

Parsiānā

JUNE 2001 R\$ 35





ARMAYESH

We Have Designs
on You!

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

(Exquisite Parsi
Garas are our forte.)

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

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

Armayesh
hand embroidery
lasts!

The Finest Hand Embroidery - Forever

Please telephone Ms NILOUFER IRANI or Mr ARMAND N. AGA on 91-22-2658071, 2661364, 2662987 to
finalise the date and time of your visit to our Design Studio and Showroom.

Armayesh Fashions Pvt Ltd. Design Studio and Showroom, Kamanwala Chambers, 2nd Floor, Sir P. M. Road
Fort, Mumbai 400001 Fax: 91-22-2662183, E-mail: armayesh@vsnl.com Website: www.armayesh.com

Parsiana

June 2001
Volume 23 Number 11

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

2 Readers' Forum

8 Events and Personalities

14 Zoroastrians Abroad

20 The Mehta-Maneck election match by Arnavaz Mama

22 Baroda: A meeting of hearts

28 Dinshaw Mehta on the move

29 Maneck Engineer: Equalling the election odds

32 An ode to the Oval

34 Ava Khullar: The Sonava Style by Dilnavaz Bhagwagar

51 Books

52 Milestones

55 In Memoriam: Fali Bilimoria

Cover: An ornate wrought iron gatepost at the Horniman Circle gardens Photograph by Gustasp Irani

Parsiana is edited and published by Jehangir R. Patel for Parsiana Publications Pvt Ltd at 300 Perin Nariman Street, Bombay 400001 and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, A-191, Road No 16A, MIDC, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thana (W), 400604. All rights reserved. Processing Comart Lithographers. Editorial enquiries: 2078183. Advertising: 2078104, 2072915. Subscription: 2665661, 2662709. General: 2078730, 2072624. Fax: 2074541, 2075572. Press: 5804162 E-mail: parvo@giabm01.vsnl.net.in parsiana@yahoo.com parsiana@vsnl.net For subscription enquiries and payments: C/o Kaiser-E-Hind Pvt Ltd, 300 Perin Nariman Street (Behind Reserve Bank of India), Bombay 400001. ISSN: 0971-3786.

Annual inland subscription for one year (11 issues) Rs 350; for two years (22 issues) Rs 675; for three years (33 issues) Rs 1,000. Foreign subscription rates: Seemal for one year Rs 600/ US \$ 15/UK £ 9/Euro 15; for two years Rs 1,150/US \$ 28/UK £ 17/Euro 28; for three years Rs 1,675/US \$ 40/UK £ 25/Euro 40 (please allow six months or more for seemal delivery from the time of publication). Airmail for one year Rs 875/US \$ 21/ UK £ 13/ Euro 21; for two years Rs 1,650/US \$ 40/UK £ 25/Euro 40; for three years Rs 2,475/US \$ 60/ UK £ 37/Euro 60. For Indian upcountry cheques add Rs 20 for bank charges; for US cheques add \$ 5; for UK cheques add £ 3; for Euro cheques add Euro 5. Cheques and drafts are to be drawn in favor of Parsiana.



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

"Davie's dadgah"

This is in reference to "Davie's dadgah" by Dinshaw D. Naterwala (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, April 2001).

The Davie agiary belongs to the Davier Parsi Anjuman and as trustees thereof we wish to make certain clarifications to present a true picture to our community.

The agiary is not as dilapidated as made out by Naterwala. It is also not true that no repairs have been undertaken for many years. The construction is 150 years old and with the limited funds at our disposal we do our best to spend whatever we can on its maintenance. Since 1998 Bomi Mistry and his team from Nowroz Baug regularly come to Davier and do maintenance work without charging anything for their labor. We are indeed beholden to them!

In order to undertake complete repairs and renovations we need at least Rs 10 lakhs. The trustees have from time

to time made appeals to the community for donations. The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, of which the Davier Anjuman is a member, has also endorsed our appeal.

Naterwala is rightly saddened by the fact that there is no mobed in the agiary and appeals to the trustees to appoint one. At present an elderly Parsi gentleman and his devoted wife look after the fire as well as the agiary as the Anjuman does not have adequate funds to pay for a full-time mobed.

We therefore appeal to our community and trusts to donate generously to this noble cause. Cheques should favor the "Davier Parsee Zarhosti Anjuman Fund" and be forwarded to Marzban Wadia, Ratan Abad Building, Umargam Road, Dist Valsad, Gujarat 396165 or Rohintan Davierwala, Khanbahadur Bungalow, Sanjan (W. Rly) Maharashtra 396150.

MARZBAN E. WADIA

President

ROHINTAN M. DAVIERWALA, PARVEZE WADIA

Trustees, Davier Anjuman

There is talk going on in some quarters of our Zoroastrian society that our existing dadgahs which are in a bad shape, both structure-wise and on account of paucity of funds, should be closed down forthwith. Such negative thoughts should not be tolerated at all.

Marzban Wadia of the Davier Anjuman requested our team to carry out the painting work of the kebla of Davier's dadgah. Thereafter, one night (around 4 a.m.) an elderly lady appeared in my dream and requested me to undertake the painting work of the kebla of her dadgah. The same morning I telephoned Wadia and asked him whether the founder of the Davier dadgah was a lady. He answered in the affirmative and enquired as to how I came to know about it. I enlightened him about my dream. Subsequently, Wadia confirmed that the lady in my dream was none other than the late Navaz Goiporia, the founder of the Davier dadgah.

In the recent past, Wadia, through the Davier Anjuman, had the dadgah premises painted (*chuno*) from outside, which we observed when we were simultaneously carrying out the interior work of the kebla.

The work done by us was carried out without shifting the holy fire from the

kebla and we had taken all adequate precautions to protect the holy fire. Our work included scraping and painting the kebla from inside; polishing the doors and windows of the kebla; cleaning the gumbaj and replacing the roof tiles which were in a dilapidated condition to stop the leakage.

The entire work was carried out by our team without any consideration for monetary gain or for any publicity. This dadgah has become the regular place of worship of Zoroastrian families who stay in and around Umargam and Davier.

Instead of criticizing and putting forth negative aspects, we should all make sincere efforts to procure more funds and donations from our fellow Zoroastrians and lend a helping hand in maintaining holy places of our community.

BOMI J. MISTRY

"Celebrations clouded"

The trustees of the Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman have read the letter titled "Celebrations clouded" by Dr M. D. Disawalla (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, March 2001) and find the need to correct certain false and misleading observations made by the writer with regard to Rusi Gae's participation, and the uncharitable remarks leveled against the manner in which the funds raised for the purpose were spent.

Gae was invited to attend the platinum jubilee function of our Dar-e-Meher as a guest of the Anjuman. The Bangalore Anjuman was gracious enough to send invitations to several dignitaries of our community irrespective of their personal views on religious matters. He was one such dignitary.

However Gae was not included in our list of speakers. Like many others he was invited to grace the occasion in recognition of his stature and past achievements.

During the function, he requested permission to speak with a view to enlighten the trustees and the gathering on the route to be followed to obtain income tax exemption for our Anjuman under section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961. He discussed the pros and cons of this issue personally with some of our trustees and members, as also our auditors. After receiving his personal assurance that he would confine himself to this subject only and not touch upon

Be a proud owner of **Centralcard**



- Easy acceptance at over 100,000 outlets in India & Nepal.
- Card with your photograph for extra safety.
- Cash withdrawal facility upto Rs 5,000 per month at selected Branches in major cities.
- Cheque-encashment upto Rs 2,500 per month at all outstation Branches free of charge.
- 24-Hours Voice Authorization Centres at 8 major cities to facilitate smooth Merchant Operations.
- Dial 6336876/79 for HELPDESK in Mumbai from 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. 365 days.
- Accident Insurance Cover upto Rs 100,000.

*The Card of Convenience
and Confidence*

FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT



**Central Bank
of India**

15/16, Bajaj Bhavan, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021

Tel: 2022331, 2026312, 2042376/80/83/97

Fax: 2024004 • E-mail: ccard@vsnl.com

any topic that may lead to avoidable controversy, he was allowed to address the audience. We do not omit to mention that this was done with some difficulty, as due to a very tight schedule, finding a slot for him meant making last minute adjustments.

It is therefore wrong for anyone to state that he was invited as a speaker. Once having been given the stage to make his observations, he unfortunately digressed from this topic of income tax exemption and instead chose to speak on issues that go against our religious tenets and which in any case were outside the purview of his topic thereby hurting the sentiments of the gathering. Since the majority of our members are orthodox in their religious beliefs, their spontaneous reaction to Gae's uncalled for but purposeful remarks was to be expected, more so as they were not prepared for discussions on such thorny issues as inter-faith marriages and conversions. Can one really fault the spontaneous reaction of the gathering?

Despite various attempts made to bring some order into the resultant discord, agitated members chose to vent their feelings against this unwelcome and uncalled for intrusion into what

promised to be a very orderly and dignified function. Ultimately order did prevail and, contrary to what the writer records, Gae was allowed to complete his talk.

It may be noted that it was precisely for this reason that the trustees had decided to dispense with the routine question and answer session. This was done purely to avoid any controversial topics being raised which could mar the sanctity of such an occasion. Moreover, this was hardly considered the right forum to discuss and debate such issues.

Furthermore, those shortlisted to speak to us on any religious subject of their choice were told that considering the nature of the function no controversial issues should be touched upon. They very graciously agreed. They naturally felt somewhat offended when they thought that an exception was made in Gae's case till they were informed that the trustees never intended this.

Disawalla states, "I hang my head in shame for the reprehensible behavior shown to Gae who is way above us all in his knowledge and acumen concerning legal matters." No one disputes Gae's credentials. As a matter of fact he was in our midst because of his credentials and

stature. Sadly, a joyful occasion which we Bangalore Parsis worked for with single-minded devotion and with a great feeling of pride was unfortunately tainted by what we believe to be an act of defiance and total insensitivity towards the feelings of our members and the occasion.

Our fire-temple has very satisfactorily served the spiritual needs of the community. It was only fitting that we celebrate the occasion with pride, and with the traditional gaiety which we Parsis are known for. In such gatherings there is no place for rancor and controversies.

The writer also refers to his earlier opposition to the celebration plans that were unfurled before the general body. The general body that approved the plans put before them with a thumping majority apparently did not share his views on this issue. Funds were raised with the active and commendable support of Dastur Nadirshah Unvalla with the specific purpose of carrying out long delayed repairs and restoration to our agiary and other properties. It should be appreciated that such repairs and restorations cannot be postponed time and again as we were forced to do, and what better

“Sure Relief of All Aches & Pains”

Madhivala

Liniment And Pain-Balm

For ● Pain in joint ● Muscles
● Neck ● Back ● Knee trouble
and other body pains,
Especially for Chronic Complaints
a really effective medicine.



Manufactured by:
Remedies Pharmaceuticals 127, Wadala Udyog Bhavan, Wadala, Mumbai 400 031.
Phone: 414 7642



Celebrating one hundred years in global freight forwarding.

Jeena
& COMPANY
ESTD. 1900
GLOBAL LOGISTICS

Elphinstone Building, 1st floor, 10, Veer Nariman Road, Mumbai 400 001, India. Tel.: (22) 204 2032 Fax: (22) 202 6853 E-mail: info@jeena.co.in

BANGALORE • BARODA • CALCUTTA • CHENNAI • COCHIN • GOA • HYDERABAD • KANPUR • NEW DELHI • PUNE

www.jeena.com

time to undertake this task than in preparation of the jubilee celebrations.

This apart, advertisement revenue was generated to meet the cost of the two-day festivities. Our actions were in line with the universal principle of celebrating events of such importance. The trustees are quite alive to the need for creating funds for other purposes that will benefit our members, in which direction we have initiated some action. Therefore the writer's observation "My earlier appeals to the trustees not to fritter away donations received" has absolutely no relevance and is totally out of context.

KALI D. CAWASJI

President, The Bangalore Parsee Zoroastrian Anjuman

"The designing of..."

The March 2001 issue of *Parsiana* carries a very informative, illustrated article by our revered Dastur (Dr) Firoze Kotwal, titled "The designing of dakhmas" which not only reveals the intricate, elaborately complicated designing as well as construction of our dakhmas, where we normally dispose of our dead, but also hints at the historic background of this unique practice.

To quote Kotwal, "According to Zoroastrian doctrine, the most contaminated object on earth is the dead human body, and the sooner it is disposed of, with due ceremonial prescription, the better it is for the health of the living." Then he quotes from our ancient *Vendidad* excerpts which clearly emphasize that the dead bodies be placed "on the highest places from where the corpse-eating dogs and corpse-eating birds may sooner perceive them." And the bones "are exposed to the cleansing rays of the sun." According to this ancient practice the corpse would be disposed of "in the minimum of time and maximum of speed."

While we have written proofs of this ancient system, "we have no clear record when this custom of the Towers of Silence originated. It is even doubtful whether it existed in the time of Zoroaster himself." (Prof A. R. Wadia)

The "link divine" that binds us all to our loved ones at birth is not broken by death. We not only lovingly cherish their lovely memories but constantly silently pray, "*Ashiumam Vanguhish Surao Spentao Fravashayo Yazamaide* (We cherish the good, brave, bountiful souls of the righteous)." When death inevitably and naturally separates us, we would like their physical remains to

be disposed of as quickly, cleanly, respectfully and lovingly as possible.

This leads us to the conflict and confusion that faces our fold recently, more so as the present system of the disposal of the dead is obviously not functioning ideally.

Let us pray for a solution for "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of" as sung by Tennyson.

While the Towers of Silence have served our purpose for nearly 300

years, the signs and situation facing us demand a change and what could be better than using the most purifying force on earth to which we as true Mazdayasnian Zarathushtris, daily pray: "*Athrob Ahurahe Mazdao, Tava Atarsh Puthra Ahurahe Mazdao, Athronahurahe Mazdao putrao* (O fire, the purifier of all things pertaining to Ahura Mazdao)."

Ervad Kavasji Edulji Kanga notes the ordinary meaning of the word "putra" (Sanskrit-putra) is "son." But the word in this *Nyaesh* everywhere is derived from the Sanskrit root *pu* (to purify, to render pure).

What then could be the cleanest, quickest, best method of disposing our beloved dead than by using Mazda's most purifying mysterious power, Atarsh? Let us wisely accept His will! The modern crematoria are the wisest solution. Let us suit our ceremonies anew bravely and unitedly.

BEHRAM S. H. J. RUSTOMJI

Effective solar panels

At the samast anjuman meeting held on December 15, 2000, members of the community were informed that the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) had taken the initiative in multiple directions to strengthen the system of dakhmenashini.

Introducing solar concentrators to reflect the rays of the sun was one of the methods being tried. The community was informed that extensive trials were being conducted at Baroda on carcasses of fowls and animals, keeping intact all doctrinal injunctions.

Concerns were expressed by some members of the community that the



A solar concentrator erected at Baroda

corpses would get baked/cooked, or may ignite, sear, etc as also that the reflected heat would cause the dakhmas to get superheated, thereby making it difficult for the pallbearers to enter as well as the birds to fly in. Ronnie Sabavala who designed the solar concentrator was advised to keep in mind the concerns expressed.

One solar concentrator, specifically designed keeping the needs of the community in mind, has been erected and made operational at one of the

functioning dakhmas.

The results of the solar concentrator have been very satisfactory. With the solar concentrator reflecting the sunlight at a temperature of 125°C, for an average of seven hours a day, it takes just over four days' usage to reduce a corpse to a near skeleton. In addition, the problem of foul odor too has been controlled. It has also been observed that there is no inconvenience to the pallbearers entering the dakhma when the solar concentrator is operating. The birds — crows and kites — in the vicinity are also observed to be flying into the dakhmas for other bodies inside whilst the solar concentrator is working, putting to rest the fear that they would not.

Our senior-most pallbearer with a service of 38 years has informed us that the result achieved by the solar concentrator in five days is comparable to that which used to take around four-and-a-half months. The solar concentrator has the added advantage of being cost effective, with minimal maintenance cost.

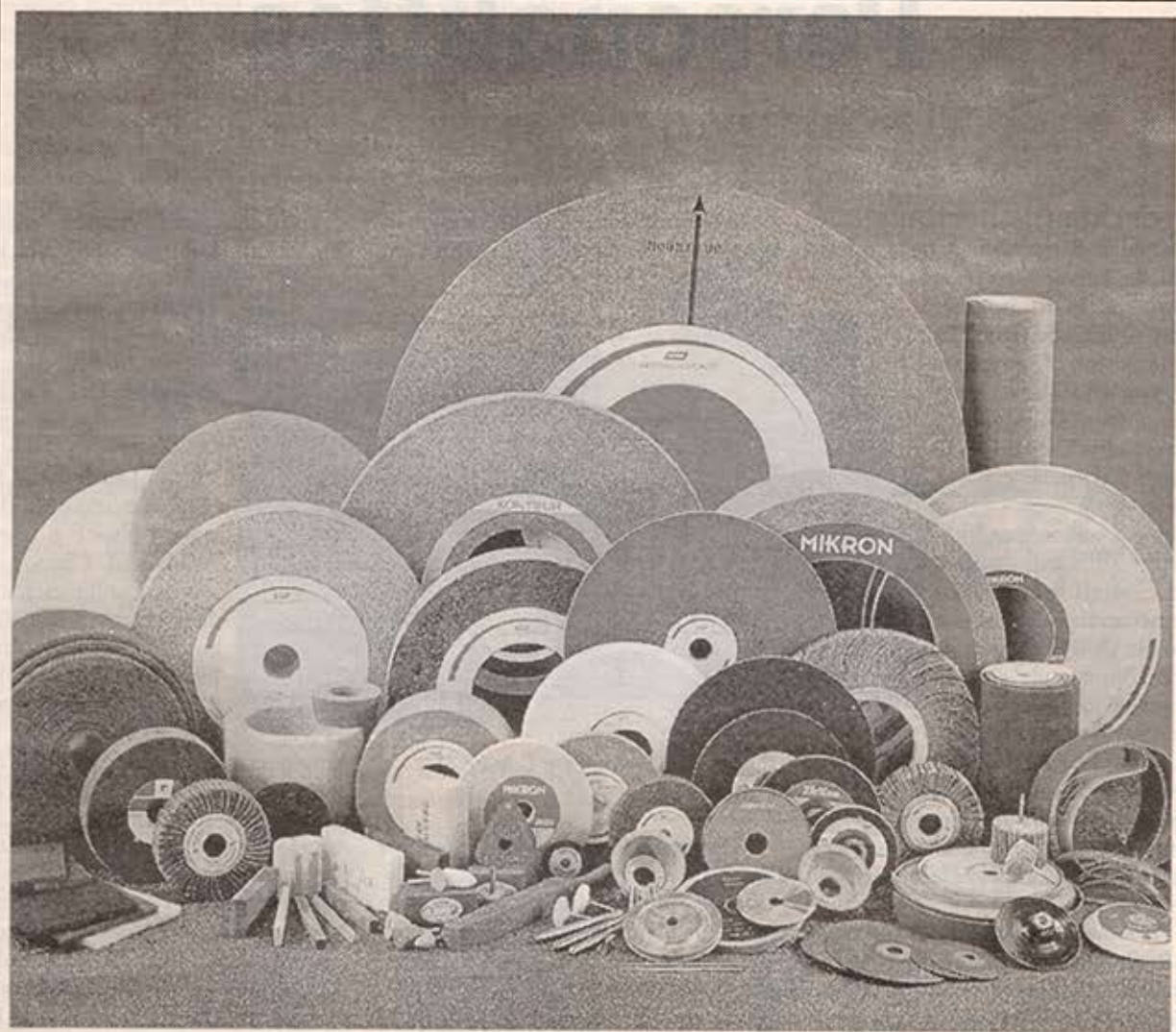
The trustees have been enthused with the results and have taken a decision to install additional solar concentrators. Orders have been placed for three additional units, and more would be ordered progressively as the need arises.

The well-known philanthropist Naryman Dubash who saw the solar concentrator, being convinced of its efficacy and usefulness, has made a donation of Rs 5,00,000 to the BPP for the purchase of additional units. The trustees extend their sincere gratitude to Dubash for this generosity.

The trustees publicly express their

continued on page 46

NORTON



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

NORTON

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

**GRINDWELL
NORTON LTD.**

Events and Personalities

Hyderabad's heritage

"Owned and maintained by a family trust, the building has been consciously conserved in its original form. Minor additions like the provision of sunshades at a later date follow the set lines of the building adding to its beauty. They testify to the fact that the owners have put in a tremendous effort in its maintenance and upkeep. For this dedicated and conscious effort in its maintenance and upkeep, the Fire Temple richly deserves an award," notes the citation presented to the trustees of the Bai Maneckbai Nusserwanji Chenoy Fire Temple which was presented the HUDA-INTACH Heritage Award 2001 by The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Hyderabad chapter, on April 24, 2001.

Presenting the Award, the governor of Andhra Pradesh C. Rangarajan commented that heritage buildings were "our links to the past," according to a report in the *Deccan Chronicle* of April 25.

In addition to the Chenoy Fire Temple, the five other landmarks to be bestowed the Award this year were the Flag Staff House in Bollaram, Princess Esin Centre, Purani Haveli, Jubilee Hall, Public Gardens, GVK House also known as Rahmatull's residence Kohinoor, Road No 1, Banjara Hills and Chiran Fort Club or Iqbalud Dowla Devdi, Begumpet, stated the *Chronicle*. Located on Tilak Road, the Chenoy Fire Temple was constructed in 1904 as a simple structure. "The basic architecture is Indo-European with brick-lime mortar construction and a Madras terrace roof. The architecture seems to

have been influenced by its location in the then predominantly British area of the Residency Bazar," adds the citation.



Bai M. N. Chenoy Fire Temple in Hyderabad

The land on which the agiary stands had been bought in an auction by the Chenoy family in 1890, according to a brief history of the Fire Temple which was inaugurated on October 16, 1904, *roz* Ardibehesht, *mah* Ardibehesht. Maneckbai Nusserwanji Chenoy from whom the Fire Temple derives its name had set aside certain securities and shares in joint stock companies as an endowment fund for the maintenance of the agiary and after her death her son Ferozshah took over the management until his demise in 1945. Following his death Pootlibai Maneckshah Chenoy who took charge created a trust deed in 1948 and became the founder president of the Fire Temple Trust.

Presently in charge of the Fire Temple are president Yadgar F. S. Chenoy, with trustees Astad E. Chenoy, Minoo H. Chenoy, Mehernosh H. Chenoy, Nadir E. Chinoy, Darius S. Chenai and honorary secretary-treasurer Pestonji D. Baria.

Over the years donations received from the philanthropic families of Khan Bahadur Ardeshtir Marker (Vetawala),

Tehmurus and Minocher Ratanji Parakh, Dr Mervin and Dr Rustom Jehangir, Dr and Ms D. P. Parekh, J. P. Parekh and his wife, J. D. Mistry (Nariawala), Viccaji Dinshah, Dr B. S. Surti, Ferozsha R. Bastawala, Yadgar F. S. Chenoy, Putlibai M. Chenoy have resulted in the creation of different residential blocks on this property. A ruvan bungli, a marriage and religious hall as also an office and shop premises were

subsequent developments on this complex. A donation from Ferozshah J. Italia made possible the mobed quarters. Serving as full-time mobeds now are Ervads Hormaji R. Unawala, Kavas D. Umrigar and Tempton H. Unawala with Ervads Kerfige Antia and Mehernosh Barucha assisting as part-time honorary mobeds. A full-time caretaker Dosu Dupattawala and gorani Daizy P. Saher help in looking after this religious institution. The income from the rents received as also donations from local Zoroastrians make possible the maintenance expenditure on the Fire Temple, according to their report.

New team in Nagpur

"The immediate concern of the new committee will be to see that a suitable and revered priest is found to tend the sacred fire, look after the beautiful agiary and nurture the spiritual needs of the 600 strong Zoroastrian community of Nagpur," said Edul F. Bhagwagar, the newly elected president of the Nagpur and Kamphthi Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman, who

Reaching for the Sky



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

Both built by Shapoorji Pallonji of course!



SHAPOORJI PALLONJI & CO. (PVT.) LTD.

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



*Nagpur's
new office
bearers
(from left):
E. Bhagwagar,
Y. Bhagwagar
and
Doongaji*

took charge on April 25, 2001 after serving as vice president for seven years. His predecessor Dinshaw Bapuna had stepped down after serving as president for 23 years.

Along with Bhagwagar, the other four office bearers who assumed new responsibilities were vice president Navroze B. Davar, honorary secretary Yezdi D. Bhagwagar, treasurer Shiraz K. Doongaji and lady member Mehru K. Watchmaker.

While the main office bearers were elected unopposed, the posts for the remaining seven members of the Anjuman managing committee were keenly contested. The elections which were held on April 22, '01 were ably conducted by the returning officer Dinyar Talavia. Those elected as members of the committee are Dr Feroze Bharda, Rusi Godha, Narges Desai, Homi Kavarana, Adil Bharucha, Dinshaw Mistry and Jamshed Cassad. It was a healthy election without any acrimony or ugliness.

Most members of the new team bring with them a legacy of service to the community with their fathers and forefathers having been leading lights or akabars of the Anjuman in their time.

President Bhagwagar who has been on the managing committee of the Anjuman for the past 28 years comes from a business family, being a partner

of the Bhagwagar Ice Factory and Cold Storage and has interests in building and construction, mines and minerals. His grandfather Ervad Eduljee Kanga was the first panthaky of the Nagpur agiary. Davar who has been on the committee since 1996 is presently managing director of the Maharashtra State Handloom Corporation. Yezdi Bhagwagar who was assistant secretary for 22 years was initially with the family business Dorab Cowasjee and Sons but later opted to pursue a business in share trading and transfer. Having been on the managing committee for 10 years, Doongaji with his brothers owns Handy Wires and Steel Wool, the only ISO 9002 certified company for steel wool in India. Watchmaker too, with 10 years of prior experience on the managing committee, had been single-handedly running a printing press for many years.

Among the committee members are newcomers Bharda who is a general practitioner with his own private practice and also serves as assistant director of the College of General Practitioners; Desai who conducts Sunday school classes for Zoroastrian children having recently retired as officer from the Central Bank of India; youngest member Bharucha who is the branch manager of Kilburn Reprographics, part of the Williamson Megor Company. Those

with prior experience on the committee are Godha who is a much sought after master of ceremonies at community functions having retired as deputy printing master from Empress Mills; Kavarana, a senior civil engineer with the Empress Mills who is viewed as an invaluable asset in administering and advising upon the considerable real estate controlled by the Anjuman; registered accountant Mistry who worked in Ahmednagar before migrating to Nagpur where he ran a glass and crockery shop; Cassad who is in the insurance and coal supply business and stays in regular touch with members of the community.

In addition to the elected members, those nominated to the committee are Rusi F. Dastur, Minoo P. Daruwalla, Rhoda M. Patel, Navroze F. Bhagwagar, Rustam M. Hormusjee and Shiraz J. Gimi.

"The goodwill and support of the community has been overwhelming," said Doongaji, adding, "We shall strive to fulfil the trust and confidence reposed in us by doing our best to improve the quality of life of the community and by keeping it united and active."

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

Lodging near the lord

With the inauguration of the Ervad Ratansha Katila Stopover Lodging Place on April 18, 2001 at the hands of Dastur Kaikobad Dastur, the World Zoroastrian Organisation (WZO) Youth Wing further strengthened its long-term "Project Udvada," according to a report submitted by its president Sarosh Bana. WZO (India) vice president and Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee Dinshaw Tamboly who was present on the occasion remarked that the Youth Wing has given shape to the vision of the late Rohinton Chinoy, former WZO (India) joint secretary and proprietor of Union Press who had dreamed of "such a resort for the poorer sections of the community."

Kaikobad Dastur (center) flanked by Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly at the inauguration of the Ervad Ratansha Katila Stopover Lodging Place



Godrej Properties & Investments Ltd.

is looking for partners

Godrej Properties & Investments Ltd., one of India's leading and most revered corporate houses, is looking for Joint Venture Partners for real estate development in Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

Owners of **prime unencumbered properties** located in or around city centres, are invited to join us in developing their plots and realising its full potential. In short, you bring in the property, we will do the rest. Also, in return you'll get the assurance of the Godrej guarantee.

We already are into ongoing Joint Ventures in Mumbai and Pune. For example, Godrej Millennium and Godrej Eternia are coming up as the best commercial complexes in

Pune. Similarly, Godrej Sherwood at Pune is an outstanding residential complex. In Mumbai, Godrej Indraprastha at Santa Cruz & Godrej Bay View at Worli Seaface are perhaps the best residential addresses in the city. While Godrej Coliseum will be a landmark commercial complex in Sion.

These properties are already bearing fruit even before completion. So join hands and become a partner with Godrej.

We may also be interested in outright purchase of compact, high value properties in South Mumbai, and from Bandra (W) to Santa Cruz (W).

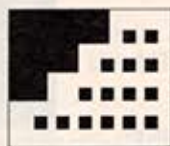
Interested parties may kindly send their proposal within 10 days to:

Godrej Properties & Investments Limited

Pirojshanagar, Eastern Express Highway, Vikhroli, Mumbai 400 079

Tel: 0091-22-518 8719 (Extn. 208) Fax: 0091-22-518 8717

Email: ktjgpil@vsnl.com Website: www.godrejproperties.com



Godrej
PROPERTIES &
INVESTMENTS LIMITED

He further commented, "The WZO flourishes on the unity of its members the world over and on the unstinted goodwill and support from its legions of patrons and well-wishers."

At the rate of Rs 20 per head per day, pilgrims to Udvada who cannot afford the hotel or dharamshala tariffs can now visit this lodging house for a maximum of 48 hours. While hot water will be



Bana (left) with winner K. Mistry

available, meals have to be arranged by the guests although light breakfast would be provided by the caretakers Mahatab and Parvez Daruwalla at an additional cost of Rs 20 per head.

"There was a heartfelt need for such a lodging in Udvada which will be a boon for needy Parsi pilgrims," noted Iranshah Atash Behram secretary Merwanji Dastur. The Lodging Place located close to the Iranshah was remodelled at a cost of nearly five lakh rupees, pointed out Bana, adding that it was a tribute to the memory of Katila who had held extremely orthodox views and had shunned plumbing and electrical connections at his abode during his lifetime. While the five rooms, blocks of three toilets and three bathrooms with their electrical and plumbing connections are functional, the Youth Wing is hoping to find donors for ceiling fans, mattresses, pillows, bed linen, a generator and for its maintenance fund. (Contributions in the name of "WZO Youth Wing" may be sent to Bana at 52 Bakhtawar (main), 22 Narayan Dabholkar Road, Bombay 400006.)

Following the dastardly attack on Katila's life in September 1997, his heirs Prof Khurshed Sheriar and his sister Rati Sheriar had offered the property to the Youth Wing. Other Youth Wing members whose contribution towards this project were recognized were: architect Rustom Hathi and civil engineer Zubin Mistry, Parvez Panthaky, Meher-nosh Dumasia, Mahatab Patel, Ketayun Bana, Cyrus and Franak Bulsara, Aban and Dilnawaz Bana.

The inaugural function had started with a jashan performed by Udvada

anjuman secretary Framroze Sidhva and his colleague Cawas Dastur and ended with a repast catered by the late Neville Godiwalla at his Hotel Majestic.

Within a week of this development the Youth Wing had organized a treasure hunt in Bombay under the guidance of Zubin Mistry to popularize their activities among the youth of the community, as notes a write-up by Patel.

Eight teams comprising 32 participants had assembled at the Parsi Gymkhana on the morning of April 22, 2001 and their hunt took them from Cuffe Parade to Byculla. The winning team captained by Kaizad Mistry from Tata Colony earned Rs 1,000 plus a dinner coupon, courtesy Kwaliti Restaurant at Kemp's Corner. The second prize of Rs 500 plus a dinner coupon from Jimmy Boy at Fort was won by the Kvaerner Power Gas team led by Sameer Barve. The third prize of Rs 500 plus Rs 201, courtesy Paradise Restaurant at Colaba was claimed by the team captained by Zarir Vesuna from Shapur Baug.

Dastur School gears up

The new three-storey building with 21 classrooms, two spacious laboratories and a library to house the Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar High School was inaugurated on March 21, 2001. The inaugural function included a jashan led by Dastur Hormazdiar Noshirwan Dastur, who is also the president and trustee of The Sardar Dastur Schools' Trust, followed by songs by the School children and felicitations to well-wishers and contributors to this landmark occasion, notes a press release.

The School aims to provide quality

education to students from Std V to X who were hitherto accommodated in facilities provided by the Primary School. And following the remarkable success of their first batch of students who appeared for their SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinations last year, the demand for admission to this institution had further risen compelling them to expand their facilities, adds the release. The new building also accommodates the office of the principal and the administrative staff on the ground floor with a large airy assembly area demarcated for the purpose.

With the establishment of the Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar High School, the Sardar Dastur Schools' Trust now has four schools under its management: Sardar Dastur Noshirwan Girls' High School (founded in 1893) and Sardar Dastur Hoshang Boys' High School (founded in 1912) which are both grant-in-aid schools; and the Bai Najamai Noshirwan Dastur Primary and Nursery School (founded in 1953) and the Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar High School which are both non-aided.

"The motivating force behind the project is the president and it is absolutely due to the munificence of well-wishers and the tireless efforts of the Fund Raising Committee that the first phase of the building was completed in record time," mentions the release hoping to receive the same cooperation for the second and third phase of the project.

Vazifdar's vibrancy

Challenging the well held belief that after 80 life is one long ride into the

continued on page 38



New building for the Sardar Dastur Hormazdiar High School

ENGINEERING & AGENCIES

Private Limited and

CAMBATTA ENGINEERING Co

Represent

1. **W. Schlafhorst AG & Co. - Germany** for Automatic Winding Machine 'Autoconer' and Open End Spinning and Winding Machine 'Autocoro'
2. **Picanol N. V. - Belgium** for Airjet and Rapier Weaving Machines
3. **Sucker Mueller Hacoba GmbH & Co. - Germany** for Indigo Dyeing and Sizing Machine, Emerizing, Shearing and Raising Machines and Sectional and Direct Warpers
4. **Babcock Textilmaschinen GmbH - Germany** for continuous scouring and bleaching ranges, continuous dyeing ranges, pad-dry and pad-steam lines, washing, ranges, stenters, curing chambers, loop steamers, etc
5. **Fong's National Engineering Co. Ltd. - Hongkong** for atmospheric and high temperature dyeing machines for all kinds of knitted and woven fabrics, high temperature package dyeing machines and dryers including Radio Frequency Dryer
6. **Otto Funke GmbH & Co. KG - Germany** for high class energy efficient jiggers for atmospheric dyeing having directly driven rollers without any kind of gear boxes
7. **Barco N. V. - Belgium** for Monitoring Systems and cotton sorters
8. **Loepfe Brothers Ltd. - Switzerland** for Electronic Yarn Clearers and Monitoring Systems
9. **Verbrugge N. V. - Belgium** for all Weaving accessories
10. **Textilmaschinenfabrik Dr. Ernst Fehrer AG - Austria** for Friction spinning & Non/woven plants
11. **Crosrol Ltd. - U.K.** for Bale Pluckers, Blow Room Machinery and High Production Cards with Autolevellers
12. **ECC Card Clothing Ltd. - U.K. & ECC Card Clothing (Asia) Pvt. Ltd., Pune - India** for Metallic Wires and Card Clothings and tops

For full particulars please contact at:

Ahmedabad office: Cambatta Central, Bharat Bobbins Ltd Premises, Rakhial Road, Ahmedabad 380023

Phone: (079) 2740925/2744500

Fax: (079) 2742651/2743649 E-mail: engamd@enaindia.com

"We killed Kili!"

An adventurous Zoroastrian couple is trying to scale the highest peaks in each continent, beginning with Mt Kilimanjaro

"I was sure that I had had enough. The sun was beginning to rise in the east and the moon was setting in the west. The wind was whipping up snow-devils. There was no time for loitering here. 'I'm continuing to the summit,' I said. Deep within, I reached and reached. I literally have no idea how I got to my feet. It was another hour and a half from Gilman's Point up to the true summit, consisting a tiring but straight-forward final trudge up to Uhuru (Freedom) Peak (19,342 ft/5,895m). I was not walking on rock, but solid ice all the way along the crater rim. The snow and ice was packed ankle deep. At the top there was no view to be had, only a howling whiteout. It felt as if I had just swum under a pool cover into the deep end, and now that my chest was heaving it was time to turn around and come back up for air. I felt withdrawn, using all my strength to stay standing. We had done it!"

Ronnie Shroff's first person account of the assault on Mt Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, may raise visions of a professional mountain climber. Not so. Shroff, with a masters in information technology from the University of Hawaii is pursuing his doctorate in Hong Kong University where he also works as a research assistant. His fiancée and partner in "crime," Zenobia Bhappoo, is an ex-Bombay girl who flies for Cathay Pacific and has been living in Hong Kong for the past 14 years. Incidentally, Zenobia reached Kilimanjaro before Shroff! *Parsiana* presents an edited and abridged version of their five-day opus, September 11 to September 15, 2000:

"After signing in the registration book we started our climb from the park headquarters at Marangu Gate (6,000 ft). The first day was a short hike that passed through highland forest to 9,000 ft. The rain forest was striking and the 'pole'

(a Swahili expression meaning 'slowly' we'd hear over and over) pace was manageable. After three hours we reached our first campsite, Mandara Hut (9,000 ft)... Panga, the cook had prepared a good meal of potatoes with vegetable curry-like sauce and an unidentified meat product. After dinner, it took us 4.3 seconds to crawl into our warm sleeping bags. Another 2.6 sec-



Shroff: en route to the summit

onds, and we were sound asleep.

"Day 2 started off with a bright and early wake-up call and we were both herded off to breakfast. This day was the first of our 'high-altitude' climb and the order from Edwin the guide was 'pole-pole.' The hike was demanding and the air became noticeably thinner as we progressed slowly and conservatively through the meandering forest toward Horombo (12,334 ft). Horombo Hut greeted us with a misty and cold coat covering its perimeter. The temperature had dropped to five degrees Celsius as we ascended through the forest. A mischievous wind started making its presence felt in the evening and assisted in dropping the temperature to uncomfortable new lows. The dinner of lentil soup, bread, potatoes, rice with vegetables, coffee and tea greeted us and contained our appetite till the next morning. We rounded the evening off, headed for our huts and fell quickly into a deep sleep.

"The next morning we awoke to the glorious sight of Kilimanjaro's dormant volcanic cone which was regally revealed to our awe as the mist imprisoning Horombo melted away. This was our first 'close-up' of Kilimanjaro's summit. Shortly the summit was enveloped by cloud, and our romantic vision was now being challenged by the reality of the day's climb to Zebra Rock. The sole

purpose of this gratuitous exercise was acclimatization to the altitude. The motto is: Climb high, sleep low. We walked at a modest and steady pace through the moorland of Horombo up to Zebra Rock. The walk back to Horombo was our first downhill walk on Kilimanjaro! That evening a very dense mist covered our campsite, obscuring the peak and making it very difficult to see anything. Edwin came to

our hut at 6.00 p.m. with some not so subtle news. "Six French go back today. Very rainy." We chuckled, but then seriously weighed our options. It was only an eight-hour hike back to civilization, warmth, tea, shower and clean clothes. He cautioned us that tomorrow would be a very difficult day, almost definitely the most demanding physical 24 hours of our lives.

"The peak was still hiding behind mountains of clouds when we set out from Horombo on the fourth day. The saddle between the twin peaks of Mawenzi and Uhuru was on the menu, 10 kilometers of high alpine desert we'd patiently been waiting for since day one. First, though, we had to negotiate a tricky section through a meadow, balancing atop tufts of grass to get to the saddle.

"Steady rain turned to stinging hail at 13,500 ft and driving snow by 14,500. If we were too wet and cold to celebrate the fact that then and there we were higher than Mt Kinabalu (13,455 ft), our



With Best Wishes from

Leopold Cafe

A Century Old Cafe

Since 1871

Colaba Causeway, Mumbai 400039

Tel: 2873362, 2020131 Fax: 91-22-2852037



Bhappoo, Shroff and the challenging, exhilarating mountains

last summit, how fun was it going to be then, at 19,000? Our footing was getting surely slower as we trudged through snow covered talus and scree.

We trudged into Kibo Hut (15,520 ft) at 3.00 p.m. (after seven hours) and opted for an afternoon nap after our mandatory cup of hot tea and cookies.

"Our wake-up call was at 23 hours and after donning full battle-dress, we waited for midnight to arrive. At the stroke of midnight, in the blackness of the night, we strolled out of the dank hut and into the light of a hazy moon and began our 'assault' on the final 3,800 ft or so remaining to the summit. Madness? Surely. But it was the only way to be there for sunrise between 6 and 6.30 a.m.

"The air was so thin that I was inhaling on one step, exhaling on the next. Edwin led the way followed by Zen (Zenobia). I traced her exact footsteps, which were easy to find in the deep snow. We continued. A full moon lit our path, so much so that we didn't even need our flashlights. After three hours of picking our way up and over fuzzy forms in steadily falling snow, we took a short breather in Hans Meyer Cave where a rest was welcome. I peered at my watch: three hours since we left camp. It was definitely well below freezing and our

jackets and pants were covered with ice. It was at this point that we decided it would be best to split up into two groups as Zen was keeping a faster pace. Zen followed Edwin and I tagged behind Panga. I need to rest longer. I stopped again. I thought of the poor French team that hadn't made it the night before. 'Ronnie we must continue. We can reach the top today,' Panga said. At least that is what I thought he said — the wind rustled on every breath and obscured about every other word of his broken English. I continued to trudge along. Zen had disappeared with Edwin and I continued to plod up the slope at 'pole-pole' pace.

"Traversing this trail was like climbing a ladder with every second rung broken off. Lungs heaved in the thin air and the occasional gust wicked the heat that reached down inside my soul, chilling to the center. But with the gust's exit came the next heaving step, and the next. We were in effect no less isolated than those who assault Everest and, given our level of preparedness, the conditions were only marginally more favorable. The situation looked potentially dangerous. Even the rest stops were difficult since it was the consistent activity that kept us warm. When that activity stopped, so did the inner furnace. The chill cut through quickly, motivating us to continue.

"Progress was slow but steady as the

snow got deeper and we ascended the base of the Wall, a brutally steep talus slope with 44 switchbacks (hairpin curves) up to the crater rim. At times we had to plow a course straight up, our only option since the trail was hopelessly hidden under the snow. I got a good rhythm going, planting two poles in front of me and then stepping up herringbone fashion through the snow, one foot at a time. The thin air was taking its toll. Inhale, exhale, step and sink. Inhale, exhale, step and sink. Panga called out when we were one hour from Gilman's Point, a landmark along the route — the end of the worst of the steep slopes.

"One more hour turned out to be two. After seven relentless hours of upward plodding, stopping only for a couple of minutes on the hour, we reached Gilman's Point (18,630 ft), the top of the volcanic cone perimeter. Gilman's Point was the moment of ruthless truth. I sat there for less than two minutes. With great effort I dragged out a camera and Panga took my picture. From here I could see the amazing sight of the incredulous glaciers and stalactites draped over the volcanic rock. As I rose to walk on to the summit, I saw a number of members from other teams who were not able to continue to the summit. Their fast pace on the mountain, and no acclimatization day had finally dealt them an unkind reality. Gilman's would be their point of descent on Kilimanjaro..."

After scaling Kilimanjaro Shroff started on his return journey:

"At 20 below, and a wind chill factor near -35, I had to descend. It took about an hour to reach Gilman's Point. It was only clear to me from that moment that going down was going to be just as tough as going up. But, with each step the air gained viscosity. My feet were frozen solid. I accepted the congratulations of the guides and porters as I arrived at Kibo. Zen, who had anxiously been awaiting my return was there to greet me. We both hugged and congratulated each other with our summit success. We then crawled into the hut to sleep for two hours before our descent back to Horombo. After some 16 hours and 50 minutes of hiking since midnight, we reached Horombo campsite. We slept almost straight through until the next morning while it rained ceaselessly.

"Panga woke us around 6 a.m. We threw everything in our backpacks with little regard for cleanliness. After a brief breakfast, we set out for the last day of

Life is a Journey, Travel with us.



- Online reservation system for Domestic and International Airline bookings
- Hotel reservations for all major countries
- Assistance in issuance of Business/Tourist/Student and Immigrant Visas.
- Domestic and International package tours.
- Authorised passport agents.
- Udwada package from Pune with a stop at Lonavala Agiary (subject to minimum passengers)

NTA **NAPOLITAN**
TRAVEL AGENCY CO. PVT. LTD.

Cannaught Plaza, F2, 1st floor, Opp G P O, 5 Cannaught Road, Pune 411001
Tel 6128789, 6053265-266, 6119570 • Fax 6135685
E-mail nta@vsnl.com • www.ntaworld.com

hiking. Every step, I envisioned the certificate I earned hanging prominently in my room. After five hours of hiking we arrived at the Marangu Park headquarters. Our adventure was complete. We signed the log book, took the 'after' photos, tipped the porters and guides and reflected. We had somehow made it to the top of a 19,000-ft mountain, and would carry the memory of that accomplishment for the rest of our lives."

With a passion for the outdoors Shroff and Bhappoo are an ambitious pair. With Kili in the bag, they set their sights on Mt Aconcagua, South America's highest peak at 6,956m in January 2001. Though they failed to reach the top, they made their adventure pay by way of sponsors helping them collect Rs 1,20,000 which was donated to Child Relief and You (CRY) in India, informs Bhappoo.

Next year they hope to clamber up Mt Elbrus, Europe's highest peak, on the border of Russia and Georgia. Bhappoo is excited about their plans. Thereafter they are targeting Mt Kosciuszko in New South Wales, Australia, Mt McKinley in Alaska, Vinson Massif in the Antarctica and, finally, Mt Everest. In ascending order, they are the tallest peaks in each continent.

Zenobia is the daughter of Bandrabased Homi and Nergish Bhappoo. Her sisters Maharukh and Mehernaz fly for Air India. The eldest, Dilnavaz, is based in the US and enjoys skydiving.

Shroff is the son of Dina who retired as an English professor at the University of Hongkong and the late Homi. Of his two sisters, Sooni Gander is a freelance journalist and Roshni Muscarello, his twin, is a marketing executive. Bhappoo ascribes their fascination with mountain climbing to their love of the outdoors and to Shroff's cousin Cyrus Commissariat who introduced them to ice-climbing with a trip to an over 10,000-ft-high volcano in the US and some skydiving. "We loved it. We like the height and the exhilaration. It is both challenging and threatening..."

Mody and HK University

While on the subject of Hongkong Zoroastrians we learn from Jimmy Master that at the beginning of the 20th century "the only big daddy in Hongkong with money to spare" was Hormusjee Navrojee Mody. He was the largest benefactor to respond to Governor Frederick Lugard's call for funds to found a local university. To commemorate his lar-

gesse a bust of his was placed in the entrance foyer of the building that was erected.

With the passage of time, the memory of Mody has faded. His bust has been moved to a less conspicuous spot and "if you ask anyone at the University who Mody was, you would most probably get a blank stare," notes Master. Some time ago Prof C. N. Kumana of the University's medical department had suggested to the Incorporated Trustees of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hongkong, Canton and Macau to approach the University to name a building after Mody, but it seems that no one took up the issue, adds Master.

Waghmar's Talenthill

Wanting "to pursue something on (his) own," Sarosh Waghmar joined up with Pierre Bogacz to found Talenthill, a new start-up in Austin, Texas aimed at providing software that would enable businesses to understand and staff their consulting projects on line. More than an exchange where a client can try to match up with a consultant, Talenthill.com's products help the client determine if a consultant is required and of what genre. "We educate you," says Waghmar.

Quoting figures provided by the International Data Corporation, a market research company based in Framingham, Massachusetts, the Talenthill write-up notes that the worldwide Internet services which totalled \$ 34.6 billion in 1999, is expected to reach \$ 63.9 billion in 2003.

Waghmar and Bogacz, both originally consultants at the Houston base of Deloitte and Touche, one of the world's five major consultancy firms, set up Talenthill in Austin to be better able to access the expertise of Dr Anitesh Barua, associate director of the Center for Research in Electronic Commerce at the University of Texas in Austin.

"Being in the consulting world I realized that there are certain areas that still had been untapped and where the Internet could play a major role in revolutionizing the way we do business," writes Waghmar. The company aims to be a leading player in the professional services procurement infrastructure arena, he notes, adding, "Currently we do not have any direct competition." A feather in the cap of the young company is that it has been backed by leading individual investors from Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, according to the write-ups re-

ceived by Parsiana.

Waghmar went on to the University of Texas at Austin after completing junior college at Bombay's H. R. College of Commerce, graduating with economic honors with concentration in computer science in 1998.

Another Zoroastrian associated with Talenthill is Houston's Ruzbeh Gonda. Having graduated from the University of Texas along with Waghmar, Gonda is a solution architect for Talenthill. In an e-mail to Parsiana Waghmar had wished "there were a lot more opportunities for young Parsi entrepreneurs in the US... if there was some infrastructure in place which could guide and help folks with setting up their business."

Legionnaire Zubin

Maestro Zubin Mehta has been much in the news over the turn of the millennium, most recently for having been named Knight of the Legion of Honor by French president Jacques Chirac at a ceremony at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

A socially and politically conscious artiste, Mehta had led the Belgrade Philharmonic through Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* and Tchaikovsky's *Fourth Symphony* in a concert attended by Yugoslav president Vojislav Kostunica. Mehta was the first international virtuoso to perform in Belgrade after the country's return to democracy, noted *The Times of India* (November 8, 2000). He said he had selected these two works because of their "great inner sense of destiny and victory... both end with a huge victory of spirit." The concert proceeds were slated for a pediatric hospital in that city.

Mehta, who celebrates 30 years as director of the Israel Philharmonic, and Daniel Barenboim, currently director general of Berlin's Staatskapelle who made his debut as a piano soloist 50 years ago, according to *The Times* (April 30, 2001), gave a second concert in Berlin, in aid of the earthquake victims of Gujarat, on March 26, 2001, under the patronage of German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. Mehta had received the Padma Bhushan from the Indian government on the day of the disastrous quake.

Initially the demand for tickets was distressingly weak, noted the India Abroad News Service but eventually the two men who have known each other for

continued on page 56

THE MOST RELIABLE TURBINE BYPASS AND REHEATER SPRAY WATER CONTROL VALVES FOR STEAM POWER GENERATION :



MAZDA - Financially and technically
affiliated with Croll-Reynolds Co. inc. NJ U.S.A.

KAUER-MAZDA offers the widest and most complete range of hypercritical control valves for power plants including :

- High pressure heater bypass valve.
- Minimum flow water re-circulation valve.
- Feed water control valve.
- Superheater spray water valve.
- High pressure heater attemperator valve.
- Low pressure heater attemperator valve.
- Feed water tank attemperator valve.
- Spray water control valve.
- High pressure heater drain valve.
- Low pressure heater bypass valve.

The combined resources and experience of Kauer and Mazda offer you world class valves which gives high performance and dependability even in hypercritical conditions at realistic cost.

- Valves available in forged block body construction
- Ratings up to 2500# lbs.
- Sizes up to 24".
- Plasma nitrided trim for excellent performance and life.
- Unique, superior spray water injection designs.
- Precise designs to avoid thermal shocks & stresses during water injection.
- Faster deliveries.
- Assured, quick after sales services whenever needed.

"DESUPERHEATING IN POWER PLANTS" We wrote the book.
Please visit us at : <http://www.mazdalimited.com>

Mazda House,
Panchwati 2nd Lane,
Ambawadi,
Ahmedabad 380 006
INDIA
Phone :
6431014, 6431151,
6431654, 6405277
Fax :
079-6565605
E-Mail :
mazda@ad1.vsnl.net.in



An Indo-American and German Joint Venture



FREE

Steam
desuperheating
guide for
power plant
engineers



For Pure Diamonds

K. WADIA

JEWELLERS (Since 1901)

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

The Mehta-Maneck match

The issues of housing, integrity, vision and electoral procedures dominated the election campaign between BPP sitting trustee Dinshaw Mehta and challenger Maneck Engineer

Arnavaz S. Mama

It wasn't really a surprise that master strategist Dinshaw Mehta beat his rival Maneck Engineer to regain his BPP (Bombay Parsi Punchayet) trusteeship and begin his second seven-year term by a margin of 120 votes. Proposed by Athornan Mandal vice president Cowasjee Dinshaw (Adenwala) and seconded by solicitor Rusi Sethna he had neatly tied up support through the full spectrum of community opinion from the most orthodox to the most reformist. Besides, by consistent application to the problems of the Punchayet, Mehta has endeared himself to a cross-range of the community and especially those whose worries regarding housing, water supply, maintenance, etc he has successfully addressed.

Maneck Engineer, a civil engineer and architect by training and profession, is the vice president (constructions) of Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited who has been the Godrej interface in many of their dealings with the community, specifically the construction of Godrej Baug, the greening of Doongerwadi at the behest of the BPP, the construction of the time capsule that was interred at Sanjan last November as also in the construction of other Zoroastrian housing colonies such as Ahuna in Thana, the Gilder Baug in Andheri, etc.

Though 784 members of the Anjuman Committee (AC) eventually cast their votes, by the time the doors closed at 5 p.m., it had been a largely low-key election. By noon, i.e. in the first two hours, 400 members had exercised their franchise. And the last hour, from 4 to 5 p.m. which often sees hectic polling, dragged on to the end with just about 28 members casting their ballot in the final 25 minutes of the day. The statistics indicated that 523 elected members and 261 donors (from a total AC membership of 1,422 as in February 2001) made the trip

to Khareghat Colony's Khareghat Hall to cast their vote.

A source of friction was the positioning of the four booths with the BPP's and Mehta's facing each other close to the Khareghat Hall steps. Next to Mehta's booth was the canteen and to the far end, was placed Engineer's booth. As trustees seeking reelection are, by definition, more adept at the game than the novice challenger, this type of arrangement bred much heartburn in the Engineer camp, especially as they saw trustees freely crisscrossing between the Mehta and BPP booths where electors sans certificates sought identification and duplicates (among them 52 from the elected register and 25 from the donor register). Whether it was so or not, the perception was that all such individuals were pressured in favor of Mehta.

Mehta, with all his many qualities of head and heart dedicated to the BPP tasks, is not known for tact or a gentle approach. As an array of sympathizers including Dinshaw, Sethna, Dr Mehroo Bengalee, B. S. Bhesania, Khushroo P. Byramjee, Dadi K. Contractor, Zal K. Contractor, Jangoo R. Gagrati, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Rustom Jejeebhoy, Mithoo J. Jesia, Bakhtavar N. Karbhari, Farrokh K. Kavarana, Kersi J. Limathwalla, Dr Freddie A. Mehta, Nariman E. Mehta, Silla B. Motivala, Fali A. Poncha, Sam P. Rao, Dr Rustom P. Soonawala, Dr Rushad T. Udawadia endorsed in the *Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly* (May 20, 2001), "All of us know that Dinshaw is a rough diamond. He has never resorted to any pretence or false airs. He is truly a son of the soil. It is this trait of calling a spade, a spade which has earned Dinshaw many opponents. His honesty of approach, his brutally frank manner, his refusal to budge an inch on what he believes are issues of principle — have all made him one of the most remarkably successful trustees of our times."

From the opposing team Sarosh Daruwalla was distressed that he was not permitted to sit in the BPP enclosure despite BPP senior executive Nergish Irani's invitation to be present to oversee the duplicate certificates issued. He claimed that Mehta told him curtly to "please vacate your seat." Daruwalla and his team considered this unfair when Mehta and his friends could go in and out of the BPP enclosure at will.

Another source of misgiving was that pro-Mehta trustees approached the invalid voters who were unable to climb to the polling booth on the first floor and one was said to have been led to Mehta's booth by the scrutineer. Protests with BPP trustee Dadi Engineer and election president Rustom Hormuzdiar corrected this slip up but the mind frame had been jiggered.

Dissatisfaction had begun to seethe the night before as both teams sought to ready the scene for the following morning. Maneck Engineer's supporters questioned the positioning of the respective booths which BPP's chief engineer (maintenance) Noshir Medhora had been charged to erect. They claimed that Mehta brusquely informed them, "Medhora né hoo kévus téj é karsé (Medhora will do exactly what I tell him to do)!" Maneck Engineer informed *Parsiana* that his team summoned him when they found Mehta's posters all over the scene, including the Khareghat Hall building and were removed only on Dadi Engineer's intercession. Noted Mahiyar Das-toor, a self-employed member of Maneck Engineer's team from the Dadar Parsi Colony, "People from all over the world look at the BPP as the apex body of the community. Yet the sethias are going from baug to baug politicizing!"

By the time the ballots had been separated into their respective boxes trustee Rustom Tirandaz and business-

continued on page 26



Left to Right (First row) Outside the Mehta and Engineer booths; (second row) BPP staff with executives Aibara and Crawford; BPP trustees Guzder, Minoo Shroff, Dinshaw Tamboly, D. Engineer and Tirandaz (third row) on the stretch leading up to Khareghat Hall with Noshir Mehta and Contractor in the foreground; candidates' representatives keeping count of voters; S. Kavarana (fourth row) Ballot boxes; BPP senior executive Sheroo Master, Hormuzdiar, scrutineer Homai Modi, BPP CEO Dastur and scrutineer Rusi Bhungara; Winner Mehta (Photos: Arnavaz S. Mama)



Baroda: A meeting of hearts

The Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth organized the first ever all-India matrimonial meet

"When two hearts start to beat as one, it is magic," the delegates were reminded at the first Heart Meet hosted by the Baroda United Zoroastrian Youth (BUZY) from April 6 to 8, 2001. "We got very positive feedback and already five couples have decided (to tie the knot)," stated Cyrus Cooper, president of BUZY, who is acknowledged as the brain behind this venture.

Starting with the ice breaking session on the first day the delegates, the majority of whom had come from Bombay, Surat and Ahmedabad, with a few from Poona, Indore, Agra, Delhi, Calcutta and Hyderabad, were provided many occasions to interact with each other. The males at the Meet, in the age-group of 25-50, outnumbered the females in the age-group of 20-37 by 3:1, mentioned Homiyar Anklesaria, chief coordinator for the event, who reiterated that "the success of the Meet lies more in the firsthand interaction of the youth with each other rather than (in) animated matchmaking processes."

The 165 delegates (125 males and 40 females) had been divided into groups by the organizers according to their educational, financial and geographical compatibility as revealed in the delegate registration form filled out earlier. They were made to wear badges displaying their name, age-group and photograph. Special Personal Relations Officers (PROs) who were primarily mature adults constantly intermingled with the youth and provided a balanced opinion and guidance, noted a report in *ZEND* (April 2001), the quarterly house magazine of the Shree Parsi Panchayat, Vadodara (VPP). Interactive sessions, games, outings and dances kept the delegates happily engaged during the two-and-a-half days of activities following the jashan ceremony and inauguration on the lawns of Hira Baug when working committee members Phiroza Cama and Khushnuma Bhesania ably compered the proceedings.

Present VPP secretary and senior trustee Boman Cama presided over the

inaugural function in the absence of president Jal R. Patel who was out of town. Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) trustee Dinshaw Tamboly who was the guest of honor observed that when the fairer sex, which according to him is the stronger one, make up their minds, there is no option for the weaker sex (the men) but to yield.

Chief guest Mithoo Jesia who runs the Mancherji Edulji Joshi Trust matrimonial bureau counselled, "Come to the Heart Meet with a purpose. *Khaavaa peevaanu ané masti-majaa tau karvanij chhè* (we are certainly going to eat, drink and be merry) but you must also try to understand each other."

Her advice was particularly relevant as one PRO Pinky Contractor reported that some girls refused introductions to the interested boys stating, 'I have come here to enjoy and have no immediate plans for marriage.' It should be made clear to all the delegates that at Heart Meet the only purpose is matrimony, she stressed. Another PRO Sunnu Kasad remarked that the PROs should have an opportunity to chat with the members of their respective groups to assess each delegate's thinking and seriousness. Failure to do this resulted in some delegates mingling with former acquaintances during the free time and at meals, etc. Some of the delegates told their PRO Shirin Wadia that the third day's program should have scheduled events for the full day instead of only half the day as participants were busy concentrating on their departure instead of further availing of acquaintance opportunities.

The volunteers' untiring efforts to conduct the programs on schedule and to raise the necessary finance whereby the delegates could be hosted on a registration fee of just Rs 200 per head earned the appreciation of both the participants and invitees. Their prior experience of hosting the XIth All India Youth Seminar in 1997 had also given them the necessary confidence, acknowledges one volunteer. Members of BUZY are a fluid group "consisting of 9th to 12th graders

in school, hyped-up collegiates, youngsters just in service or starting small businesses...constantly reaching out for their buzzing beepers and cell phones, juggling office or site work."

As narrated one of the volunteers in his diary, "The organizers started fund-raising in Bombay, Poona and other cities from December 2000...Many large corporates with able Zoroastrian stewardship expressed their inability to advertise for a community-based program, and similarly, Zoroastrian trusts cited that their objects permitted only educational and relief causes." And with considerable charity funds being diverted towards the devastating earthquake in Gujarat "the working committee had to put in all the more effort to raise funds for the present event," notes a report from Anklesaria. Reiterated former VPP president Savak Patel, "Events such as these have to be conducted regularly and there is a need to form a corpus amount from the interest of which such events could be conducted on a long-term basis." While the organizers were appreciative of the generous contributions from Naryman Dubash, the BPP, Jamshed Guzder, the World Zoroastrian Organisation, Tamboly, the VPP, Jesia and her team members from the Dadar Parsi Colony, they felt more support, both functional and financial is required.

As Anklesaria who had to juggle a job, examinations and the event explained, "Our hope is to generate an atmosphere for each boy and girl to think in terms of marriage within the community and be assured of opportunities of finding a suitable match in one of such functions." The data collected for this event was to be included on the matrimonial page on BUZY's website www.buzy.org which was designed and created in record time by Hosidar Patwa for launch during the Heart Meet. The website has had 1,358 hits, even from distant Netherlands, Nigeria, USA and Japan, reported *ZEND*. Besides giving information on BUZY and its activities, the website also gives news on the Baroda

MASTER GROUP OF COMPANIES



www.mastergroups.com

Corporate Office:

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

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

Cable: "MOORINGS" Telex: 118-2119 MMSB Email: mmsplb@mastergroups.com

Administrative Office:

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

Tel: 2692787 (10 Lines) Fax: 91-22-2652841 Cable: "SHIPMENT"

Email: prudential@mastergroups.com



**MASTER
MARINE** *Services*
913. 239.

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



**Prudential Shipping Agencies
Private Limited**

*Shipping Agents, Cargo Brokers and
Multi Transport Operators*



**Meher Container Terminals
Private Limited**

*(A division of MMSPL)
Yard and CFS management*



Kalson Power Tech Private Limited
Hydro-Power

** Where Growth Is A Way Of Life **



Top row: Entertainment at Heart Meet; middle row: On the dais (from left) S. Patel, Tamboly, B. Cama, Jesia and Anklesaria and a section of the audience; bottom row (from left): Felicitations for Baroda's eldest Zoroastrian and former VPP president Goolbanoo Wadia with Ruhshad Cama and Aadil Bavaadam; Cooper and S. Patel; Jesia and Anklesaria

community and covers the Zoroastrian religion and prayers.

Formed under the auspices of the VPP in 1988, BUZY was registered as a charitable trust in 1997-98, notes an introduction to the association in the souvenir brought out on the occasion. "The Heart Meet project is the response

of BUZY to the serious issue of population decline of the Zoroastrian community," mentions Cooper in the souvenir, adding that "the activities for the event started as long as a year back when a draft idea of the entire project was prepared. Guidance and perspective from many community elders was taken on the subject..." As pointed out Cooper, although the youth seminars are very popular, they do not go that extra mile for matchmaking and the youth of today being averse to animated matchmaking. BUZY thought of combining the two in a seminar conducive to matrimony. Commending the BUZY team which "has been extremely successful in efficiently organizing get-togethers of this type," Jal Patel was optimistic in his message,

"the Meet will provide an environment which will enable the participants to gather and exchange ideas on our religious and social values...with the ultimate aim of encouraging matrimony among the Zoroastrian youth."

As remarked Tamboly after the close of the Meet, "The interest among the participants to leave no stone unturned in their quest to form lifelong alliances with members of our faith augurs well for the future well-being of our community...If members of our community can develop the vision, wisdom, and maturity to undertake such positive endeavors instead of focusing on controversies and contentious issues as we unfortunately seem to revel in, the community can indeed look forward to a better and brilliant future."

BLOOD CAN KILL



AIDS BEWARE !

We are Concerned as a Corporate Citizen.

KRUPP INDUSTRIES INDIA

(An ISO 9001 Company)

GLOBE THEATRES Pvt Ltd

Established
April 3, 1915

Pioneers of Show Business
in India for
the last 86 years

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

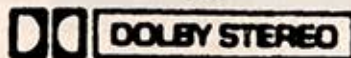
NOTHING BUT THE BEST

to our ever increasing
number of Patrons

Controlling:

REGAL
BOMBAY
•
CAPITOL
BOMBAY
•
GLOBE
CALCUTTA

All the above Cinemas have
now been equipped with



Sound System

THE MEHTA-MANECK MATCH *continued from page 21*

man supporter Byramjee were already predicting a Mehta lead of 125 votes. The final verdict was 450 to Mehta, 330 to Engineer and four invalid votes. By then Engineer had already returned Silloo Kavarana's embrace, shaken hands with the winner and departed the scene.

An emotional Mehta hugged Kavarana first before acknowledging the congratulations of his supporters all whom got a bear hug and a volley of thanks.

When BPP president Jamshed Guzder formally announced the results (the fire crackers had exploded well before that) an emotionally overwrought Mehta said to the assembled community, "There have been a lot of allegations against me, my father, my family. Thank you for not believing them."

Core group

Mehta is the son of oft-elected, popular Bombay municipal corporator Rusi Mehta who was assassinated thanks to his long-running battle with the mafia. A chemical engineer who renounced his educational career to take over the supervision of the family business and real estate when his father opted for politics, Mehta's most recent business achievement is the construction of the P&O pier at Nhava Sheva.

One of the original core group of the now moribund CER (originally the Committee for Electoral Rights and presently the Committee for Economic Revival), Mehta had masterminded the electoral campaigns of all his former CER colleagues, the most recent example being that of Silloo Kavarana's close reelection in March 2000 against the stiff challenge of B. D. Petit Parsee General Hospital's joint honorary secretary Zarir Bhathena. There have been significant occasions, of course, when the contender has been too weighty to need strategy, but there have been as many occasions when the Mehta touch made a difference to the verdict.

Significantly, this was the first time Mehta personally fought a trusteeship election. On his first entry he had walked in unopposed when the man who was expected to walk in unopposed, solicitor Dadi Engineer, suddenly withdrew in Mehta's favor. Mehta's nomination had been filed at the eleventh hour!

Perhaps this history explains the elaborate campaign mounted by Mehta

and some of his BPP co-trustees. For with Mehta's well-known priority for Panchayet welfare, significantly reiterated in the *Jamé*, it seemed unnecessary to the point of being counter productive. For if a man is always available to his community at all hours of day or night, the community is unlikely to forget his good offices.

At the Rustom Baug meet addressed by Mehta and his supporters, Daraiyus Bhappoo referred to the colony's water problems and added, "We reached out to all the trustees (but it was) Mehta who was caught... Mehta is always there to pull the chestnuts out of the fire," he emphasized.

Like Kavarana, Mehta is short on words and generally shies away from addressing the gathering at public functions. "Till this campaign began Mehta had never made a speech in his life," asserted co-trustee Dadi Engineer, adding, "Today will be the first time he'll be speaking in the microphone," and was corrected to "No, the sixth!"

Iterating the qualities required of a trustee — scrupulous honesty, the ability to apply one's mind with vision for the community, to devote sufficient time and bring his own background and expertise to bear on Panchayet affairs — Dadi Engineer noted that Mehta devotes "six to seven hours a day, day in day out to the affairs of the BPP; wears honors lightly; is totally familiar with every single building project of the BPP; has taken keener interest than all six of us put together. He is the man on the spot. Within 10 minutes of an SOS Mehta is there. All of us say, 'Let new faces come in,' (but if Mehta) is not elected, we will lose the services of a very valuable member of the community."

Answering the oft repeated query, 'why are trustees interested in electioneering?' Dadi Engineer claimed it as "our duty to support such a man, especially in the present context when the man is so maligned... so hurt by poison letters."

Scurrilous letters have been a part of BPP trusteeship elections over the past two decades. Though most contestants are honorable men who are hurt and dismayed to be accused of such indignity, at each election, and often between elections as well, disgruntled community members are known to shoot off poison letters under pseudonyms with fictitious addresses.

On his part Mehta has been accused



Left to Right: Mehta supporters Maneck Daver, F. Kavarana and Byramjee; Engineer backers Dastur and Meher Panthaky

of beefing up his own coffers as well as that of the BPP at the expense of the poor and needy of the community. The source of misgivings lay in the BPP's new policy of accepting 40 percent of the market price of a flat as a donation by cheque to the BPP to change the rent receipt in the name of the new occupant. This is a marked change from the older policy of pursuing legal action against tenants and illegal inductees that took decades of time and cost a fortune in legal fees. The change, unanimously adopted by the BPP board, has led to a substantial rise in the Punchayet's corpus. Mehta was at pains to point out to his Rustom Baug audience that these "transfer fees" pertained only to occupied flats, "flats that are already tenanted," and not to vacant flats which are "given on the basis of merit rating only... This needs to be clarified in light of maligning letters," he added. In letters to voters as well as in the *Jamé* Mehta noted, "I have never taken a single rupee for personal gain in the allotment of any flat or any other BPP matter. I have never made directly or indirectly any financial gain in the discharge of my duties and obligations as a trustee of the Punchayet. All donations, transfer fees and deposits have been received by cheques favoring the BPP and that too only after the unanimous approval by the entire board of trustees of the BPP. Whatever has been received has gone to increase the corpus of the BPP."

The Godrej connection

Maneck Engineer, on his part, was strafed by anti-Godrej propagandists who accused him of being instrumental in us-

ing the Godrej quota of 90 flats at Godrej Baug entirely for the purpose of rehousing their Zoroastrian staff. Engineer explains that it is the Pirojsha Godrej Foundation that provided the construction help for Godrej Baug and made the allocation and not the Soonabai Godrej Foundation of which he is a trustee. Denying that all allocations from the Godrej quota at Godrej Baug went only to Godrej employees past and present, Engineer notes that when these allotments were made in the 1980s and early 1990s there were over 1,000 Parsis employed by Godrej. "How many of them could be accommodated in 90 flats? And is it a sin to employ Parsis or to give them flats?" he asks. In a clarification issued by his team, Engineer's supporters who campaigned on his "integrity, accountability, vision and values," noted, "We have emphatically to state that neither Engineer nor his campaign team had on any occasion denigrated or maligned Dinshaw Mehta. In any case Dinshaw Mehta could have had an open debate on any knotty or contentious issues where Engineer would have been ever ready, able and willing to do so where the community at large could judge and weigh Engineer's view points as against his." It is well known that Mehta had no desire for an open debate.

Mehta's manifesto notes, "My more than 35 years' experience in the field of construction and repairs of buildings in (Bombay) has proved of immense help in addressing the maintenance, repairs and other housing problems of the BPP. I have continuously coordinated with municipal and other authorities in sorting out the problems faced by our colonies."

"Amongst other BPP projects, successfully completed or under progress during my term were the purchase of a plot for three crore rupees at Andheri for

new housing, 100 readymade flats being bought from Nirlon at Jogeshwari, construction of two skyscrapers at Panthaky Baug (112 flats), 50 flats at Dhunbai Wadi as well as over 100 flats at Navsari, 100 flats on slum encumbered plots on the opposite side of Panthaky Baug and 14 flats for transit accommodation at Dadar Parsi Colony.

"Any trustee who does not easily bend to show favor but adopts a bold, aggressive and practical approach has always met with the fiercest of criticism from persons who are affected by progress as well as from the disgruntled and dissatisfied. I have been instrumental in formulating a scheme of donors' right for flat nominees which has resulted in the corpus of the BPP increasing during my term from about Rs 16 crores to over Rs 50 crores. This has been criticized as 'commercialization of charity.'"

Mehta also envisages the creation of 2,280 new flats by redevelopment at Dadar, Khareghat Colony, Navroze Baug and Contractor Baug by the translation of the current MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority) policy, as per his manifesto.

Maneck Engineer cut his architectural teeth designing and constructing the various plants, colonies and schools at Pirojshanagar, the Godrej home base at Vikhroli. Proposing his candidature Godrej and Boyce chairman and managing director Jamshyd Godrej noted, "Engineer has been with Godrej for over 37 years and has sound knowledge about the Zoroastrian community, its history, its background and its present-day problems."

"Maneck is a man of integrity. He has a rational approach to life and has a balanced view and mild temperament and carries out the jobs entrusted to him efficiently and meticulously. His hallmark is his humility coupled with a capacity to care for persons less fortunate than himself." Engineer was seconded by his neighbor and committee member of the Parsi Lying-in Hospital Ratu Dastur.

In his manifesto Engineer introduced himself as "a trustee of the Soonabai P. Godrej Foundation since 1987, the Mewawalla Agiary, Byculla since 1988, the B. C. Batliwalla Agiary at Tardeo since 1997 and also on the committee of management of the Parsi Lying-in Hospital, which we are in the process of refurbishing and transforming into a

continued on page 30

Mehta on the move

Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustee elect Dinshaw Mehta prefers working from the wings rather than center stage

Arnavaz S. Mama

Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trustee Dinshaw Mehta is a man on the move. And media interviews feature low on his priorities. He would prefer to eschew them altogether, but when the journalist is a persistent female he believes, like Shakespeare's Falstaff, that discretion is the better part of valor, and tries to keep the meeting bikini length! Thus, a first interview appointment was aborted when Mehta had to leave *Parsiiana* and a host of other normal supplicants bereft 'cause an important meeting with a BPP builder/financier failed to conclude as planned. On the second occasion *Parsiiana's* questions were answered in 15 minutes flat!

The BPP office is almost like Mehta's home as he flits between tables and cabins, sorting out people's worries. That's what he is good at and enjoys doing. "The most frightening thing was to give speeches in the microphone," he admits candidly, adding, "So far I had only fought for other people. This was the first time I fought (an election) for myself. It was a learning experience (but) I would like to avoid it if possible!"

Like the other community professionals who drifted together in the late 1970s because "no one was aware of how a trustee was elected or who elected him or what the Anjuman Committee (AC) was," Mehta says he was shepherd-ed into the nascent CER (Committee for Electoral Rights) by activists Fali Poncha and Berjis Desai. At that time their activities were peripheral: getting community members to register on the general or D register so as to be able to elect the AC which elects trustees. It was the extensive mandate wrested by the CER against the conservative CUZ (Committee of United Zoroastrians) that led to

the retirement of conservative BPP chairman B. K. Boman-Behram and the advent of CER president Jamsheed Kanga onto the BPP board.



Mehta: a learning experience

Mehta's main — perhaps only — regret at pursuing community work with his customary zeal has been occasioned by the poison letters maligning him as well as his family, particularly his brother and late father. He realizes it is "probably someone whose application was rejected who is campaigning against me and my family...not my challenger or his supporters... But at such a time one feels, is it worth going through the effort, spending time and money (on community work) *jau gaar-aj khaavaa ni hoi tau* (if the end result is slander)!"

Deeply involved with his family — his vivacious wife Pansy is present at most community events and belongs to the group of Parsi social workers following in the footsteps of BPP trustee Silloo Kavarana — their three sons Viraf (24), Hormuz (20) and Darayus (15) are respectively pursuing their academic careers in MS (finance), second year law and 10th standard at St Mary's School. Though living in a cosmopolitan milieu the Mehtas' "close rapport with the Parsi community has made the boys aware of *Parsipanu*," says their father. "It is quite clear in their minds; they are unlikely to marry out," he feels.

Mehta's involvement with the Doongerwadi has been at the doing end: When the BPP won a case against two of the four Kharwa encroachers on the property, the practical Mehta prevailed on his co-trustees to pay them a compensation of five lakh rupees to prevent them from going into appeal and personally supervised the vacation of the property.

There are now two sheds constructed for 10 khandhias between those two spots.

As for the prevailing controversy over dakhmenashini, Mehta informed *Parsiiana* that the trustees had decided to reserve the Bisney dakhma and its environs for the construction of the aviary while the Banaji and Sethna dakhmas were being equipped with five solar reflectors each. [Each reflector is concentrated on a single body but since the time frame for dessicating the body is reduced from five months to five days ("during the monsoon double the time may be required," reckons Mehta) the high priests have agreed to it as a stop-gap measure until the aviary comes up, notes Mehta.] The Anjuman dakhma which has been fitted with an air purification system will continue with Khurshed Nigernishn in its pristine form. The trustees are simultaneously negotiating with the prominent doctors and lawyers of the DDD-AG (Disposal of the Dead with Dignity-Action Group which has been demanding space for funerary rites at Doongerwadi for those who opt for alternative methods of disposal) in an "approach toward consensus rather than driving people away," endorses Mehta.

Where he does not see eye-to-eye with his co-trustees is on the matter of amending the scheme for election of trustees. Five of them have filed for a revision that doubles the number of elected voters per donor member (currently elected members equal donor members) on the AC. Mehta and BPP cotrustee Rustom Tirandaz have filed a separate petition asking for universal adult franchise. As reasons Mehta, the next electoral college will be 3,000 strong assuming the 2:1 ratio goes through the High Court. At the last AC elections about 3,500 people voted. If adult franchise is accepted, about the same number of people can be expected to vote, *continued on page 30*

Equalling the election odds

Erstwhile trusteeship candidate Maneck Engineer proposes the creation of clear-cut electoral rules

Arnavaz S. Mama

Having shed the election tension Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing Company Limited vice president (constructions) Maneck Engineer, the erstwhile challenger for the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP) trusteeship, was his usual affable self, speaking to *Parsiana* in the familiar environs of Godrej Bhavan on June 6, 2001. The dejection of what he perceived as an unequal fight because of the prerogatives enjoyed by a sitting trustee backed by four others, was behind him as his thoughts focused on what needs to be done to amend the situation.

Reliving the scenario, Engineer says, "After I decided to stand for election, I wrote to the Punchayet asking for the bye-laws (governing the election procedure). I was told there is nothing like bye-laws and was quoted one clause from the scheme for election of trustees. I then got a copy of the scheme but it doesn't lay down any conditions."

Engineer, and especially his team of supporters, were upset at the allocation to them of a stall at the far end from the polling booth while sitting trustee Dinshaw Mehta had his stall facing that of the Punchayet's, with the canteen stall adjacent to his.

When Engineer's team discovered this on Friday night and protested, Dinshaw Mehta "openly said, '(Noshir) Medhora (BPP's chief engineer, maintenance) will do exactly as I tell him,'" notes Engineer. BPP CEO (chief executive officer) Behram Dastur, who came at 10 in the night from a function he was attending, noted that the position of the booths was the same as at the time of Silloo Kavarana's reelection in March 2000. "We felt that if the trustees are sponsoring him (Mehta), who are we? We felt dejected," admitted Engineer. Also, the candidate's posters are never permitted on the polling booth. Engineer says he had to appeal to BPP trustee Dadi Engineer to get Mehta's posters removed from the entrance to the Khareghat Hall building.

Engineer maintains that the two candidates stalls should have been facing each other at the entrance to the path leading up to the Khareghat Hall and thereby equidistant from the Punchayet's where the executives sit to identify voters who come without their Anjuman Committee certificates and need duplicates to be issued to them before proceeding to vote.

"The sitting trustee should not have any say. A neutral officer (like the election president Rustom Hormuzdiar) should be appointed much earlier to be able to instruct the staff on the various procedures, lay down conditions. He could then summon the candidates and get their cooperation to the position of their booths, the space for posters, etc, maintains Engineer. "In any election, the polling booth is 100 meters away from the candidates' booths. The same rule should be followed," he adds. "Increase the deposit (currently Rs 500) to Rs 5,000," he suggests, but maintain "something like ethics. The community was known for its ethics and ideals. *Havé baddhu khalaas thai gayuch* (now it's all gone)!"

A talking point of the election was the alleged enmity between Mehta and Engineer dating back to the construction of the Rusi Mehta Building at Godrej Baug donated by Dinshaw Mehta in memory of his father well before he became trustee. It was said that Mehta had asked for certain changes in design to accommodate more amenities to which Engineer, as the architect of Godrej Baug, had refused to accede. Eventually Mehta had appointed the BPP's architect Sam Rao to carry out the design and construction of his building.

"When there is a large project like Godrej Baug, the buildings should have

similarity. What Mehta proposed was different from the others, therefore I objected," says Engineer. The Mehta building has parking under the stilts as



Engineer: "the community was known for its ethics"

one of its plus points but Engineer says there are several buildings with parking under stilts "wherever we got the advantage of a ground slope. All buildings have their balconies enclosed and the area is the same. The column positions are the same... Some inside configuration might have changed but I haven't seen the interior (of the Mehta building). There was a difference of opinion about this building, that's all. The trustees gave in because they are all friends of Mehta. Four against one was the ratio," maintains Engineer.

Explaining that the Soonabai Godrej Foundation, of which he is trustee, holds 500 acres of land and has "nothing to do with Godrej Baug or allocation of flats," Engineer recalls that when Naoroji Godrej was trustee of the BPP in 1985-87 (the period to which the controversy regarding allotment of the Godrej quota of Godrej Baug flats pertains) there were more than 1,000 Parsis working in Godrej. He laughs at allegations that Godrej was emptying its own housing quarters at Vikhroli by shifting the inmates to Malabar Hill. Godrej got 50 percent allotment rights in buildings A, B and C and the full M block totalling about 80-85 flats over a period of 15 years. Considering the fact — now conveniently forgotten — that Naoroji Godrej stepped in to help with the construction of Godrej Baug when the BPP was strapped for cash, Engineer's loyalty to Godrej finds the carping hard to stomach.

Asserting that all formalities had been completed for the buildings commissioned under him, Engineer says that the

plot between buildings A and E is still lying fallow though it was dereserved in 1992 because the trustees wanted to proceed on their own. "Till now they have not been able to take up the project. Why, I do not know." He further adds, "Whenever they (BPP) can't do anything on their own, they come to Godrej and then they criticize Godrej," laughs Engineer citing the fabrication of the time capsule, the 3,000 truckloads of earth ferried for the greening of Doongerwadi, the expertise on the aviary project ("Rishad Naoraji is our man"). Explaining the Godrej credo Engineer avers,



Engineer with daughter Khushnuma and wife Zarin

"We are only concerned about the community. We don't care what the trustees say or do. Community *nu saaru thai tau bus* (if the community is fortified, that's enough)!"

Schooled at St Xavier's, Engineer grew up in Cusrow Baug, spending a lifetime there except for the years at Baroda University where he acquired his qualifications as civil engineer and architect from the faculty of technology and engineering. Though occasionally mystified by the vagaries of Parsi politics his wife Zarin and daughters Khushnuma and Delnaz supported him throughout his restrained electoral campaign.

Engineer believes that the mushrooming of BPP housing is out of kilter with the community's demography. He is of the opinion that there are now less than 10,000 youths in Bombay under the age of 20. The young are constantly migrating abroad, he says, citing two recent cases in his own department. "Without them what are you going to do with these edifices?" he asks, noting that 10 percent of Cusrow Baug flats are occupied by one or two persons over the age of 70. "In the next 10 years there will be no takers for colony flats!" His prescription is to give flats to those getting

married by transferring the aged to comfortable old age homes. He is dubious of the high-priced one-room kitchen flats in the new towers at Panthaky Baug finding buyers. "If you have money, give it to the poor and needy. We have to increase the numbers..."

MEHTA ON THE MOVE *continued from page 28*

except that they would then be voting for trustees about seven times in as many years instead of once in seven years for the creation of the AC. "It will increase costs for the candidate," says Mehta, "as he/she will be catering to the community rather than to the AC (as happens to date)." But Mehta feels there will not be such a substantial increase in cost to the Punchayet which, he says spends between Rs 40,000 and 50,000 for each trusteeship election and around Rs 80,000 for a general election.

The increase in cost would also be justified on the basis of wider democratic rights, he says. Though the High Court had dismissed the plea for adult franchise earlier, Mehta believes there is now "a good chance it will be upheld."

Regarding his fallout with the official Godrej Baug architect and his challenger for trusteeship Maneck Engineer, over the construction of the Rusi Mehta Building whose construction cost he had donated, Mehta said he wanted a terrace instead of a roof, the installation of an elevator, an extra balcony and construction on stilts to facilitate parking. Engineer's "services were free of cost but I preferred to have my own architect (Sam Rao) because at every stage it was 'you can't do this or that.'" The mobeds' quarters—a CER project just beyond the Godrej Baug wall—were also designed and constructed by a different architect—Kersy Kapadia, he adds.

Mehta with (R to L) Pansy, Viraf, Hormuz and navjotee Darayus



According to Mehta, Rashid Khosravi's challenge at the end of the election day on June 2, 2001 was the irrational conduct of a personal tenant whose view on certain matters he had refused to endorse. Mehta alleged that as Khosravi got physical (according to Khosravi's report to Parsiana it was the other way around) he reported a non cognizable complaint with the police. Khosravi also claimed to have done so. And thereby hangs a tale...

THE MEHTA-MANECK MATCH *continued from page 27*

super specialty unit of global standards along with some NRIs." He enunciated his priority of community unity: "Considering the fact that we are at a crossroads and at a very critical juncture which needs rational thinking, my endeavor would be to forge unity within the community which will not come easily and automatically amidst diversity of thought and action. It will need prolonged hard work by a team of like-minded, selfless and devoted workers, and if need be, adapt some modern disciplines."

Tirandaz, the most political of the trustees, sought to pour the proverbial oil over the troubled waters after the results were announced: "This election has divided the community right down the middle... (Now there is) no reason why the acrimony should persist. This too shall pass as all things do. Close ranks and become friends again... I want both sides to come to toast the winner."

However, reports of a skirmish later in the evening between Mehta critic Rashid Khosravi and Mehta's supporters in the Khareghat Colony precincts with both sides filing complaints with the police gave the lie to Tirandaz's homily.



**Find Purpose
The Means
Will Follow**

TATA FINANCE LIMITED

Corporate Office: Tata Finance Ltd., Dubash House, 15 J.N. Heredia Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai 400 001, Tel: 022-2661471

Regional Head Quarters: Calcutta Tel: 033-2296867/8468 * Chennai Tel: 044-8232748/49/50
* Delhi Tel: 011-3316299 * Mumbai Tel: 022-8240000

An ode to the Oval

The restoration of Bombay's Oval Maidan shows what tenacity and teamwork can accomplish

Arnavaz S. Mama

Twenty-eight members of the state's ruling coalition were sworn in as ministers "at the unearthly hour of one o'clock in the afternoon" on October 19, 1999, said Maharashtra governor Dr P. C. Alexander because he was determined to keep his evening tryst with the Oval-Cooperage Residents' Association (OCRA) and the Organisation for Verdant Ambience and Land (OVAL) Trust to inaugurate the restored Oval Maidan. "Why was I so keen? Not only (to express) my warm approval, but to convey to the citizens of Maharashtra that here's a good example that can be followed. This is democracy in action!" Alexander emphasized his motive.

The forecourt or esplanade of Bombay's magnificent 19th century heritage buildings of the High Court, the Rajabai Clock Tower and the Convocation Hall of Bombay University and the Old Secretariat on the one side and the 20th century art deco residences on the other, the Maidan has been rid of the debris of decades and nursed back to vernal health with fresh earth, unclogged drains and a new watering well. Its periphery of palms, trimmed of decayed and diseased specimens, has been augmented with 185 young additions. Its derelict walking-cum-riding path has been relaid with compacted earth, providing an eight-foot wide walking/jogging circuit nearly a mile long. And for the commuters whose need for a short cut had worn unsightly bald patches in the Maidan, a broad, tiled pathway in natural stone complements the grace of the Rajabai Tower before it. A sturdy steel fence round the Grade I heritage precinct, with two aesthetic gates that function, protects and preserves this labor of love which is open for the use of

the citizens of Bombay from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

This monument born of individual initiative, sustained teamwork and enlightened corporate benefaction to the tune of Rs 1.29 crore—which Alexander hailed in the words "You are creating history today!"—was over two years in



P. C. Alexander at the mike with (from left) Bharucha, N. Kathpalia, Kothawalla, Deshmukh, Akama Alexander and Kanga

the making. But the preface to the Maharashtra government's 1997 decision to permit OCRA to revive the Oval extended over 15 years of concerted effort.

The Maidan had degenerated into a wasteland with overgrown grass, a dump for garbage and the debris of the vicinity, where antisocial elements ruled the roost after sundown. In a city endemically short of space, these 22 acres were coveted by a variety of commercial and political interests guided by the love of lucre.

"When I was a child this was a very safe, green haven of a playground," recalls Shirin Bharucha, trustee of OVAL and president of OCRA since 1985, who channeled her spare time and office resources to spearhead the neighborhood's battle to restore this precinct to its original grandeur. Along with OCRA vice presidents and OVAL trustees Persis Kothawalla and Nayana Kathpalia, the dedicated trio "nurtured a dream for the

Oval Maidan" in the words of Kathpalia and fought for it in and out of the Bombay High Court, in marathon decade-long correspondence and umpteen personal meetings with government officials. In their determined, unceasing battle to preserve south Bombay's green lung they tilted with proposals for clubhouses and gymkhanas, stadia and shopping centers, underground car park, changing and shower rooms, as a site for rallies, protests, weddings and 'fasts unto death.'

"That these things never came to pass or were hastily abandoned was the result of the strong protests and objections voiced and action taken by the public and NGOs (non-governmental organizations). In their view, such plans for the use of the land of the Oval are aberrations and not its real intentment. Historically and today, the ground is reserved as part of the green belt, as a recreation ground in the Town Planning Scheme and in the latest Development Plan for the city," notes Bharucha.

On four separate occasions, threats to the future of the Maidan or a perceived threat to the right of citizens to its open spaces led to court action, recounts Bharucha. In 1985, the Congress Party, intent on celebrating its centenary in the city of its birth, proposed to house its out-of-town delegates at the Oval and at other open grounds. When this proposal was opposed by OCRA "as being very ill-considered and against the public interest, it got transmuted into a proposal to have an industrial exhibition on these grounds," notes Bharucha. Faced with an intransigent government and alarmed at the prospect of the bad precedent this would set, the citizens, led by the redoubtable Feroza Seervai, filed a writ petition in the High Court (Oval Shiv Shanti Bhavan Cooperative Housing



Society Ltd and others v. The State of Maharashtra and others, December 1985). "Not wanting the case to be heard on merits as both the facts and time were on the citizens' side," the government mooted a compromise permitting them to park some cars there only for the duration of the celebrations which would not be used as a precedent in the future, recalls Bharucha. "The racecourse authorities did not at that time take such preventive action and were overrun then by the Congress 'delegates' and (later) by the Bharatiya Janata Party 'delegates' with 1,00,000 plus people being housed and fed on the racecourse grounds at Mahalaxmi," she adds.



Three years later the Oval community came to learn that three large private commercial hoardings were to be added to the long existing government hoardings on the Oval periphery. The Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) refused permission as the project violated two BMC norms: no hoarding may obstruct the view of historic or impor-

*Clockwise from top:
The Bombay High Court from across
the Oval; one of the
resplendent gates
of the Horniman
Circle Garden;*

(Photos: Gustasp Irani)

Bharucha

(Photo: Arnavaz S. Mama)

tant buildings or materially cover greenery. In the resulting case (EAG Kallan v. BMC and Shirin Bharucha v. The State of Maharashtra, 1988) the citizens joined the Corporation as co-respondents where the court not only upheld their case but told them that "the real offenders (Maharashtra Government)" were not tackled and hoped the petitioner would take the necessary action. "So, following as it were, the Court's diktat, on the same rationale, the citizens petitioned the Court in 1991 to have the

continued on page 42

"The gold medals I won at the University were the worst thing that happened to me," said Ava Khullar, startling us with her comment. "It forced me into believing that I was cut out for the academic field but my heart was never in it."

After completing her Bachelor of Arts from Nagpur University with flying colors, Ava Kanga got a scholarship to pursue a Masters program in political science from Occidental College, Los Angeles, USA. On returning to India, she taught for a year in Bombay, then went to Delhi where she was administrator and program secretary at the Centre For The Study Of Developing Societies.

For 17 years Ava Khullar, now married, was involved in the in-depth study of minority communities and in organizing international seminars and symposia on the subject. She undertook a comprehensive demographic and socioeconomic profile of the Parsis of Delhi, a study which highlighted the various areas of stress the community currently faces. While her work gained acclaim, Khullar says it never satisfied her completely. An accomplished pianist and nimble with the needle, her creative impulses remained starved.

Her only daughter, Sonali, was growing up and Khullar decided to quit her job and enjoy the years of mother-daughter bonding. "The hours I shared with her were precious and beautiful," said Khullar, "but the Protestant work ethic of 'keep your hands and feet moving and your mind working' was so strongly ingrained in me that I found I could not sit back and be a lady at large! I had to do something."

That was when the idea of Sonava (Sonali plus Ava) was born: a label of exquisitely designed, embroidered and tailored clothes for the fashion-conscious woman of Delhi. Khullar's own sisters-in-law were her first inspiration. They wore elaborately worked salwars bought at expensive boutiques in Delhi. They appreciatively received Khullar's initial attempts with the Sonava tag.

Khullar started in a small way, designing for family and friends. Very soon, by word of mouth, her circle of clients grew, and Khullar's creative juices began to flow as she plunged headlong into her new occupation. First

The Sonava Style

From academics to embroidery Ava Khullar's involvement with the community continues

Dilnavaz E. Bhagwagar

imitating and then creating her own designs, she felt excited and fulfilled as each piece took shape. "A whole new world of fabrics, colors and craftsmen opened up," said Ava animatedly. "The intricacies of different stitches unfolded themselves to me. I decided to concentrate on fine machine embroidery on my outfits. Shading in embroidery can be like an exquisite painting in the hands of an artist, using more than 10 colors in a single bird or flower."

Surprisingly, it is not women but men with deft fingers who are the best *karigars* (craftsmen). "Men from UP and Bihar are good at machine embroidery, while the Muslims of Jama Masjid area excel in hand embroidery. The tailors are mostly sardaris," Khullar informed us. "The skill of our craftsmen continually surprises me," she added.

Khullar sources all the material, makes the complete embroidery design on paper, then gives it for embroidery and later for stitching. Earlier, she had to go into the bylanes and bazaars of Delhi to contact the craftsmen. Now that the work volume has increased and Sonava is a name to reckon with, they happily come to her. If Khullar's eagle eye finds any flaw in a piece, it is withdrawn from sale.

As Sonali grew up, she began to take more and more interest in her mother's work. Today, Sonava is a true partnership of effort and ideas between Sonali and Ava.

Some six years ago, when Khullar first started, she took her inspiration from Moghul and Persian motifs. From books, archives, museums and old monuments she painstakingly adapted patterns and replicated the colors. Flowers, borders and the 'tree of life' design were favorites.

Two years ago, a new idea germinated in her mind. She was familiar with and proud of the Parsi heritage of ex-

quisitely embroidered Swiss borders and Chinese *garas*. By now, she had acquired an in-depth knowledge and practical experience of the men and materials that make for fine embroidery. Why not combine the two? The idea of a revival of the rich Parsi tradition in clothes excited her hugely. Family and friends readily made their priceless borders, *garas* and *jhablas* available to her for recreating the design.

Indian and Moghul patterns were mainly floral. Now, birds of exotic plumage flew into her designs. Birds of Paradise, Siberian cranes, cocks and hens, peacocks and parrots perched on flowing creepers and strutted in her borders.

"Many Parsis and even non-Parsis have successfully ventured into the revival of old *gara* designs on saris," said Khullar, "but I must be one of the very few who have translated these motifs onto the salwar kameez. Salwars are the most popular mode of female attire in Delhi and for that matter, all over the country, outside of Bombay," said Khullar.

The Parsi Revival Collection of salwar-kameezes and saris were an instant hit and Sonava could not make them as fast as they sold. "Both Parsis and non-Parsis went for these. Zoroastrians settled abroad were most appreciative of the Parsi Revival Collection. Reaching out to one's roots is stronger among those who have migrated and they always pick up items with a typical Zoroastrian flavor," observed Khullar. Her outfits have travelled to Europe, USA and Canada and probably grace many a Navroz and Pateti function there. A restaurant in New York called The Parsis, inadvertently advertises *garas*—"Come in your Parsi *gara* and meet a Green Card baba."

Though an original Chinese *gara* was always hand embroidered and could take 12 women a span of six months to com-



O.K.



Good



Excellent



Outstanding

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

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

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

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

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

HSBC 

YOUR WORLD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited.



plete, the Sonava creations are machine embroidered. "The price range of machine embroidery makes it accessible to more people. If machine work is done under strict supervision and by skilled artists, it can be very beautiful," opined Khullar. A lovely machine embroidered gara can be had for within Rs 10,000, whereas a hand embroidered one would start only at Rs 50,000.

Apart from retailing from her home, Khullar has had exhibitions of her salwar kameezes and gara saris in Delhi, Bombay and Nagpur. Her regular clientele swear by the quality of her work and go back to her for more. The only criticism, if you can call it that, comes from some customers who feel that a Sonava creation is typecast and can be spotted

immediately. Khullar thinks the brand image is a strength.

Fulfilled and happy in her new business, Khullar now gets an extra mile out of it because she feels she is helping preserve the Parsi tradition in dressing. "Apart from the money and the pure pleasure of creating, a whole lot of intangible benefits accrue from my work. I was forced to start driving, something I had avoided all these years. Today, I can't imagine being dependent on someone else to ferry me around! My circle of friends has also increased greatly."

In spite of an intercommunal marriage, Khullar is passionately involved in everything Parsi. "That is possible because of my very supportive and understanding husband Gopal," she says.

Ava (above left) and Sonali with their Sonava creations

She is an active trustee of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, is deeply concerned about declining numbers and is currently involved in helping with a UNESCO sponsored research project on preservation of culture and traditions of the Zoroastrian community.

When we asked if this was not an anomaly, Khullar very candidly replied, "When you are within the community, you take everything for granted. When you are out, either through migration or marriage, you become more conscious of upholding traditions and more appreciative of the principles and values you grew up with."

The Products That Your Process Needs...



The products you see here tell you only part of what **Forbes Marshall** does. That's because we do much more than sell products. We build **steam engineering and control instrumentation** solutions that work for you. If you're looking to optimise your process, we're the best choice to help you better harness steam, air and water. We'll help your process run at its best.

The quality of any product is only as good as the people behind it. Our people are among the best trained, well equipped and most experienced in the world today.

We have also embarked on **utilities management** activity, and our energy conservation package is one of the best ways for you to harness our expertise in this area. The result - lower energy consumption, improved product quality and better control of your process.



Forbes Marshall Ltd.

Mumbai - Pune Road,
Kasarwadi, Pune 411 034, India.
Tel: 91(0)20 - 7145595,
Fax: 91(0)20 - 7147413
E-mail: bizdev@forbesmarshall.com
www.forbesmarshall.com



EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES

continued from page 12

sunset, octogenarian Jehangir P. Vazifdar had yet another exhibition of his paintings. Thirty-two of his works were on display for eight days in March 2001 at Bombay's Studio Windsor. "Abstract form in a modernistic context is the most current phase which Vazifdar is passing through," notes a press release. "The paintings in this niche exhibit force the viewer to juxtapose his mind on that of the painter and source a rare vibrancy that must match a thinking that is both joyous and reflective at the same time," further elaborates the release.

Following the exhibition the artist took his works to London to have them valued on the prompting of his family and friends, mentions his granddaughter Simone Meher adding that until now his works have never been sold.

An architect by training and profession, to Vazifdar painting is "a mistress that continues to bewitch both his talent and his time." He started his art career with landscapes and portraits featuring well-known personalities like Swami



Vazifdar with some of his recent exhibits

Chinmaya - nanda, Richard Nixon and others. Then followed the geometric phase when the artist used only squares, triangles and rectangles. In the late 1960s he reportedly created the "First Colour Dictionary" for painters. After mastering the technique for five years, in 1972 Vazifdar pursued his three dimensional portraits. His passion for art also led him to found Studio Windsor at Colaba where old masters are recreated.

After his graduation from Bombay's J. J. School of Architecture in 1940, at the age of 21 he co-founded Doctor and Vazifdar, an architectural firm known for designing structures like the Ashoka Hotel in New Delhi, the (new) Somnath Temple and Bombay's Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. His architectural firm Vazifdar Builders set up in 1945 added to the Bombay skyline landmarks like Breach

Candy Apartments, Daisylea, Eden Hall, Washington House, Amalfi and others, states the press release. It was on his initiative that the first college of building industries imparting postal tuitions to students all over India was set up, notes the release, adding, "Vazifdar has never let barriers and boundaries stop him."

Natural tapestry

"It is really hard to believe that the works on display were not paintings but really fine embroidery. The edges that any work of needle and thread normally give were surprisingly muted and the flow of lines was like that of a smooth running paintbrush," noted a review in *The Hindustan Times*. Haryana based Maki Mehta held her first exhibition at the India Habitat Centre in March 2001 where most of her works done in tapestry stitch (half cross stitch) projected scenes connected with nature.

In the course of her travels with husband Air Commodore Minoo Mehta (Retd), Maki was able to observe scenes around the world. "Everywhere I went, I enjoyed and absorbed nature...that (gave) me peace and also the subjects for my work," Maki was quoted in *The Hindustan Times*. "In this maze of natural beauty a profile of Nefertiti, the Egyptian queen stood out. This portrait also stands out for the background color, black, as the rest of the embroidery pieces have soft natural backgrounds," mentions the news report.

"I have had no formal training in embroidery. It just caught my fancy ever since I was a child and it is purely out of passion that I do this," stated the self taught artist who also paints in oil and water colors and contemplates exhibiting these works as well, as notes her enthusiastic husband.

Maki who finds art therapeutic is looking forward to doing a series of

Mehta and her "maze of natural beauty"



WORLD-CLASS CONFERENCING SOLUTIONS

AUDIO
CONFERENCING



SLIDE PROJECTORS



VIDEO CONFERENCING



DATA VIDEO PROJECTORS



ELECTRONIC WHITE BOARD



Godrej International
PRIMA DIVISION® Conferencing
Solutions

Godrej & Boyce Mfg.Co.Ltd., Prima Division,
Plant 18, Pirojshanagar, Vikhroli, Mumbai 400 079.
Tel: 5962652-54. Fax: 91-22-5961526.
Email: kerso@godrej.com Visit us at: www.godrej.com

THE DIFFERENCE IS TECHNOLOGY. THE DIFFERENCE IS GODREJ.

Souvenir ad 10" X 7"



With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**

enchancing winter sunsets as witnessed in Gurgaon where she resides and painting the natural beauty she found captivating in the south of Spain, Costa del Sol.

It's Vispi's voice

As a teenager he would participate in music competitions at the Bharda High School every Sunday where he would win the first prize of Rs 15, a welcome addition to his regular pocket money. Several years later pop singer Vispi Gandevia has two albums to his credit and two in the making. Following the success of his debut audio album *Jab Se* in November 1999, Vispi released *Teri Marzi* on March 24, 2001. Promoted by Jet music, *Teri Marzi* has eight tracks sung by Gandevia, popularly known as Vispi. The lyrics for the album have been penned by Shyam Anuragi and the music is composed by Charles Srinivasan.

Since his parents Aloo and Bomi expired shortly after the release of his first album, Vispi's second album released 16 months later was in their memory. Believing that, "It was God's *marzi* (wish) that took my parents away," Vispi decided to name his album *Teri Marzi*. Videos of the album's songs *Mujse nazar milao*, *Everybody wants love* and *Teri Marzi* are currently being aired on leading TV music channels. Vispi notes that *Jab Se*, which won him the All India Film Goers Award 2000 and the Kala Niketan Millennium Award 2000, sold over 50,000 copies. His second one earned him the Upcoming Pop Singer Award in April 2001. He is in the process of making two more albums, one with veteran singer Asha Bhonsle, which should be released some time later this year, reveals Vispi.

Born in Bombay in 1959, Vispi studied at the St Teresa High School and completed his education from Siddharth College. Married at a young age he migrated to Iran with his wife Farida. Describing Iran, "as a beautiful place that made my life," Vispi spent four memorable years there. The un-



Gandevia: singing success

stable situation in Iran forced them to return to Bombay in the early 1980s after which Vispi entered the catering business, taking up contracts at the Ravindra Natya Mandir, Prabhadevi and Rang Bhavan, Dhobitalao. Farida works for the Emigration Department at the British Deputy High Commission and Vispi attributes much of his success to her. When he sent his demo to television music programs like "Sa Re Ga Ma" and "Meri Awaaz Suno" and got no response, his mother and wife suggested compiling an album of his own. Shortly afterwards *Jab Se* was released. Vispi mentions that music is in his blood. His father sang on request at navjotes and weddings and his uncles Piroze and Behliya came together to form the Gandevia band.

Believing that success in the music field comes only with hard work and confidence, Vispi mentions that he would be most willing to help anybody interested in singing professionally. Vispi still considers his voice "raw" and has refused offers for playback singing, which after adequate training he hopes to commence next year. His 17-year-old daughter and only child Nazneen who studies at Jai Hind College hopes to release an album of her own in the future. The fear of not making the grade deters several aspirants from taking up the profession, observes Vispi who believes that Parsis who

are conversant with Gujarati, English, Hindi, Marathi and Urdu have an edge over others in the entertainment profession which requires an understanding of many languages.

"Let's wake up and encourage our community to enter more glamorous professions. We seem to forget we were pioneers in this field," he remarks. Simin J. Patel

"Love Is Greater than Life"



Compiled by Parinaz M. Gandhi



With Best Compliments From

LEACH & WEBORNY

When in Bombay Contact us
for attending to your laundry.
We are Launderers & Dyers of repute.
We will also attend to your carpets
for cleaning or dyeing.

66, Off E. Moses Road, Worli, Bombay 400018
Phone: Head Office 2654294 Factory: 4924384, 4925644

AN ODE TO THE OVAL *continued from page 33*

hoardings put up by the state government also to be taken down. The petition was admitted by the Court. However, the prayer that the present hoardings be taken down was denied. The authorities undertook, verbally in Court, not to put up further hoardings pending the hearing of the case which is still hanging fire (Shirin Bharucha v. The State of Maharashtra, BMC, and others, August 1991)."

The biggest blow struck in their favor was the Supreme Court decision of 1991 regarding an open ground in Bangalore which had been reserved for recreation since 1945 but which the state government allotted to a medical trust to set up a hospital in 1976. The aggrieved citizens went to court. At the end of the long legal saga the Supreme Court upheld their locus standi to petition the court as they were "intimately, vitally and adversely" affected by the proposed change of user of the ground. The Court further observed "that once an area has been stamped with a character of a particular civic amenity by a reservation of that area, it cannot be diverted to any other use. It is meant for the development of the city in a way that maximum space is provided for the benefit of the public at large for recreation, enjoyment, 'ventilation' and fresh air... Protection of the environment, open spaces for recreation and fresh air, playgrounds for children, promenade for the residents, and other conveniences or amenities are matters of great public concern and of vital interest to be taken care of in a development scheme (Bangalore Medical Trust v. B. S. Muddappa and others — *All India Reporter* 1991 SC 1902)."

In 1995 the Oval residents learnt from newspaper reports that a cricket academy was slated at the Oval where a prominent cricketer would train budding players. OCRA enquiries with the government revealed "several irregularities" in the arrangement which included structures for toilets, changing rooms and storage, and that the land would be used for commercial purposes. Questioning "this extraordinary use of public land given to one trust to the detriment of the general public," OCRA filed a writ petition which resulted in terms of settlement "permitting the (cricket) trust to use the land for the academy after removing these and sev-

eral other objectionable features (Oval-Cooperage Residents' Association and others v. Dilip Vengsarkar and others, May 1995)," related Bharucha.

For over 17 years OCRA remained a thorn in the side of the state government, persuading, cajoling, demanding that it either maintain the Oval Maidan (which it technically owns) as the recreational ground it is meant to be or permit OCRA to do so. "We were very tena-

"Once an area
has been stamped with a
character of a particular civic
amenity... it cannot be diverted
to any other use"

cious in the teeth of nothing coming from the government. The government kept saying you don't have the money to restore the Oval. It was their major argument against us. So finally Shirin (Bharucha) and I decided we'll set up a trust," Kothawalla, then a professor at the Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, recalls the birth of the OVAL Trust in 1994. The two founder trustees thereafter inducted former union government secretary B. G. Deshmukh as chairman and former Bombay municipal commissioner Jamsheed Kanga, Prof Gool Bhujwala of Nirmala Niketan, Sashi and Nayana Kathpalia as co-trustees. The OVAL Trust's declared objectives are to restore, green, preserve, protect and upkeep parks, maidans, gardens and recreation grounds.

Another positive development was the publication of the government's Heritage Regulations for Greater Bombay in 1995 wherein buildings, grounds and precincts were graded according to their architectural and historical importance. The Oval was the only maidan listed as a Grade I heritage ground. The objectives and rules governing such grounds declare, "As Grade I heritage grounds richly deserve careful preservation, no intervention will be permitted unless it is in the interest of prolonging the life of the precinct. For this purpose absolutely essential and minimal changes will be allowed, which must be in accordance with the original."

The OVAL Trust's detailed proposal for restoring and beautifying the Oval

was sanctioned by the government and the Heritage Conservation Committee of Bombay in August 1997. While Rahul Mehrotra and David Cardoz of the Bombay Collaborative, a firm of conservation architects, were commissioned to prepare a project report, the OVAL team focused on a fund-raising drive. Once work on the project began, cooperation from government, municipality and the police, voluntary and continuous professional inputs from architects and engineers (the Sewri Engineering

Construction Company carried out the entire work on a turnkey basis below market price) and generous donations from public trusts [the cost of the steel fence and gates, the most expensive element of the restoration, was entirely borne by Sir Ratan Tata Trust (RTT) without asking for commercial rights] and the corporate sector led by the Tata Group of Companies. Plaques donated by the Indian Heritage Society, Bombay and affixed to the main gates afford interested passersby and posterity a record of the Oval's history and a list of major donors. "Since restoration was to be done professionally, although it took time, a survey of the entire contour of the Oval ground, its elevations, drainage, boundaries and peripheral pavements were mapped for the first time," notes the brochure published on the occasion of the formal inaugural.

Though the rejuvenated Maidan is a fait accompli, Indian civic habits (or lack of them) die hard: Human urine is already corroding the fence on the High Court side, so Bharucha and friends have acquired the permission to create a six-foot-wide garden on the adjoining footpath to protect it. Simultaneously a public convenience has been planned near the gate opposite the Rajabai Tower. Plans are also afoot to close in the statues of Sir Jamsetji Jejeebhoy and Mahadev Ranade on the Oval periphery so that their enclosures can be kept clean.

OCRA is now looking at the restoration of the Oval's surrounding precincts, starting with the Churchgate Revival Project in conjunction with the other citizens' organizations in the area including the Western India Automobile Association (WIAA), the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC), Clean Mumbai Foundation and three other residents' associations, says Nayana Kathpalia. Their effort is directed towards reorienting the



Corporate Office:

Prop of: Taj Printing Works, 46/A, Cawasji Patel Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001.

Tel: 2042432 ♦ 2854218 ♦ 2853058 ♦ 2853080 Fax: 022-2855325

E-mail: mpgoc@bom3.vsnl.net.in Website: www.mpallonjigroup.com



M. PALLONJI & CO. PVT. LTD.

Leading Contractors for Industrial Painting and Coatings, Anti-Corrosion, Waterproofing, Construction, Diving, Dredging and Offshore Contractors
Members of S.S.P.C. (USA) & N.A.C.E. (USA)

PALLONJI INVESTMENT & FINANCE PVT. LTD

Manufacturers of Waterproofing material

AquaEpoxy

Manufacturers of Longlasting Exterior coating material

Kenitex



TRAVOTEL (INDIA) PVT. LTD.

Hotel Maya Balrampur

Member of International Hotel Association & FHRAI

Situated at: Balrampur, Dist. Gonda, Uttar Pradesh 271 201.

Tel. No. STD 05263-32208/32507 Fax No: STD 05263-32508



PALLONJI LEASING PVT. LTD.

Hire Purchase, Leasing & other Financial Services



PALLONJI COATINGS PVT. LTD.

Manufacturers of Industrial Paints, Primers & Sealants



STERLING MOTORS

Authorised **Telco** Dealers

For Nashik, Ahmednagar and Solapur

for **TATA** Passenger Cars and Commercial Vehicles

Sales, Service and Sparte Parts

NASHIK (Main Dealer)

Old Agra Road, Nashik 422 001. (0253) 598298/591598/594576 Fax: 596598

E-mail: sterling@bom6.vsnl.net.in

Spare Parts Shop: Swastik Chambers, New Agra Road, Nashik 422001 tel: 591090

SOLAPUR (Dealer)

74/3, Bale, Solapur-Pune Road, Taluka North Solapur, Solapur 413006. Tele/Fax: (0217)

720337 City Office: Super Mkt, Murarji Peth, Solapur 413001. Tel: (0217) 720458

AHMEDNAGAR (Dealer)

Opp. S. T. Stand, Bableshwar 413737, Dist Ahmednagar. Tel: (02422) 53594

Apt. No. 202, Office No. 106, Raj Chambers, Kothala Road, Ahmednagar.



traffic and pedestrian patterns to enhance an efficient use of the area.

The Urban Design Research Institute — a group of concerned architects and engineers whose executive director is Mehrotra — has been approached to study the area and its problems, where four million people using the Churchgate station every day “are assaulted by traffic and hawkers!” The six-month holistic study itemized the movement, numbers and traffic patterns of the people, bus stops, street furniture, hawkers, trees, etc. The Associated Cement Companies gave office space and computer time for the study which cost Rs 1,70,000 financed from citizens’ contributions with a matching grant from the BMC, says Nayana Kathpalia. Among the ideas mooted in the first phase is the construction of two subways to eliminate pedestrians from the carriage way (one where the current road crossing is, the second an extension from the Asiatic end to the Oval to catch buses and taxis for Colaba), the rationalization of bus routes, etc.

Bharucha, the Tata group’s legal officer whose green thumb has nurtured the Bombay House terrace garden, is trustee of the Horniman Garden Trust, actively involved in its maintenance, and is now involved with the Horniman Circle Asso-

ciation which aims to upgrade this vintage banking district. Concurrently she is secretary of the Kala Ghoda Association nurturing the art district of the city which houses the Jehangir Art Gallery, the David Sassoon Library, the Prince of Wales Museum and the Bombay Natural History Society. She has also been chairperson of the Bombay chapter of the Indian Heritage Society. This vast personal experience of NGOs involved in urban resurrection was tapped by the organizers of the international seminar on “The unending crises of cities,” held last October in Marseilles, France where she was invited to make a presentation on “Citizens’ Action Groups — the emerging fourth wing of government.”

Casually inducted into active citizenship by Bhujwala and Dr Jehan Chichgar as they came with a petition to save the Oval when she was alone at home one day, Bharucha says, “That’s when I discovered there’s an Oval-Cooperative Residents’ Association (which has been in existence since 1978)!” Invited to represent her building, she attended a few meetings and became secretary. “I took it on because of the infrastructure at the office,” she maintains. The president then was the late Dr A. S. Naik, a former government officer.

“Eventually, reluctantly, (she) was thrust with the presidency.” But since then there is no secretary because “no one else wants to do it!”

This alumna of The Alexandra Girls’ English Institution, St Xavier’s College and the Government Law College has found the Zoroastrian community “more alive to the issues, percentage-wise” though enlightened members of all communities have been her comrades-in-arms and she is loath to discriminate. Among the former she cites Dolly Masani, the founder-treasurer of OCRA, its founder member Seervai, and Dr Sam Mahaluxmiwala as always ready to take on responsibility. Deanna Jejeebhoy of the RTT, Russi Lala of the Dorab Tata Trust, Shahrokh Sabavala of Tata Steel have encouraged and supported her through the protracted Oval story.

Also, from Bharucha’s experience it would seem that the problem of the Parsis is becoming the problem of the metropolis: “We need younger people of every community, but there are few coming forward. The youth is not coming forward, not in my area, not on a sustained basis,” she regrets. As for the community, “the parabola is downward. You publish the deaths and births. The numbers are frightening...”

Tanaz R. Godiwalla

Caterer

Call

3736136, 3736194

For instant access

mobile 98201 33399

Go ahead.

Pour out

your love.

Only Aquaguard delivers absolutely safe drinking water. Guaranteed by renowned UV technology that eliminates all known waterborne disease causing bacteria and viruses. Only Aquaguard has the unique Electronic Monitoring System which stops the flow



of water if the purification level falls. Only Aquaguard is backed by the Eureka Forbes assurance of efficient after-sales service. Naturally, today over five million people in India trust only Aquaguard. So call your friend from Eureka Forbes, today.



Visit us at: www.eurekaforbes.com

Aquaguard

WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM

Absolutely safe drinking water

TRITON/2000/EFL/012

For absolutely safe drinking water, page your friend from Eureka Forbes at 9622-343434 or call us at : Mumbai: EUROHELPLINE (24 HOURS) Tel: 8206060. Tel: 430 1725, 836 8328, 600 7579, 494 9183, 564 0962, 218 7441, 894 9953, 911-201629. Pune: Tel: 649173, 7124532. Ahmedabad: Tel: 7541380, 7542570, 5359356, 7504001. New Delhi: Tel: 6229540, 6419611, 573 5308, 3267302, 6467279, 2155779, 7216054, 5449959. Calcutta: Tel: 4749708, 4786845, 2451548, 4745326, 5545729, 4134533, 3373107, 4751305. Bangalore: Tel: 2224453, 2093041, 5522333, 0811034443. Hyderabad: Tel: 7844128, 3315451, 7567185. Chennai: Tel: 4348328, 6424579, 8280409, 2301152, 6230199, 8234721.

gratitude and appreciation to Dr Homi B. Dhallia who volunteered to spearhead this project, and persevered in the face of opposition from those who could not visualize the positive aspects of the solar concentrator project. Gratitude is also due to Sabavala and his colleagues who designed, fabricated, erected and commissioned the solar concentrator.

The trustees clarify that the success achieved in the area of solar concentrators does not in any way diminish their enthusiasm to continue to pursue, support and encourage the project to bring back the birds of prey and explore any avenue that will strengthen the system. Permissions to commence the aviary project are awaited.

It is hoped that the community realizes the sincerity of the trustees to reinforce and strengthen the system of dakhmenashini in every conceivable way and will continue to extend support as they endeavor to go about fulfilling their duties.

J. N. GUZDER

President, Bombay Parsi Panchayat

Options at Doongerwadi

Can we honestly call ourselves "an enlightened community" if we cannot solve our problems without making a public display of our differences concerning dakhmenashini?

Our Parsi Panchayat should select a group of worthy and respectable members of our community, including doctors, lawyers, social workers and priests, and permit them to enter the dakhma well, and inspect the condition of the dead bodies lying there over a period of time. This may invite strong opposition from a section of our community, but this must be tackled firmly and tactfully in the interest of solving this major problem without delay, and in the larger interest of our community.

If the bodies are found in reasonably good condition with the application of chemicals despite lying inside for many days, then our age-old custom may continue to function. If not, alternative methods should be allowed side-by-side with the existing age-old practice, and the mobeds should be permitted to perform the last rites.

If we succeed in either attracting the vultures or using solar energy, then I am sure those who prefer alternative methods of disposal of their dear ones will gladly welcome our age-old custom

which should put an end to this unfortunate controversy for good.

If this urgent problem is not solved without undue delay, our dwindling community is sure to split further, and ultimately disappear from the earth, and future generations will see our models in the museums.

MINOOS BHATHENA

Poona

"A doctrinal crossfire"

"The sun, which is a ball of fire, shines upon the good and the bad, fair and ugly, pure and impure, clean and filthy, and its all purifying light cleanses all filth and stench and defiling and decaying matter (Zarathushtra)."

This refers to Arnavaz S. Mama's cover story "A doctrinal crossfire" (*Parsiana*, January 2001). Not only did it make interesting reading, but one wonders when this ordeal (controversy) will come to an end so that the souls of our dear departed can rest in peace. As for us, who are living on this earth, there doesn't seem to be any peace.

Even after nearly 30 years we, as an educated and cultured community, have still not been able to find a solution to the problem of the "paucity of vultures" which has been there since 1972, or even earlier, as already reported in "A legal legend," (*Parsiana*, February 2000) in the obituary on Shriavak R. Vakil. The legal luminary and eminent trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) had this to say:

"Between December 1972 and September 1973 (which means 10 months) I have gone inside the Towers of Silence several times (on many occasions with one of my co-trustees, Dr A. Golwalla) with a view to ascertain their condition. I have also on several occasions checked the issue of paucity of birds..."

"There is a paucity of birds, whatever the reasons may be, with the result that substantial parts of the bodies remain untouched. Small portions are eaten not only by vultures but by crows and kites. Every human carcass is consigned to the well (bhandar) on the next day after it is laid to rest. When the bodies are lowered in the well, they are consigned one over the other like dead carcasses of animals, and remain so in that state for months, rotting and stinking in the process of decomposition.

"It is no use suggesting breeding vultures because they cannot thrive in these conditions."

One can imagine how grave the situ-

ation would now be after three decades. To think that we will meet the same fate in time to come gives one a creepy feeling.

It is an irony of fate that with a dwindling population which happens to be a major problem for the Parsi community the world over, they are beset with another problem of equal magnitude, the disposal of their dead in towns and cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Poona, Baroda, Surat and Ahmedabad where the dead are confined to the Towers of Silence.

This custom of disposal of the dead did not exist in ancient Iran from where the Parsis migrated to India nearly 1,400 years ago as at that time the corpses were tied and left on the hilltop for disposal by animals and the powerful rays of the sun.

The problem facing the Parsis today is the extinction of the griffon vultures who are dying across the world, succumbing to a mysterious viral disease. To us it poses a more practical problem, as for centuries in India we have relied on these big birds to dispose of our dead. Earlier when vultures in plenty swooped down on a dead body it took them about an hour to devour it. And when the bones were completely dried up by the heat of the sun and atmospheric influences these were drained through a channel into a hollow pit (bhandar) where they crumbled into dust. According to our religion both rich and poor are equal in the eyes of God, and at death they meet together.

The BPP sought the advice of Jemima Parry-Jones, head of Britain's National Centre for Birds of Prey in Gloucestershire who hopes that if vultures can be bred successfully, there might be a way to start repopulating vultures in India.

Such a solution to the problem will necessarily take a long time and has a number of "ifs and buts" attached to it. The griffon vultures have all but disappeared from India. They are dying from a viral disease. The breeding of these birds has virtually become impossible. Are we prepared to wait for experiments to start their breeding once again? If these experiments fail, then what?

Can we allow the dead bodies of our kith and kin to rot for years together? Is this the kind of respect we ought to show to our own beloved dead? Surely we can't treat our dead like garbage!

Being alive, let each Parsi ask himself/herself and answer this simple ques-



Sir J.J. College of Commerce

OVER
47
YEARS

Professional Courses

*** Job Placement Assured**



- Executive Secretarial
- Computers
- Office Assistant
- Diploma in Business Management
- Public Speaking
- Personality Development
- Telemarketing
- Shorthand & Typewriting

LOAN SCHOLARSHIPS

available for
Zoroastrian Parsis
&
Iranis from
**World Zoroastrian
Organisation, India**

Internationally Recognised
Certification from
Pitman
Qualifications, U.K.

Multimedia Courses

- ✓ Certificate in Desktop Publishing
- ✓ Certificate in Multimedia Authoring
- ✓ Certificate in Web Page Designing
- ✓ Certificate in Video Editing

Short Term Courses

- ✓ Digital Illustrations
- ✓ Digital Imaging
- ✓ 2D Animations

FUN-N-LEARN

- ✓ Designing E-Greetings
- ✓ Home Video



For more information contact us at: Sir J.J. College of Commerce, 14, Nanabhoy Lane, Hutatma Chowk, Mumbai - 400 001.
Tel: 2871058, 2844329 Fax: 2871185 E-mail: jjcc@vsnl.com

Progressives



Distance

Mid-distance

Near



*The lens for uninterrupted vision at different ranges
distance, mid-distance & reading.*

Progressives are multifocal lenses without the tell-tale lines of bifocals.

Progressives need professional care.

For the best results come to Baliwalla & Homi.

One of the finest optometrists & contact-lens practitioners in the country.



Baliwalla & Homi
Private Limited

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

tion: "Would I like to meet the same fate as those before me when my turn comes?"

Are we prepared to face the wrath of other communities, the municipality and the government, because of our negligence, having done nothing for 30 years?

At present we have just thrown open a window to pollution and disease. With time the danger of the gates of pollution bursting open is very much there. Do we want such a thing to happen?

Bombay being the city where we have the largest concentration of the Parsi population, as a first step, let the BPP convene a meeting where only two representatives from each town/city where we have a 'dakhma' be invited to attend. Let these members visit each and every town where we have dakhmas and see from inside whether the dead bodies are truly piling up and report the same to the parent body and the BPP. Take a vote of each and every Parsi adult (18 years and above) whether he would like an alternative under the present circumstances (answers to be kept confidential). The alternatives are as follows: dakhmenashini system only if vultures are available; dakhmenashini system even if vultures are not available; solar energy through the installation of parabolic reflectors which will bring forth concentrated heat from the rays of the sun; burial; cremation at the ghats; electric crematorium.

The priestly class have refused to pray for the dead if cremated.

The unorthodox can only take solace from Zarathushtra's message to humanity of the "immortality of the human soul i.e. life after death," and the Prophet's philosophy of "the significance of good and evil" wherein he preached to his followers "life is an eternal struggle."

Today, at the turn of the 21st century, let this be a test of our true manashni, gavashni, kunashni, and see how each one of us can stand up to it.

PESI D. MUNCHERJI
Baroda

"Sanctity of the dakhmas"

There are certain misguiding conceptions in the article "Sanctity of the dakhmas" (Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, January 2001):

- An editorial comment is not necessary for every individual opinion expressed in the magazine.

- In Khurshed Nigerishn the sun's rays purify the entire environment and pro-

tect against any infection, possible virus and pollution.

- The root of the word 'dakhma' is not *dah* but *dakhm* meaning to bury. It is clearly mentioned in the *Vendidad* that *dazm* i.e. burning, is prohibited for Zarathushtrians as it defiles the environment and is an insult to the holy fire.

- Yes, dakhmas are sacred, as all Towers of Silence are consecrated with several *ijashni* ceremonies before use. There is a scientific method of laying the foundation in keeping with the spiritual *tana* circuits, with exalted mantras of *Yatha Ahu Vairyo*. Thus dakhmas are not a morgue of bricks only. They are consecrated *alaats*.

- In the *Vendidad* it is stated that those who demolish burial places, like the tombs or graves and take out the corpse, expose it to the sun, make the earth rejoice. It does not refer to a dakhma at all wherein human corpses are deposited (placed inside) a consecrated construction, open to sky, and not buried under the ground!

- The system of Khurshed Nigerishn is completely eco-friendly because it never pollutes any natural elements, i.e. fire, water, ground, air and atmosphere.

- The high apartments were built after the dakhmas were built. The new owners must naturally know that they were not staying near fragrant gardens and so they have no reason to complain.

- Is an atmosphere with deadly foul smoke and stinky poisonous gases around us eco-friendly? Such a situation arises continuously from vehicles, mills and crematorium chimneys. Then why complain only of the dakhmas?

- Our *Avesta* prayers, especially the *geh sarna*, give more than enough spiritual solace to the bereaved families. The soul is never deceased and its spiritual progress is undisturbed, while the dead body is simply *druj* lying inside the dakhma.

- Nasasalars are protected with an anti-septic agent *aabezer* (taro) before coming into contact with the corpse. Such *nirang* is even applied on the dead body to avoid contamination. It is compulsory for the nasasalars to take a religious purificatory bath (*nahn*) after they come out of the dakhma. There are rare chances of environmental hazards.

NOSHIR DABOO
Ahmedabad

Cost-effective options

The Disposal of the Dead with Dignity-Action Group (DDD-AG) is not at all

interested in propagating the closure of the current dakhmenashini system. Its aim is to simply have recourse to an additional/optional mode of disposal — now that the currently weakened system is burdened with the load of around 100 corpses a month!

DDD-AG continues to respect the rights/wishes of those who believe in the dakhmenashini system and has no intention to dissuade anyone to continue its use.

However, DDD-AG ascertains that a quick, effective, hygienic and cost-effective optional system has become the need of the hour for the Zoroastrian community today due to rapid urbanization and extinction of the vultures. As per Zoroastrian scriptures, it is believed that a dead body is a 'naso' and that putrefying matter should be disposed of as expeditiously and efficaciously as possible.

DDD-AG strongly believes that irrespective of the system of disposal followed, every Zoroastrian is entitled to all prayers and funeral ceremonies — irrespective of the place he resides in, be it in Bombay, Delhi, Poona, Calcutta, London or US as those residing in Bombay are as devout Zoroastrians as their counterparts in other places which do not practice the system of dakhmenashini.

DDD-AG further clarifies that the Doongerwadi complex including the bunglis is specifically for the use of all community members for the performance of funeral rites/ceremonies and not subject to any conditions. Hence, the lands would be at risk only if there is a breach of 'public order, morality or health' and most certainly not if an additional/optional system of disposal is adopted.

DDD-AG affirms its stand that their growing number of voluntary members are all unquestionably committed to their religion — as much as their traditional brethren. However, the difference being that the members of DDD-AG are alive to the stark, grim reality, and having accepted it gracefully, see no other alternative but to move on and seek the best possible solution to this grave problem — knowing fully well that other things in life can wait. Death will not.

To be trapped into religious captivity, without control over one's major life decisions or future is surely the most dehumanizing and most demoralizing of all human conditions. Would you want that for our respected, progressive commu-

nity members?

Therefore, our humble plea is — 'To adopt religion as an approach to living and not as an irrational, static, dogmatic creation. Keeping one's balance and perspective is indeed the key to problem solving.

GOOL A. BUGWADIA

Jt. Hon. Secretary, DDD-AG

"Kisseh-Houston"

Two of your readers (Porus H. Havewala and Pashmina M. Contractor) have criticized your magazine for publishing Noshir Grant's letter supporting Ali Jafarey's certain reformist action ("Kisseh Houston," Readers' Forum, *Parsiana*, February 2001).

Those critics must also ponder why Ali Jafarey had so much support from the Parsi/Irani Zoroastrians in USA, that in spite of being born a Muslim, he was given a platform to present his paper at the recently concluded Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress held at Houston, USA, in spite of the boycott threat by the trustees of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet.

The reason for this support, I believe, is due to his writings on Zoroastrianism which are full of sense and reason. I had been reading his articles in *Spenta*, published by the Zarathushtrian Assembly, having its headquarters in Torrance, California, USA, and of which magazine Jafarey was the editor. These magazines were forwarded to me (and probably to many others also) through the courtesy of *Parsiana*. Apart from tales from the *Shah Nameh*, Jafarey had written several articles on "Spenta Mainyu," "The Gathas," "Death in the Gathas," "The Zoroastrian Priest in the Avesta," and also on adopting the correct Zarathushtrian New Year, Navroz. I was impressed by the clarity of his interpretation of our religious texts.

Spenta also contained many other illuminating articles by Parsi religious scholars like Ervad (Dr) Jehan Bagli, Dr Pallan R. Ichaporia, etc. Unfortunately, the circulation of this magazine was discontinued in India after December 1995.

I now come to some actual criticisms of Jafarey's reformist actions. I should mention now that it is not only Brig N. B. Grant who has called for reforms in many of our outdated rituals, but he has been supported by Dr M. D. Disawalla, Dali J. Gundevia and myself. To prevent repetition and save valuable printing space I would request the orthodox readers to refer to "The three myths" (*Parsiana*, April 1999 and July-August 1999) for our views on the same. I would also request the die-hards to heed the call for change sounded by the Supreme Court judge, Sam Bharucha, in his address at a meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India held in Jamshedpur in December 2000 ("Thus Spake Bharucha," *Parsiana*, January 2001). Said the learned Bharucha: "The time for change has come," and we should look up to science in these changing times. Though Bharucha advocated reforms in the context of the present raging controversy over dakhmenashini, his foresighted advice applies equally well to many of our outdated rituals and practices.

Dr P. D. SUNAVALA

Scant representation

The "Observance for Commonwealth Day 2001" on March 12 in the Westminster Abbey, London, took place in a church that has been dedicated to Christian worship for over 900 years, and the Observance had a Christian orientation that is appropriate to this place. Other great and historic faiths also have an honored place in the Commonwealth. Representa-

State of the art
projection, sound,
air-conditioning,
comfort and ambience



The All New

CHITRA C I N E M A

198, Dr B. Ambedkar Road, Dadar,
Mumbai 400014 Tel: 4182264

Fully Air-conditioned with



Strong® Projection and
Platter Systems (U.S.A.)

Fibre-Optic Lighting

Elegant foyer and lobbies

Comfortable seats

tives of those faiths were gladly welcomed to take part in the Observance and read from their scriptures or revered writings. These passages showed how the affirmations which are at the heart of the Observance, resting upon values and principles, sustain the Commonwealth and nourish its distinctive character.

The welcome and introduction was delivered by the dean of Westminster followed by a reading of the Commonwealth Message 2001 from the Queen, the head of the Commonwealth. Then followed readings by the elected representatives of the Islamic Cultural Centre, the rabbi of the Jewish faith, the Network of Sikh Organizations, UK, the UK National Assembly of Baha'is, the London Buddhist Vihara, the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre.

In this illustrious list the absence of a participating reader from the Zoroastrian religious faith is only too evident. Is this a pointer that the managing committee of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE), London lacks one of acceptable caliber? This status is a distinct mockery of the ZTFE's claim in the Memorandum of Association to advance the Zoroastrian religious faith. To date

the ZTFE managing committee has had seven consecutive invitations for a presence at the Observance and all of these have been bereft of any evidence to grasp these inviting opportunities to honor this undertaking.

Hitherto, only the ZTFE president of the day has been observed to be present as an honorary steward at each of the Commonwealth Observance. Perhaps it is a pointer that the people who have made Zoroastrian House, London, a center for Zoroastrian assemblage, etc are not the contemporary managing committees but, men and women, who by their hard work, talent, and in many cases their genius across the range of Zoroastrian activities have raised it to its present unchallenged level. Many have been known to exclaim — especially those in mainland Europe — “what a pity that the contemporary managing committees have not impressed as being wholeheartedly appreciative of this legacy as evidenced by their tendency to stand on the shoulders of their predecessors.” It is the latter who have rightly merited the inclusion of “Europe” in the appellation, “The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Inc),” by virtue of their genuine concern for and interest in

the welfare of Zoroastrians in Europe with whom they maintained regular meaningful contact and dialog. One may ask: “Is it an indictment that the ZTFE's managing committees of the recent past have lacked a bright star capable of projecting a quintessentially Zoroastrian power to focus on the cardinal doctrine and the greatness of the precepts of Zarathushtra?”

Much was made by the current managing committee of the ZTFE for receiving an invitation for a free ride to the Millennium Dome, London, on the opening day in company with some cabinet ministers. Zoroastrians in London may have well taken some pride because of the inclusion of “Zoroastrianism” in the Faith Zone of the Dome though devoid of any significant contribution from the ZTFE even remotely equating those from Jews, Hindus, Muslims, etc. Now that this Dome has suffered the ignominy of premature death, a meaningful opportunity was lost to project the magnanimity known to be the hallmark of the Zoroastrian faith.

FURHOK K. TANGREE

La Roche-sur-Foron

France

Edited by Parinaz M. Gandhi

Notice to *Parsiana* readers

As Indian postal regulations require that 12 issues of a publication be published in a year to avail of the special concessional postal rates, *Parsiana* will be publishing a 12 to 16-page issue for July. Subscribers will, therefore, now receive 12 issues in a year.

As the post office has doubled the postal rates for registered publications such as *Parsiana*, we are compelled to increase our subscription from Rs 350 to Rs 400 a year. We regret the additional burden to our loyal subscribers and count on your continued subscription support.

MATRIMONIAL

An unmarried, fair, good-looking, Zoroastrian (Parsi), Indian businessman aged 36, 5'6" tall, seeks matrimony with a decent, attractive, well settled Parsi lady in the US (up to 45 years). The advertiser, Mr Don Addy, is willing to settle and expand his present business in USA. Interested ladies kindly e-mail: d_a@la.com

- Ready hand and machine made Parsi garas available as well as made to order ones
- We transfer old jari saris/garas onto new materials
- Ready original jari borders and zardosi net borders available as well as made to order ones
- Japanese crepe, butter crepe, Italian crepe, Georgette and plain materials are also available.
- We will also do embroidery on your churidar material.

Mahavir's Embroidery

Mahavir Building Compound,
Bhandarkar Road, Opp Kabutar Khana
Matunga (C.R.), Mumbai 400019
Tel No. 4025070 C/o 4021818
Telefax: 4313328
Website: www.mahavirgroup.net
E-mail: contactus@mahavirgroup.net

Sunday closed



The wealth of the worthies

A Touch of Greatness: Encounters with the Eminent by Russi M. Lala. Published in 2001 by Penguin Books India (Private) Limited, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110017, India. Pp: 239. Price: Rs 295.

It was at the National Institute of Professional Secretaries (NIPS) Administrative Professionals Day luncheon at Hotel Taj President that I met Russi Lala after a fairly long time. Noticing that there were only salads on my plate, he remarked that he too loved salads "but I've to be extra careful. Infection, you know." Lala is known to be suffering from cancer for quite some time and has even written a touching little book holding out desperate straws of hope for fellow-sufferers. The long pre-luncheon function had obviously tired him for he said, "Come, let's find a place to sit." I said to myself, here was a man stricken, carrying on uncomplainingly, quietly smiling. Wasn't there a touch of greatness about this?

By a delightful coincidence, just a few days later, I got a call from Parsiana whether I'd be interested in reviewing Lala's latest book. I sure would. And what is the book's title? *A Touch of Greatness!*

A Touch isn't really a new book, but a reprint of the earlier *Encounters with the Eminent*, with a few notable additions, among them men like Azim Premji and N. R. Narayana Murthy. Although reputed to be the third-richest man in the world, Premji leads a very simple life, travelling economy class by plane, avoiding five-star hotels and wearing only

clothes made in India. Narayana Murthy, too, may be a role model for successful entrepreneurs, but his touch of greatness lies in the fact that he must be that rarest of rare Indian who, enjoying both fame and fortune, claims that his most prized possession is his conscience.

The times are out of joint. A book like this, a breath of fresh air, can be a fount of inspiration. If we learn by example, this book offers 26 examples to humble us with the thought of how much we have yet to learn. With our eyes complacently closed, we are suddenly confronted with "the inward vision." What, for example, is that supreme quality about the Dalai Lama, that blessedness of being, that sustains him, haunted though he is by the knowledge that a million of his people on "the roof of the world" have been tortured, imprisoned and killed, that not a word of bitterness escapes his lips and nothing is further from his mind than revenge?

How deep and profound is the human capacity for love that a woman like Mother Teresa chooses to dedicate her life to bringing not only solace, but dignity to the poorest of the poor in their final hours? Ah, but the Mother herself gives the answer. "Silence," she says, "is a beautiful fruit of prayer. We must learn not only the silence of the mouth, but also the silence of the heart, of the eyes, of the ears and of the mind, which I call the five silences. Say it and memorize it on your five fingers." As to the low charge made against the Mother that at the point of death she converted the patients to Christianity by reciting

the Last Sacrament, she replied convincingly: "We help the poor to die with God... we live that they may die in peace, so that they may go home according to what is written in the Book, be it written according to Hindu or Muslim or Buddhist or Catholic or Protestant or any other people."

This book makes you ponder over the nature of greatness. Jawaharlal Nehru once said, after a program by M. S. Subbulakshmi: "Who am I, a mere prime minister, before the Queen of Song?" Yet it is this Queen whom Lala also quotes as saying: "It may not be easy to be a good person. There is, however, a great advantage. There is no time bar to becoming good. There is no question of becoming a doctor, an engineer or a lawyer after a certain age. But there is no age limit for anyone to become a good person. In the mind of a good person, bhakti is an instinctive growth. God Himself makes His home in such a mind."

Great men need to be dedicated and determined, strong willed, with iron in their souls. Lal Bahadur Shastri once came home on a week's parole from jail as his four-year-old son was down with typhoid. When the time came to return to jail, the child's temperature had shot up to 106°F. The child whispered, "Babuji, please don't go." Tears rolled down Shastri's cheeks. He shook his head, folded his hands to greet everyone, and went back to jail.

Humility too appears to be an essential ingredient of greatness. Though renowned throughout India as an eminent lawyer and man of letters, Nani Palkhivala remains modest about his accomplishments: "I don't think I have

continued on page 56



Lala: inspired and enriched by the luminaries



As illustrated in the book (from left): Tata, Palkhivala, Field-Marshal Sam Manekshaw, Dr Banoo Coyaji and Mino Masani

MILESTONES

The age of Zoroastrian brides (as listed in this issue) ranged between 23 and 38 years, the arithmetic mean (the total number of individual ages divided by the total number of brides) being 26 years. The corresponding figures for the grooms were 22 and 49 years, averaging at 29 years.

Heart disease (as usual the major killer) felled 22 of the 59 Zoroastrians (seven in the 80+ age group) who expired in May 2001 in Bombay. As compared to the deaths the births numbered only 14. The other killers were brain disease (six), lung disease and pneumonia (five), hypertension, old age/general debility and septicemia (four each), kidney failure (three) and paralysis (two). Polytrauma following a road accident, hypothyroidism, respiratory infection, cervical cord constriction with quadriplegia, falciparum malaria, haemorrhage and shock due to head injury, cellulitis of left toes, diabetes, cancer and jaundice were the isolated cases registered in May. The eldest to breathe her last was a 102-year-old lady. Two youths, aged 32 and 37, were also lost to the community. The Zoroastrian life

expectancy at birth for May, in Bombay, was 76 years.

The data on births, marriages and deaths has been compiled from information supplied by various newsletters and anjuman in India and abroad, courts and hospitals. This information is not always complete or consistent: we are unable to carry data from areas where the anjuman do not furnish the particulars; the birth figures for Bombay are supplied by 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 break-up of deaths according to illnesses, especially of the elderly, death is often due to a combination of several diseases.

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

AHMEDABAD

DIED

Jimmy Darabshaw Bhagwagar (74), husband of Keti and father of Armaity Dinyar Das-toor, Rashna Faramroze Master, Cyrus and Sillu Kurush Sanjana on May 5, 2001

BARODA

MARRIED

Rozen Homi Kavarana and Darius Adi Vakharia; April 15

DIED

Manizeh Driver (88); April 12
Kersasp G. Contractor (85); April 21

BOMBAY

BORN

A girl, *Parinaz*, to *Pervin and Homiyar Wadia*; February 12
A girl to *Persis and Jehangir Khambatta*; May 1
A boy to *Persis and Amit Sharma*; May 3
A girl to *Shernaz and Hormazd Mistry*; May 5
A girl to *Benaz and Cyrus*

Reporter; May 5

A girl to *Kamal and Pradeep Lalwani*; May 7

A boy to *Delna and Jimmy Mistry*; May 12

A girl to *Shernaz and Venkatesh Dhound*; May 19

A boy to *Benaifer and Rupen Vikamsey*; May 22

A boy to *Beeafred and Rohinton Madon*; May 24

A boy to *Mahbanoo and Sohrab Faroodi*; May 25

A girl to *Maneck and Hemansu Thakkar*; May 27

A girl, *Diane*, to *Parveen and Zarir Mistry*, sister to *Riyan*; May 29

A girl, *Naira*, to *Yasmin and Pirojshaw Sarkari*; May 29

A boy to *Yasmin and Khushroo Bhadda*; May 30

MARRIED

Zeeya Bahadur Mistry and Homiyar Nariosang Kapadia; April 29

Hufirish Jehanbux Majra and Zubin Farokh Homavazir; May 3

Hufiriz Dara Taraporewala of Thana and Kersi Keki Dastur; May 5

Zia Jazeel Mehta and Hurvaksh Adi Irani; May 6

Anahita Dhanjisha Balsara of Poona and Zarir Kekobad Sidhwa; May 7

Delnaz Kersi Mistry and Ronnee Darius Wankadia; May 7

Anahita Cherag Doctor and Sarosh Dara Patel; May 12

Jasmin Firoz Bhote and Cyrus Faroke Rustomji; May 12

Binaifer Pervaz Devlaliwalla and Kuresh Meherwan Gourabian; May 15

Natasha Adil Anklesaria of Madras and Burziz Farokh Thunthi; May 18

Minaz Hoshang Charna and Rumi Keki Kanga; May 19

Kainaz Dosu Dordi and Yazad Phiroze Pardiwalla; May 20

Zia Vispi Sagar and Rustom Noshir Anklesaria; May 24

Shireen Hoshi Gazdar and Arish Yazdi Eduljee of New Delhi; May 27

Armin Aspi Irani and Khushru Marazban Irani; May 27

DIED

Fali Nadirsha Sahiar (69), residing at 302, Madhuvan, Sri Krishna Complex, Vartak Rd, Virar (W), 401303; April 30

Navroz Rustom Italia (53), 38, Peace Heaven, Perry Rd, Bandra (W), 400050; May 1

Homi Burjor Patel (82), 14, Himgiri, Veer Savarkar Ngr, Vasai Rd, 401202; May 3

Ratanshaw Noshirwan Baja (64), 7/A, Old Wadia Bldg, Chandonwadi, 400002; May 4

Daulat Homi Nanavaty (85), B/9, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 4

Goolbai Jehangirji Hilloo (84), 1, Nana Bldg, 23, Gilder Lane, Opp Navjivan Soc, 400008; May 5

Homai Burjor Mehta (65), 632, Marker Mans, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 5

Nargish Eruch Tata (74), 650, Karani Charity Bldg, Firdoshi Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 5

Naval Rustamji Italia (86), 683/A, Khareghat Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 6

Nergish Homi Pavri (78), B/8, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 6

Banubai Hormusjshah Billimoria (92), A-3/23, Sahakar, 5th Rd, TPS III, Santacruz (E), 400055; May 7

Nosher Hormusji Dhunjibhoy (85), 6/A, Imroz, Mount Pleasant Rd, 400006; May 8

Adeshar Covasji Mistry (88), F. S. Parukh Dharamshalla, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 8

Freny Burjorji Suvaliwalla (86), N/5, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; May 8

Bhikha Adi Havewalla (75), 2/10, Ratan Tata Clny, Tardeo Rd, 400034; May 9

Kali Rustomji Madan (72), T/12, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 9

Jamshed Nadersha Divecha (73), F/3, Dalal Est, Bombay Central, 400008; May 10

Manijeh Homji Meherhomji (89), 581, Shirin Abad, Jame Jamshed Rd, Matunga, 400019; May 10

Silloo Dara Shroff (78), C/15, Shapur Baug, V. P. Rd, 400004; May 10

Behram Boman Irani (70), B/18, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; May 11

Jehangir Nawroji Parakh (85), 502, Sterling Tower, Gamdevi, 400007; May 11

Goolrukh Sorab Farzadi (65), 2/21, A. H. Wadia Baug, Parel Tank Rd, 400033; May 12

Jamshed Rustom Irani (65), A/27/34-38, Master Bldg, Mohamad Shakur Marg, Bora Bazar, Fort, 400001; May 12

Meher Phiroze Randelia (102), D/12, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 12

Dosibai Rustomji Mistry (Dalal) (87), 1/10, C. M. Banaji Bldg, Forjett St, 400036; May 13

Dinoo Minoo Sarkari (90), Naju Villa, Vakola Bridge, Santacruz (E), 400055; May 13

Jehanbux Fariborz Tata (78), 669, Malegaumwalla Boyce Bldg, Katrak Rd, Wadala, 400031; May 13

Mani Firoze Damania (70), 23, Godrej Bldg, Contractor Baug, Mori Rd, Mahim, 400016; May 14

Sheroo Darabshaw Gagrati (76), 4-A/7, New Dubash Bldg, Gamadia Clny, Tardeo, 400007; May 14

Manijeh Sorabji Tata (80),

FIGURES AT A GLANCE*

	Bombay			India			World		
	This issue	2000*	2001○	This issue	2000*	2001○	This issue	2000*	2001○
BIRTHS									
Boys	6	87	35	1	15	2	5	20	7
Girls	9	84	48	1	14	2	4	19	6
MARRIAGES									
Parsi	15	128	154	7	13	10	3	20	2
INTERCOMMUNAL									
Males married out	—	20	—	—	2	—	—	4	—
Females married out	—	19	—	—	2	—	—	1	—
DEATHS									
CONSIGNED									
Males	26	463	177	7	79	24	5	58	10
Females	34	461	180	7	57	22	2	45	5
CREMATED									
Males	—	5	2	—	1	—	—	—	—
Females	—	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Running totals for 2000 (January 2000-June 2001 issues)

○Running totals for 2001 (January 2001-June 2001 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.

F/1, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 14
Jaiji Behram Wadia (81), Captain Bldg, 275/B, Zoroastrian Clny, Chikalwadi, Tardeo Rd, 400007; May 14
Dali Nariman Tavaria (72), 8/14, Tata Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 15
Dalimai Burjorji Daruwalla (96), Rati Villa, Opp Bhatia Hosp, Tardeo, 400007; May 16
Allamai Nadirsha Gandhi (80), E/12, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 16
Gool Jimi Mistri (96), 1/5, Brighton, 68/D, Napean Sea Rd, 400006; May 17
Nargis Rusi Moudawalla (67), A/3, Krishna Ngr, Agashi Rd, Virar (W), 401303; May 17
Dhanjisha Bhikaji Tangri (32), 9, Petit Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 17
Piloo Darabsha Wadia (54), 6/13, Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; May 17
Neville Rohinton Godiwalla (41), Sai Niketan, B-13/13, Mazagaon, 400010; May 18
Dolly Furdoonji Seervai (78), 3, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 18
Ardeshir Sorab Mehta (94), 15, Wadia Bldg, Old

Khareghat Clny, Hughes Rd, 400007; May 19
Aloo Hormusji Mistri (89), M/35, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 19
Sheroo Pestonji Daruwalla (88), Daruwalla Bldg, 316, Dr Cawasjee Hormusjee St, Marine Lines, 400002; May 20
Jal Meherwanji Khan (86), 614, Jame Jamshed Rd, Parsi Clny, Dadar, 400014; May 21
Jehangir Rustomji Sarkari (73), Silverene, 34/35, Malcolm Baug, Jogeshwari (W), 400102; May 22
Bahadur Rustomji Baliwala (88), 84/G, Dastoor Block, Naigaum Cross Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 23
Najamai Kaikhushroo Hatara (92), G/50, Cusrow Baug, S. B. Rd, 400039; May 23
Rashid Aspiandiar Irani (64), 9, New Mistri Bldg, Balaram St, Grant Rd, 400007; May 24
Pallonji Dorabji Mistri (84), 6/86, Chateau Windsor, Veer Nariman Rd, 400020; May 24
Gool Keki Tarapore (80), Meher Mans, Tardeo Lower Bridge, Off Lamington Rd, 400008; May 24
Phiroze Ardeshir Boomla (76), 3/62, Kailash Apts, S. V. Rd, Borivli (W), 400092; May 25
Perin Framroze Kathawala

(88), 93, Mama Chmbs, A. K. Marg, 400036; May 25
Najoo Ratan Madan (76), C/o Nilufer E. Bharucha, D/9, Captain Clny, Tardeo, 400034; May 26
Sam Jamshed Nagporwalla (58), P. Pandiya Hse, Opp Bhiwandiwalla Ter, 400002; May 26
Adar Phirowshah Mandroina (65), 5, Kanga Bldg, Dr B. A. Rd, Dadar, 400014; May 27
Roshan Kersi Powwalla (63), P/6, S. B. Bharucha Baug, S. V. Rd, Andheri (W), 400058; May 27
Havovi Nadir Desai (37), A/33, Nowroz Baug, Lalbaug, 400012; May 28
Sam Cooverji Mistri (71), 19/12A, Panthaky Baug, Andheri (E), 400069; May 28
Perin Jehangerji Patel (73), 224, Gustad Mans, Tardeo, 400007; May 29
Dolly Homi Marfatia (87), J. J. Dharamshalla, Nagpada, 400008; May 31

CALCUTTA

BORN

A boy, *Reyan*, to *Suparna* and *Dinyar Mucadam*; February 14

MARRIED

Avi Bodhanwala and *Nauzer*

Batlivala; May 6

DIED

Zenobia Deboo, wife of Maneck and mother of Perveen and Zubin; April 10
Tehmi Ismail, wife of Mohammed and sister of Jimmy, Mehru Parekh, Dhun Setna, Jal and Jeru Postwalla; May 29

POONA

BORN

A girl, *Rea*, to *Aseema* and *Noshir Desai*; May 17

DIED

Sohrab Irani, husband of late Lal and father of Shahrokh and Phiroze; March 5

SECUNDERABAD

MARRIED

Roshni Baldawala, daughter of Dolat and late Dinshaw, and *Porus Billimoria*, son of Kety and Parvez; November 20, 2000
Yasmin Mistri, daughter of Kety and Parvez, and *Zarir Jilla*, son of Kety and Hoshang; January 28, 2001
Naznin Toddywala, daughter of Gool and Dinshaw, and *Cyrus Gandevia*, son of Kety and late Erach; February 14
Tanaz Wadia, daughter of Armin and Keki, and *Khushru Sidhva*, son of Meher and late Burjor; February 25
Sanobar Dupatawala, daughter of Amy and Dara, and *Zahl Tantra*, son of Sarosh and Feroz; May 27

SURAT

DIED

Homi Gustadji Mistri (79), Choksi St, Nanpura, 395001; April 16
Gool Shariyarji Madan (78), Kelani Vakhari, Lalgate, 395003; April 21
Navroz Jhangirji Jalgamwala (49), Navipeth, 334, Stn Rd, Jalgaon, 425001; April 27
Hutoxi Homi Jijina (50), 12/2877, Bibiniwadi, Sayedpura, 395003; April 28
Hillamai Burjorji Shethna (90), Hira Parekh Chawl, Timaliwad, Nanpura, 395001; May 3
Tehmul Hormasji Wadia (62), 12/916, Kelani Vakhari, Lalgate, 395003; May 12
Bajibhai K. Dadina (78), Opp

Dr Bhacca's Dispensary,
Vanki Bordi, 395003; May 17
Shreema Firze Cooper (87),
Nariman Home and Infirmary,
Shahpore, 395003; May 25

CANADA
British Columbia
BORN

A girl, *Jasmin*, to *Tushnamaity*
and *Jamshed Minwalla* in
Vancouver; January 26
A girl, *Anaita*, to *Zarrin*
and *Zarir Dadinatha* in
Vancouver; April 29
A boy, *Komyar*, to *Armita*
and *Azadmehr Kaviani* in
Vancouver; May 13

MARRIED
Homa Sorooshi of North
Vancouver and *Shervin*
Shahriari of North Vancouver
in Richmond; April 14
Parizad Mistry and *Zerxes*
Bhathena of Bombay in
Langley; April 15

DIED
Villu Murzban Pajmiger (74),
in Vancouver; January 14
Gool Homi Amrolia (82),
mother of *Dinyar*, *Sheroo* and
Silloo Parekh in Vancouver;
March 4

Ontario

BORN
A boy, *Zen*, to *Neena* and
Behram Sharifabadi, brother to
Afreen; March 26
A boy, *Liam Sorabji*, to
Binaifer and *Rustom Mirza*,
brother to *Riaan* in Ottawa;
March 30

DIED
Jehangir Cawasjee Patell,
brother of *Soonie* and *Homi* in
Toronto; April 30

IRAN

DIED
Alayar Keikhosrow Kalantar,
father of *Keikhosrow*,
Esfandiyar, *Khodarahm*
and *Hormozdyar* in Yazd;
March 21
Shahpour Soroush Partovinia,
father of *Homa Khosraviani*,
Roksaneh, *Jamshid* and
Farshid in Tehran; March 29
Mehrban Soroush Javid,
brother of *Katayoun*,
Bahram and *Aflatoon* in
Tehran; April 1

UAE

BORN
A boy, *Danesh*, to *Ma'az* and
Zubin Sutaria in

Dubai; May 20

USA

California

MARRIED
Mahboobeh Ghorbani and
Shahriar Shahriari of
Vancouver; October 17, 2000

New York

DIED
Rusi Keki Balsara (67),
husband of *Jeroo* and father of
Shahnaz and *Cyrus* in White
Plains; February 23, 2001

Texas

BORN

A girl, *Natasha Diane*, to
Tami and *Jamshed Rivetna*,
sister to *Olivia Zarine*;
October 31, 2000
A boy, *Zahan*, to *Fauziya* and
Khushnood Shokrehuda in
Houston; February 20, 2001
A girl, *Sophia Michelle*, to
Maynaz and *Matthew Olson*,
sister to *Madison* in Dallas;
March 26

Compiled by Roxana A. Driver

MATRIMONIAL

Parsi (Zoroastrian) boy born in
February 1973, tall, fair and cool mannered,
commerce graduate &
M.B.A. (Finance) London, working
as a finance manager in Bangalore
with a handsome salary, seeks matrimony
from parents of well-educated, tall, good-looking
Parsi girl. Please contact parents:

Percy N. Daruwala
Sahuwala Cylinders Limited, 242, D-Block,
Autonagar, Visakhapatnam 530012
E-mail: sahuwala@satyasaionline.net.in
Fax: 0891-517762
Phone: 0891-516823 (O) 755578/575053 (R)

With Best Wishes From

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

and

Mrs Purviz R. Shroff

The doyen of documentaries

Parinaz M. Gandhi

Died: Fali Rustomji Bilimoria, 77, veteran documentary and short filmmaker who was on the jury of various national and international film festivals, in Bombay on January 14, 2001 following lung failure.

Over a period of 41 years Bilimoria is known to have made more than 300 advertising films and 90 documentaries, winning many national and international awards and accolades in the process. But for him, more rewarding than the encomiums was the opportunity he got to "know this country better than most people... It made a man out of me," Bilimoria had acknowledged in an interview with *IDPA Update*, the journal of the Indian Documentary Producers' Association.

Among his most memorable works was *The House That Ananda Built* which in 1968 was the first Indian documentary to have won an (Oscar) Academy Award nomination, notes an obituary in the *IDPA Update* of January-March 2001. In fact this film which depicts the life and aspirations of a typical Oriya family was also selected for screening in non-competitive international film festivals in Melbourne and Leipzig, East Germany, in Antwerp and Philadelphia over the next four years, states his bio data.

In the earlier decade, *A Village in Travancore* had won the first prize at the Cork International Film Festival in UK. As noted the chairman of the jury Sir Basil Wright in 1956, "A Village in Travancore deserves its award because when we have seen it we are not only better informed about a group of people in a certain faraway place but have received that artistic satisfaction which comes from a film sensitively directed by someone who knows precisely what they want to say, and have succeeded perfectly in saying it. A deceptively

simple seeming film, its virtues are unobtrusive but basic and deeply rooted. Let no one underestimate the skill and artistry which have gone into its making." Acclaim from the critics notwithstanding, Bilimoria's favorite continued to be *The Last Raja* which he made in 1972 depicting the post-Independence lifestyle of a former princely ruler.

His proprietary firm, Fali Bilimoria Productions claimed to have delivered over half a million feet of edited and censored footage to clients with experience in feature length productions, documentaries and advertising before it wound up operations in 1988. Among the other distinctions to its credit was its inclusion by the BBC, UNESCO and Asia Society as a producer of some of the best documentary films in the world, notes a company profile. It was reportedly the only Indian company selected by UNESCO to execute work on their behalf overseas (Indonesia). Other world bodies to be included among its clients were the UNO, WHO, United States Information Agency, International Planned Parenthood Federation... In India, the firm must have produced hundreds of advertising shorts for clients that included the Films Division — ministry of information and

broadcasting, ministry of external affairs, ministry of labor and employment, The Reserve Bank of India, the Indian Road Transport and Development Association and corporates like Burmah Shell, Hindustan Lever Limited, Rallis India Limited, Air India. "His film, *An Interview with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru* (commissioned by Arnold Michealis Productions, USA to showcase Nehru's views on India for screening to the American senate and the public in USA), "led him to make numerous documentary films outlining the progress achieved by our country in all the core sectors," conveyed his sister-in-law Silloo Commissariat.

Umpteen documentaries by Bilimoria must have been screened in cinema houses when it was mandatory to show them before the start of the feature film. But as Bilimoria conveyed in *IDPA Update*, "The short filmmaker then, as it is now, was sustained by advertising films rather than documentary films... Documentary filmmakers have always played second fiddle to story films. We were the losers in the theaters and we will be the losers here (on the TV) but do not forget that non-fiction channels like the Discovery Channel, CNN and BBC are also proving to be very popular. Eventually I think the documentary has as much a future as the feature film." His balanced views earned him a respected place on the committees appointed by the Government of India's ministry of information and broadcasting.

It was more by default that Bilimoria joined filmmaking. His early education was at Bombay's New Era High School after which he completed his Inter Science from St Xavier's College and did four years of medical studies. When in his last year at the G. S. Medical College, he decided to totally dedicate himself to India's independence movement. Unable to resume his medical education after India's independence, he was encouraged to take up filmmaking by Paul Zils of UFA Studios, West Germany and Warner Brothers, USA. In partner-



Bilimoria (left) when shooting for the award-winning *A Village in Travancore*

ship with Zils he started Documentary Unit India in 1947 and Art Films of Asia Private Limited in 1952 which after Zils' departure from India in 1959 was functioning as Fali Bilimoria Productions, states his bio data. In 1963 he was invited to the USA by Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith on a Leadership Grant. His expertise in direction, photography and editing must have benefited innumerable newcomers to the industry. Known for his "suavity, urbane charm and vitriolic wit," it was his "practical approach" which earned him success and also allowed him "to retire with dignity and grace," noted the write-up in *IDPA Update*.

In fact even after retiring from active filmmaking he continued with consultancy work, mentions his wife Vera. In later life it was golf that preoccupied him. A practising Zoroastrian although not one who felt the need to wear the sudreh-kusti daily, Vera notes that "he was very respectful of all religions." Not surprisingly he was selected by reputed sociologists Dr Arnold Toynbee and Dr Margaret Mead for their productions on comparative religions and comparative families.

"Bilimoria's career parallels the history of contemporary short films in India," summed up *IDPA Update* in its report on the Fourth Mumbai International Film Festival for Documentary, Short and Animation Films in 1996. Two years later he was honored with the V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award. With retrospectives of his films held at film festivals in India and abroad Bilimoria also enjoyed the distinction of having his name recorded in the Hall of Fame by the Indian Academy of Advertising Film Art.

The respected filmmaker is survived by his wife Vera.

ZOROASTRIANS ABROAD

continued from page 18

decades performed to a full house which they described as a "signal of hope and international solidarity."

Earlier in March renowned tenors including Jose Carreras and Placido Domingo had performed in Parma, Italy under Mehta's baton to celebrate the death anniversary of Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi, informed the *Afternoon Despatch and Courier* (March 14, 2001).

Compiled by Arnavaz S. Mama

BOOKS

continued from page 51

reached any real position. In any case, whatever I have achieved is not due to my efforts. It is the blessing of providence."

The poet Dryden sang of a truly great man that "he was great ere fortune made him so." Again and again, as Lala records his impressions of luminaries from a wide variety of fields like politics, social activism, industry, religion and arts, or giants who played a prominent role in shaping modern India, or renowned men and women who continue to impact on our consciousness and always will, the reader gets to recognize that the essence of their greatness lies not in what they do, achieve, accumulate, discover or leave behind for future generations, but in what they are, in themselves, as human beings, men cast in God's image.

In his preface Lala states as the purpose of his book: "Some quality in their lives, or a sentence or two which I have quoted from them, has returned over the years to enrich and heighten my own life or helped me at a crucial moment. It is this wealth which I would like to share with others." He recalls an occasion when he met that doyen of industrialists, J. R. D. Tata, at the latter's sprawling bungalow, The Cairn, at Altamont Road. He was ushered into a small room with two chairs, a sofa that could be pulled out to make a bed, two telephones, a bookshelf and a desk. Lala thought this was his study. Only later did he realize that it was also his bedroom. Lala told JRD, "Sir, no one in your position would spend his time in a room as small as this." "Why do I need anything bigger?" he replied. "It suffices me." Often when Lala is tempted to acquire material things, this line comes back to him: "It suffices me."

Greatness has a tendency to rub off on those who come into contact with it. It is likely to happen to all who read, digest and ponder over this book. It certainly has rubbed off on the author.

BURJOR K. KARANJIA

The quest for quotes

Shakespeare's "Sweet are the uses of adversity/Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,/Wears yet a precious jewel in his head" are just some of the words that fill the 120-page book *Wow! Words of wisdom* compiled by Adil F. Rangoonwalla. Published in 2001 the

book contains more than 1,000 quotations in over 100 categories which include happiness, faith, wisdom, power, courage, knowledge and jealousy.

"As you are entertained, amused, empowered along the reading, I hope



Rangoonwalla: compiling quotes

you find a solid measure of victory at the end," writes well-known author and columnist Cyrus H. Merchant in his foreword. Rangoonwalla notes that many quotations have been taken from *The Home*

Book of Quotations by Burton Stevenson and the *Encyclopaedia of Familiar Quotations* by Elford Treffry.

While quotes by Emerson, Longfellow and Shakespeare seem to appear in almost every category of the book, quotes by William Blake, Lord Tennyson, E. Browning, Herbert Spencer and Voltaire are also frequently spotted. Some interesting quotes include "Be the tail of lions rather than the head of foxes (Talmud);" "Yet he was jealous, though he did not show it, for jealousy dislikes the world to know it (Byron)" and "Every principle contains in itself the germs of a prophecy (S. T. Coleridge)."

With a masters degree in industrial psychology and a diploma in counselling psychology Rangoonwalla regularly conducts workshops on self-awareness and emotional problem solving, notes a press release. His area of expertise being transactional analysis, Rangoonwalla convenes a program called "Overall Psychological Awareness" at the K. C. College and plans to conduct the same at other colleges in the next academic year. For school students he holds English enrichment programs and creative writing workshops.

Son of film historian and critic Firoze Rangoonwalla, books like *Zarathushtrianism*, *Khorshed Niayaesh* and *Meher Niayaesh* (both translated and explained), *Afrin Paigambar Zarathosht* and *Agyari Etiquette* have been authored by Adil who is working on his next title *The Good Zarathushtrian*.

The book, priced at Rs 75, is available from the author at M4. Dalal Estate, Lamington Road, Bombay 400008.

SIMIN J. PATEL

DISCOVER THE LUXURIES OF A PREMIUM BATH



Sandal Rich



Imparts natural richness
of Sandal to your skin

Deo Fresh



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

Luxury



With 80% TFM to prevent
afterwash dryness



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



The new
Rasna is richer,
thicker, tastier.
But my husband
says it's,
coool



One sip and - aah - the new Rasna is deliciously different. A smart, new pack. 13 tongue-tingling flavours to choose from. As many as 32 mouth-watering glasses with each pack... and an exciting gift inside for your kids! Make sure you bring home this extraordinary refreshment.

*Richer
Thicker
Tastier*

