 23

USA

California

BORN

A boy, *Freddy*, to *Mahrugh* and *Khushroo Fitter*, brother to *Roxanne* and *Shahnaz* in Irvine; July 15

MARRIED

Shahzad Raisi, daughter of *Katayoun* and *Ardeshtir*, and *Pedman Moobed*, son of *Parvin* and *Rostam*; September 1

DIED

Keshvar Bolandi, mother of *Stephanie Brown* in San Francisco; June 30

Illinois

DIED

Tehmina Bilimoria, wife of *Rustomji* and mother of *Yazdi* and *Nergish Kayomars Mehta* in Palos Hills; May 29

Virginia

DIED

Dilshad Framroze Patel (91), mother of *Perviz Rutton Mancherje*, *Nargis Dinshaw Manekji* and late *Shavax* in Arlington; September 14

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