

# FEZANA

# JOURNAL



SPRING 2003, BAHAR 1372 YZ

Mah Fravardin-Ardibehest-Khordad 1372 YZ (Fasli)

Mah Avan-Adar-Dae 1372 YZ (Shenshai)

Mah Adar-Dae-Bahman 1372 YZ (Kadmi)

## Zarathushtis in Sports: An Honor Roll

**Also inside:**

**On the Parsi Heritage Trail**

**Chamber of Commerce**

**World Body Discussions**

**Sunday Stories**

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

# FEZANA JOURNAL

PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF  
ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF  
NORTH AMERICA

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[page 66]

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# Gymkhana Memories

When volleyball and table tennis were articles of faith

By Porus P. Cooper  
Guest Editor

Growing up in the 1960s and '70s in Malcolm Baug, in Mumbai, brought certain privileges that kids living in most other places in the bustling city could only envy. You could jog or roller-skate or bicycle around the neighborhood without fear of being run over by cars. You could step outside for a game of street cricket, and the only concern would be that some crotchety neighbor, worried about the security of his windows, would growl when the tennis ball flew into his yard. It was less controversial to play badminton in the street.

'Baug' means 'garden,' and truly this settlement, a so-called Parsi colony in what used to be the outer suburbs of the city, was (and still is) a garden, it's every alley a tree-shaded avenue. In that it isn't unique. It is in the mold of well-kept, gated communal neighborhoods still familiar in many Indian cities. There are Parsi colonies just as there are Hindu, Muslim and Sikh colonies. In the polyglot society that is India, colonies are part fortress and part refuge, a place where you go home at night to get back in touch with your core commonality.

Malcolm Baug, especially from the perspective of my youth, was also a community united by a common passion for sports.

There was weight-lifting at Burjor's house. He was the one who owned the weights. Dara was the guy who reliably showed up with gear for a game of street cricket. If there was someone making clicking sounds with his fingers outside your window on a Sunday morning, it likely was Percy looking for company on a bicycle ride or roller-skating excursion.

(Two tots who were frequent passengers on those bike rides were sisters named Armin and Jasmin, whom the boys would take 'double-seat' on their biking escapades through the colony. The two would go on to acclaim in competitive cycling, nationally and internationally).

Sometimes Kobad would come by, or Aspi, or Vispy or Fareedoon or Hormuz. They usually were on a mission to round up enough players for a regulation game of volleyball or cricket at the gymkhana.

Ah, the gymkhana. That was the best privilege of all. Gymkhana. It's one of those vibrantly cross-cultural words born from the British presence in India. It literally means 'house of athletics,' and that's really a lot more than your neighborhood gymnasium. It was a place to meet, not just sweat. It was the repository of a variety of diversions for people of all ages. For me, sometimes, it was a refuge from homework.

There was volleyball, of course. We played it on a concrete surface that was laid down so long ago that it was cracked and buckled in a hundred places. Some long-ago-painted white lines lingered faintly, like the afterglow in your eyes after inadvertently looking at a light bulb.

The lines did not exactly coincide with the contours of a volleyball court because when they were painted they delineated a tennis court. But they were approximately true and that was usually good enough, except for those times during each game when the ball would land so close to the faint borders that vigorous arguments would break out over whether it was in or out. Usually Khushroo settled the dispute. He was captain of the traveling team and, more important, the most beefy of us all.

Then it was time to retire to the confines of the gymkhana clubhouse for some table tennis or carrom or game of cards or chess or arm wrestling.

Table tennis was not without its perils. There was only one table and no one was inclined to move on after playing just one game. Subtle forms of intimidation then came into play: Are you a gymkhana member? You are? I don't think you are up to date in your dues. What do you mean you just paid? Which committed member did you pay?

Here, Cherag usually prevailed. Cherag made up for his seemingly fragile physique with a certain mental toughness. As you couldn't get a ball past his dogged baseline defense so you could seldom get an argument past him. So if Cherag felt it was Kersi's turn at the table rather than Bomi's, well, that usually sounded like the right thing to do, sometimes even to Bomi.

By the way, although the boys tended to congregate with boys and the girls with girls – as young boys and girls everywhere have always done – there was seldom any separation of the genders once we arrived at the gymkhana. Yasmin was as competent a volleyball player as the boy next to her; Ruby could hold her own against many boys at table tennis and carrom.

A dirt patch off to one side served multiple purposes: sometimes it was the arena for a vigorous game of *kabaddi* (in which the aim is to invade the opposing team's territory and tag someone without being captured – all while breathlessly incanting "*kabaddi, kabaddi*"). Sometimes it was the venue for a game of *nargolio*, in which opposing teams would in turn seek to shatter a tiny castle of seven flat stones by hurling a tennis ball at it from a prescribed distance. Occasionally it was the place for a tug of war. Usually some hardy grown-up, occasionally even a spry senior citizen, would participate in these sports. Typically more eager than able, they provided comic relief

for the youngsters and, occasionally, some inspiration.

Sometimes, we went swimming – in a wide-mouthed well that was nestled amid a voluptuous stand of coconut and mango trees. With the benefit of hindsight I wonder what possessed us to climb into that deep, dark hole. It was full of treacherous vegetation and colonies of dark-green frogs. Someone usually brought a vial of bright red potassium permanganate to disinfect the water before we descended into it. Our science, I suspect, was as shaky as our common sense. It's a wonder we had no tragedy in the well. We were impelled by youthful bravado, no doubt. Ironically, we lost one of our comrades during a casual dip in the ocean one weekend.

So that was the sporting life in Malcolm Baug. It played out there, as it did in numerous Parsi colonies across the city by the sea. I know because we would travel frequently to the other colonies, or host them, in various tournaments. The contests would be intense, whether on the volleyball court or across the table tennis table or carrom board. Once we even organized a boxing event that drew contestants from all over the city. I cannot recall whose bright idea it was, because none of us had any clue how to box.

In a wondrous way, sport pitted Zarathushti against Zarathushti – and brought them together at the same time. Sports stitched the colonies, these scattered outposts of Zarathushtis, into a citywide quilt. From my boyhood I cannot recall any other routine activity with that effect. After the competition, there usually would be food and good humor and the anticipation of a return encounter. There was seldom any lingering rancor. Looking back, I think it fostered in me – and I presume in my comrades – a sense that there were plenty of our kind, all over the city and therefore, perhaps, all over the world. So long as it lasted, it was an illusion worth savoring. ■

## FEZANA JOURNAL

wishes Zarathushtis around the world a happy and prosperous

Norouz 1372

## To war or not to war? What do our prayers say?

**W**ith one voice, in this coming year, we all yearn for peace and justice for all peoples of the world. The big question is how do we get there? In our quest to “right evil” are we justified in going to war? What do our prayers say?

Jasa me Avanghe Mazda speaks against “quarrels”, “weapons”, “strife” and “discord”:

*Astuye daenam vanghuhim mazdayasnim, fraspayaokhedhram, nidhas-naithishem, khaetvadatham ashaonim ...*

“I praise the excellent religion of Mazda-worship, which is quarrel-removing, not believing in weapons, self-dedicating (and) holy...” [Er. Dr. Kersey H. Antia]

“I solemnly dedicate myself to the excellent religion of Mazda worship, which removes quarrels, which removes strife and discord, which teaches self-sacrifice and which leads to righteousness.” [T. R. Sethna]

Yet, in Hormazd Khodae, we pray that “tyrants”, “evil-doers” and “wicked rulers” be “smitten” and “defeated”:

*... sastaran, gunehgaran, ashmogan, darvandan, dushmana frian, zad shekasteh bad! Dush padashahan awadashan bad ...*

“... tyrants, criminals, heretics, impious ones, enemies, witches – all be smitten and defeated! May the wicked rulers cease to exist!” [Er. Dr. Kersey H. Antia]

“... tyrants, the evil-doers, the distorters of truth, those who have strayed from the path of God, the fair seducers, may all these be frustrated and defeated. May the wicked rulers be removed far from us ...” [T. R. Sethna]

And in the Gathas, Zarathushtra charges us humans with the responsibility to actively and relentlessly seek out and “vanquish” evil [D. J. Irani]:

“A veritable opponent of the evil-doer ... am I”

[Ys. 43.8]

“He who looks upon evil with tolerance, is no other than evil...”

[Ys. 46.6]

“Whoso drives him [the evil-doer] from the kingdom, removes him from peoples’ lives, shall go forth preparing the way for the ideal life.”

[Ys. 46.4]

I guess, we have to seek within for the answers ...

“With illumined mind weigh them with care,  
Before you choose which of two paths to tread,  
Deciding man by man, each one for each.”

[Ys. 30.2]

[I. J. S. Taraporewala]

Roshan Rivetna

Editor, FEZANA Journal



From the President

## *Jasa me Avanghe Mazda! (O Wise Lord, come to our guidance!)*

**T**he Mumbai meeting of world Zarathushti leaders, coordinated by Rohinton Rivetna and hosted by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), brought about a unique opportunity and experience for all who were present.

### **WZCC India Chapter.**

The inauguration of the India (Mumbai) chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce on January 18 and 19, 2003 was a resounding success, and yet another achievement for the Rivetnas.

### **World body discussions.**

The meeting to discuss world body issues was chaired by Mr. Minoo Shroff, senior most BPP trustee at the West End Hotel, Mumbai, on January 21. The FEZANA World Body Working Group (WB-WG) represented by Khorshed Jungalwala (chair) and Farrokh Mistree, provided an excellent forum and superb 'real-time' presentation in understanding the current status of the different models and possibilities. This helped the group of elected leaders to formulate a "Sense of the Meeting" to be presented to the WZO officials on my subsequent visit to London, UK.

FEZANA sincerely thanks Roshan, Rohinton, Khorshed and Farrokh, and Mr. Minoo Shroff and the BPP staff for organizing and hosting the meetings.

**Leaders' meeting.** On January 22nd, the meeting continued and other issues facing the world Zarathushti nation were discussed and interesting presentations were provided by those involved in a myriad of projects, which enabled the world leaders to gain a first hand insight.



Those discussions that in my opinion related directly to FEZANA, included: activities of the *World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation*, *Sanjan and Bahrot Conservation of Parsi Heritage* with archaeological

excavations thereof (Dr. Homi Dhalla); *Project Udvada* report of the WZO Youth Wing (Sarosh Bana) for a Pilgrimage Lodge, Museum, Holiday Home for children, etc., *Udvada beachhead conservation Project*, (Dr. Z. Tarapore/ Dr. V. Meherhomji); restoration of *manuscripts* and reconstruction of *Dastur*

*Meherjirana Library* (ZTFE librarian Malcolm Deboo); *senior citizens home in Navsari* and other property developments by *WZO Trust India* (Dinshaw Tamboly); undertakings by BPP at the Mumbai Tower of Silence *Solar Panel Project* (Dr. Homi Dhalla); updates for the next *World Youth Congress* (Sarosh Palkhiwalla) and the next *World Zarathushti Congress*, in U.K. (Dorab Mistry); the *ZWIN network* (Zareen Karani Araoz); support of Zarathushti revival in Tajikistan and parts of Central Asia (Dr. Meher Master Moos); *Zarathushti demographics and resettlement* issues (Dinshaw Tamboly); endowment fund scholarships for extremely gifted youngsters in sports, music and arts (Firdosh Mehta); book on *Zoroastrians* commissioned by Viking-Penguin (Bachi Karkaria); Zarathushti toll highway to all Atash Bahrams (Firdosh for Behram Paskania); common religion education materials (Firdosh for Kayomars Mehta).

**Pilgrimage trip.** On January 23rd and 24th, Roshan and Rohinton, Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly, Malcolm Deboo, Kersi Commissariat (YCZA) and myself embarked on a journey to Navsari, Udvada and Sanjan to get first-hand information on some of the projects mentioned above, including visitations to the Sanjan Memorial Column, Sanjan Dadgah, Navsari and Udvada Atash Bahrams, which gave a *spiritual dimension* to our visit, and made it a project oriented pilgrimage.

FEZANA thanks Dinshaw and Bachi for their hospitality. The charitable work undertaken by WZO Trust Funds India, under Dinshaw is highly commendable in providing support to athornans, seniors and other Zarathushtis. FEZANA also undertakes some medical and welfare assistance work via the WZO Trust Funds India.

**London visit.** On January 31st, I met with members of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) at a dinner hosted by ZTFE president Dorab Mistry and his wife Shehnaz, and on February 1st, with members of the executive of WZO at a dinner hosted by WZO chairman Rumi Sethna and his wife Hilda. The "Sense of the Meeting" as proposed at the January 21st meeting in Mumbai was conveyed to them, and a positive outcome of my meetings leaves me encouraged with the thought that the possibility of *One World Body* of Zarathushtis is within our reach in the future. The willingness of the leaders of WZO/ZTFE and the Indian Federation/BPP to work in harmony towards a single united world body is truly encouraging, and will need to be carefully nurtured in the near future to come to fruition.

For a detailed account of all speakers and presentations, see page 20.

FEZANA officially communicates with the community-at-large via [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) and the FEZANA Journal. Watch for more information forthcoming, on the above matters. ■

Firdosh Mehta  
President, FEZANA

### Board of Directors at ZANT (Dallas)

Board members of the Zoroastrian Association of Northern Texas for the 2002-2004 term, are from left, Mehrban Roshanravan (president), Poras Balsara (VP), Afsaneh Samiya (director), Keshvar Buhariwalla (secretary), Bakhtawar Roshanravan (social director), Ashish Pithawalla (treasurer) and Farin Iranpur (director). The Board represents a broad spectrum of the community in North Texas and is committed to building a community center that will truly reflect the diversity of the ZANT membership. The board has a good mix of young adults and parents, providing a sound, caring leadership.



## Mobed Mehrban Zartoshty honored in Vancouver

The Arbab Rostam Guiv Trust of Vancouver honored **Mobed Mehrban Jamshid Zartoshty** on November 15, 2002, for his dedication, love and services to the community.

The Madam Morvarid Guiv hall was jam packed, with people waiting in the corridors. The ceremony began with a speech in Farsi by Dr. Iradj Pourkarimi and in English by Fariborz Rahnmoon. Mobed Jehangir Panthaky, in English, and Manucher Iranpour in Farsi, recounted the services of the Zartoshty brothers, which is not limited to the Zarathushti community but reaches out to all races and all countries. Mr. Iranpour said he was proud to find the name of Arbab Mehrban Zartoshty among the top donors on the walls of Vancouver General Hospital and the Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver.

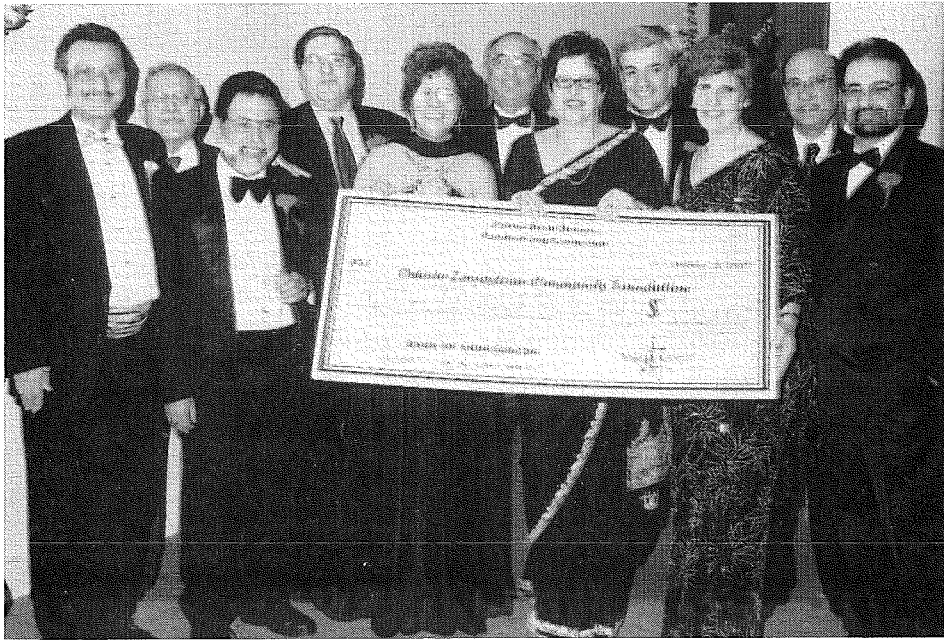
Everyone present wished him a long and healthy life. He was presented with a memorabilia and his wife Paridokht khanam, and daughter Vida, were presented a bouquet of flowers. A bouquet was also presented in memory of the Late Arbab Faridoon Zartoshty.

In a short speech, Arbab Mehrban Zartoshty reminded the audience of the services of people like Maneckji Limji Hataria, Arbab Rostam Guiv and Mr. Pavri and his wife Roda and others; he also talked of the importance of unity within the community. It was an evening that will be remembered for many many years.

[By Fariborz Rahnmoon, chair, Arbab Rostam Guiv Trust, Vancouver, [www.ancientiran.com](http://www.ancientiran.com), from [CreatingAwareness@yahoo.com](mailto:CreatingAwareness@yahoo.com).]



Cutting the cake: Mehrban and Paridokht



*Left, OCZF Black Tie Gala, October 26, at the Mississauga Convention Center in Toronto. Marzi Byramjee of Regal Press [3rd from left] presented a check to president Kobad Zarolia [center back] to cover gala expenses. Sale of tickets and auction raised \$55,000.*

*Below, Helping to make the ZSO dream a reality: 'Event and Project Leaders' of ZSO's Building Campaign Committee headed by Dr. Dhun Noria [arrow, front] at a fundraiser in December. ZSO president Sam Vesuna is in the back row [below arrow].*



## Two ambitious darbe mehr initiatives in Toronto

**T**he two Toronto-based Zarathushti organizations – the 30-year-old Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) and the newly-formed Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation (OZCF), are both pursuing aggressive fund-raising efforts towards new darbe mehrs in the Toronto area.

**The ZSO effort**, mandated by a majority vote of members is to rebuild a new, larger center at the site of the present Mehraban Guiv Darbe Mehr, which has now outgrown the

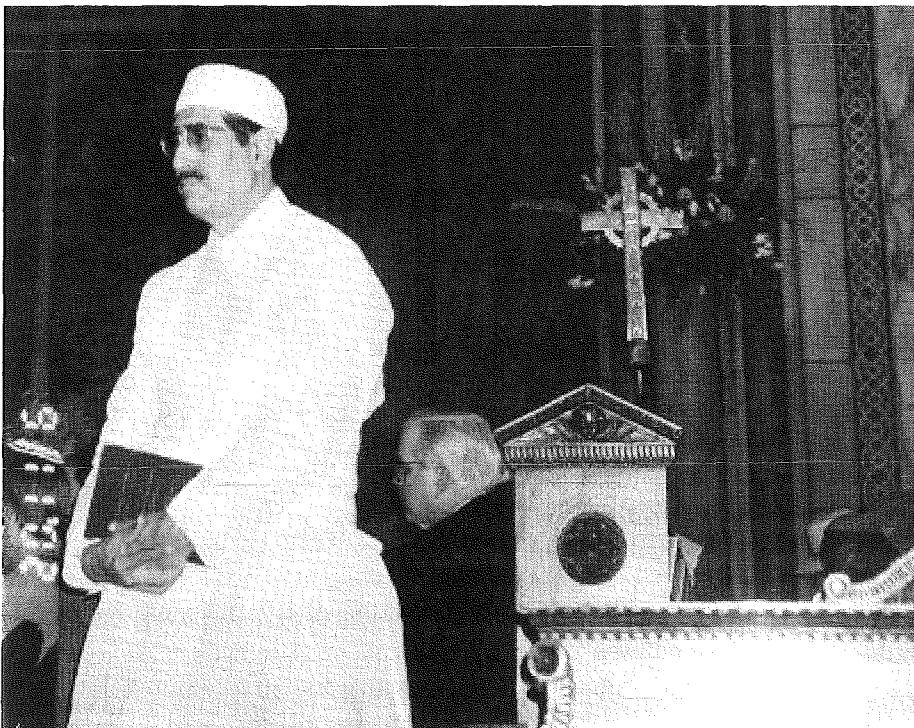
growing community of 4500 Zarathushtis in Ontario.

Dr. Dhun Noria, who heads the Building Campaign Committee, and ZSO president Sam Vesuna have plans to raise the \$2.2 million needed “to make our dream a reality.” Over 600 showed up, and donated generously, at a recent sold-out performance of “Uchki Tuchki”, a *natak* by Nozer Buchia and his troupe from Chicago. [Contact Dr. Noria at [fdnoria@hotmail.com](mailto:fdnoria@hotmail.com); see ad on inside cover].

**The OZCF effort**, led by president Er. Kobad Zarolia, plans to “purchase a large enough parcel of land of 5-15 acres, on which a modular facility with future expansion capabilities, can be built” to serve the growing numbers in the western Greater Toronto area.

A \$100 a plate Black Tie Gala last October and donations swelled coffers by \$174,000 towards their goal of \$1 million. [Contact Er. Zarolia at [kzarolia@interlog.com](mailto:kzarolia@interlog.com)]. ■





*Ervad Pervez Patel at inter-religious ceremony at St. Bartholomew Church, in Manhattan, NY, to open UN General Assembly session, in September 2002.*

## UN General Assembly Session opens with inter-religious prayer service

The first ceremony to mark the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2002 was a prayer service. Following remarks by His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, 57th President of the UN General Assembly, Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, in a moving speech, expressed his sympathy for those who were lost on 9/11 and spoke about the changing world in the aftermath of that frightening day.

This year, Zarathushtis became more visible at the UN. Our community, known for its leadership, integrity, and goodwill, portrayed itself as part of an international family, ready to work with compassion and dedication. On September 11, 2002, the first anniversary of the tragic terrorist attacks upon the USA, Zarathushtis joined Muslims, Bahais, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Jews, Jains, Yauruba/Lukumi Tribe, Native Americans and other faiths and cultures from

around the globe, to pray, each in their own language and tradition, for peace.

The service was held to remember the deceased, give succor to the survivors, and to support all those impacted by the terror. It was a solemn affair at St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Avenue at 51st Street in Manhattan, on a rather gray New York morning; reminding people, it is hatred that breeds war and despair; education, awareness, tolerance, and acceptance create peace, the only weapon that hope has. *Ervad Pervez Patel [above]* of ZAGNY recited relevant passages from the Zarathushti scriptures. Behram Pastakia, Homi Gandhi and Mehr Pastakia participated in the procession at the start of the event. FEZANA should consider becoming a regular co-sponsor of this annual Inter-religious event, as it explores possibilities to work with UN agencies in the future.

- By Mehr Pastakia

## Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders

The Global Peace Initiative of Women Religious and Spiritual Leaders was held October 6-10, at the United Nations, Palais Des Nations in Geneva.

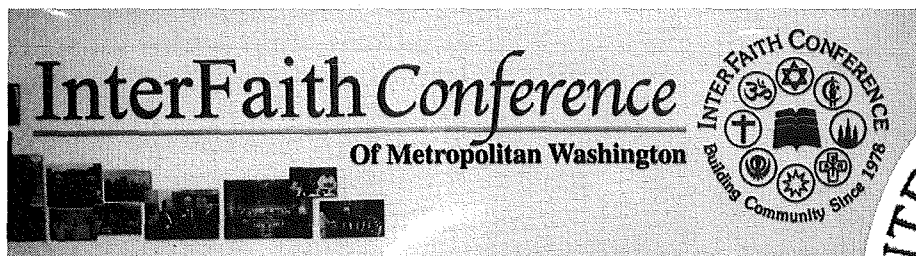
Dame Dr. Prof. Meher Master-Moos, president of Zoroastrian College, Sanjan, was among six women, and the only Zarathushti, invited to this global summit, where over 300 women leaders explored "our spiritual resources to deepen the ability of the human family to care for each other so that we can pass on to our children a more peaceful, just and sustainable World."

Dame Meher recited Avestan manthras, with an afarganyu, *sukhad* and *loban* (carried from Mumbai) on the Day of Prayers of all Faiths; and later presented a talk on "Spiritual Wisdom of the Ancient Traditions for Healing and Reconciliation".

## Interfaith celebration in Dallas, Texas

Mobed Poras Balsara represented the Zoroastrian Association of North Texas at the Interfaith Centennial Celebration of The Cathedral at the Arts District - Virgin of Guadalupe Shrine in downtown Dallas. After a welcome address by the coadjutant Bishop Catholic Diocese of Dallas, representatives from different faiths assembled the "Ring of Faith" during which each individual lit a candle and placed it in the ring. This was followed by messages of peace from the various faiths, interspersed with songs by The Children's Chorus of Greater Dallas.

## Fravahar now features on IFC logo



The program book of the 23rd Annual Interfaith Concert of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington, held at the Washington Hebrew Congregation on November 19, lists ZAMWI (Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington, Inc.) as a patron. And for the first time, the fravahar symbol appears on the IFC logo [see new logo at right, and old logo above]. For, in October, the IFC, which then represented eight faith groups, voted to accept Zarathushtis as their ninth member.

"Every little attempt we make, like our participation in the Annual Interfaith Concert, for example, will add a little towards bringing about awareness" says ZAMWI public relations chair Jimmy Dholoo, "Recently PBS has been televising a one-hour documentary on the Three Wise Men and the birth of Christ; they talk about Zarathushtra and show some scenes of a fire temple. Most people who watch this documentary will look upon Zoroastrianism as an ancient, defunct religion ... but some will identify the figures, temple and the magi of this documentary with a living, breathing faith group that they saw at the IFC concert!" ■



## COMING EVENTS

### Conference: "Encourage Zarathushti Business!"

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) - Chicago Chapter will hold a conference on "Encourage Zarathushti Business!", on July 12, 2003, in Chicago. \$35 (Tier 1), \$69 (Tier 2) and \$89 (Tier 3). Contact program organizer Natalie Vania at nvania@malch.com [See page 93].

### Conference on Interfaith youth work in Chicago

The Interfaith Youth Core, the Pluralism Project at Connecticut College, the Wellesley Multifaith Council and Rockefeller Memorial Chapel at the University of Chicago will co-host a conference on interfaith youth work in North America, May 18 - 21, 2003 at the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. This conference is partially sponsored by a Ford Foundation grant. Conference fee is \$200. Contact Communications Director April Kunze, Interfaith Youth Core,

"Nurturing a New Generation of Compassionate Global Leaders", at april@ifyc.org, tel: (312) 573-8826.

### Economic/Cultural delegation to Iran

The World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce is planning an economic/cultural delegation to Iran and inaugural conference for the Tehran chapter of WZCC, in June 2003 [see page 95].

### FEZANA AGM 2003

The 2003 FEZANA AGM will be held in Boston, Massachusetts, on Memorial Day, May 24-25, 2003, hosted by ZAGBA (sherazadem@yahoo.com). Contact FEZANA Secretary Arnavaz Sethna, email: ahsethna@yahoo.com [see page 12].

### Next NA Youth Congress

The next North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress will be held in Toronto, July 24-27, 2003. A week of post-congress activities is also

planned. Contact: nazyc2003@yahoo.com [see page 10].

### Unity Cup Soccer - 2003

The Third Unity Cup Soccer Games will be held on Labor Day weekend, Sept. 2003. Contact zsc@fezana.org.

### Iranian Studies conference in Ravenna, Italy

The 5th European Conference of Iranian Studies, sponsored by Societas Iranologica Europaea (Rome) will be held, October 6-11, 2003, in Ravenna, Italy, at the University of Bologna. Contact Prof. Antonio Panaino, president, tel: 0039-0544-484729, panainoa@alma.unibo.it.

### Parliament of Religions in New Delhi, India

The president of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam, will inaugurate the Parliament of Religions, on the theme of "Reviving the Culture of Healing, Harmony and Peace", to be held in New Delhi, December 7-10, 2003. The event is organized in partnership

with the Parliament of the World's Religions. Contact Rohinton Rivetna at rivetna@aol.com.

## World Youth Congress

The *Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress*, will be held in Pune, India, from December 27, 2003 to Jan 3, 2004. It will be hosted by the Federation of Zoroastrian Youth Associations of India, FOZYA, and the Zoroastrian Youth Association Pune, with due sponsorship from the Bombay Parsi Punchayet. Contact FOZYA president Sarosh Palkhiwalla at sarosh64@hotmail.com.

## NA Congress 2004

The *XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress* will be held in the San Francisco Bay area December 29, 2004 to January 1, 2005. Contact ZANC president Bomi Patel at bomip@yahoo.com or secretary Nazneen Spliedt at nazeher@aol.com. [see page 12].

## 2004 Zarathushti Games

The next Zarathushti Games will be held around 4th of July, 2004. The location is to be confirmed. Contact zsc@fezana.org.

## Parliament of Religions, Barcelona 2004

The 4th Parliament of the World's Religions will be held July 7-13, 2004 in Barcelona, Spain. This event follows five years after the 3rd Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa. Registration is \$425 (before June 30, 2003), \$495 (after June 30). Family/group rates available. Visit the Parliament website at www.cpwr.org or contact Rohinton Rivetna at rivetna@aol.com.

## Next World Congress

The 8th World Zoroastrian Congress will be held in the UK, in the summer of 2005. For information, contact ZTFE president Dorab Mistry at godrej@globalnet.co.uk.

## Calendar of Festivals.

*Fasli (F), Kadmi (K) and Shenshai (S) religious festivals, March - September, 2003.*

## Ayathrem Gahambar

*Mah Meher, Roz Ashtad - Aneran* Wed Feb 12 - Feb 16 (K)  
Fri Mar 14 - Tue Mar 18 (S)

## Fravardegan/Panjeh/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

*Five Gatha days* Sun Mar 16 - Thu Mar 20 (F)

## Char-Shanbe-Soori (Heralding the New Year)

*Tuesday prior to Nouruz* Tue Mar 18 (F)

## Nouruz or Jamshedi Navroz (New Year)

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd* Fri Mar 21 (F)

## Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad* Wed Mar 26 (F)

## Pir-e Herisht Festival

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Amardad-Khorshed* Thu Mar 27 - 31 (F)

## Ava Ardavisoor nu Parab

*Mah Avan, Roz Avan* Wed Feb 26 (K)  
Fri Mar 28 (S)

## Jashne Fravardian

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin* Tue Apr 8 (F)

## Jashan-e-Ardibeheshtgan

*Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Ardibehesht* Tue Apr 22 (F)

## Atash-nu-Parab

*Mah Adar, Roz Adar* Thu Mar 27 (K)  
Sat Apr 26 (S)

## Maidyozarem Gahambar

*Mah Ardibehesht, Roz Khorshed - Daepmeher*  
Wed Apr 30 - Sun May 4 (F)

## Zarathusht-no-Diso (Death anniversary of Zarathushtra)

*Mah Daye, Roz Khorshed* Mon Apr 28 (K)  
Wed May 28 (S)

## Daye Mas nu Jashan

*Mah Daye, Roz Fravardin* Tue May 6 (K)  
Thu Jun 5 (S)

## Maidhyarem Gahambar

*Mah Daye, Roz Meher-Behram* Sat May 3 - Wed May 7 (K)  
Mon Jun 2 - Fri Jun 6 (S)

## Homaji Baj

*Mah Daye, Roz Govad* Sun Jun 8 (S)

## Pir-e Sabz Festival

*Mah Khordad, Roz Ashtad-Aneran* Sat Jun 14 - Jun 18 (F)

## Pir-e Banu Festival

*Mah Tir, Roz Meher-Behram* Fri Jul 4 - Jul 8 (F)

## Maidyoshem Gahambar

*Mah Tir, Roz Khorshed-Daepmeher* Sun Jun 29 - Jul 3 (F)

## Jashne Tirgan

*Mah Tir, Roz Tir* Tue Jul 1 (F)

## Fravardegan/Muktad/Hamaspathmedayem Gahambar

*Five Gatha Days* Thu Jul 17 - Jul 21 (K)  
Sat Aug 16 - Aug 20 (S)

## (Pateti) Navroz

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Hormazd* Tue Jul 22 (K)  
Thu Aug 21 (S)

## Khordad Sal (Birthday of Zarathushtra)

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Khordad* Sun Jul 27 (K)  
Tue Aug 26 (S)

## Fravardian Jashan

*Mah Fravardin, Roz Fravardin* Sat Aug 9 (K)  
Mon Sep 8 (S)





THE ZOROASTRIAN SOCIETY OF ONTARIO  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH ZYNA AND FEZANA

PROUDLY HOST

The 10th North American Zoroastrian Youth Congress

July 24– 27, 2003

Toronto, Ontario Canada

[www.nexus2003.com](http://www.nexus2003.com)

The Nexus 2003 Committee is looking for dynamic, exciting and enthusiastic speakers !!!

Do you want to be a speaker at the next youth congress? Are there any topics that you would like to see at the congress? Do you know someone who would be a good speaker? If you answered yes to any of these questions, please contact a Nexus representative listed below.

The following are a list of topics that we are looking for speakers on:

- ***No Man's Land: First Generation Zoroastrians in North America***

Neither here nor there – not truly Indian, but not really American/Canadian – *No Man's Land* identifies and expresses young Zoroastrians' emerging feelings of isolation and uncertainty.

- ***The City that Parsees Built: Bombay's Golden Age***

It is said that though under the rule of the British, Bombay still flourished under the leadership and philanthropy of a relatively small – but dynamic and growing – Parsee community. Godrej, Wadia, Tata...Parsees were everywhere. A first of a two-part series, *The City that Parsees Built* is an examination of the glory that Parsees were integral in creating.

- ***A Community on Life Support***

The second of the two-part series, *A Community on Life Support* explores the seemingly stark contrast between *The City that Parsees Built* and what Zoroastrians are reputable for in the West. What are we doing to distinguish ourselves in North America?

- ***When Persians Ruled the World: Stories of the Great Ancient Kings***

In a time when the world was still young and unexplored, Persia dominated all that was known. Here, stories of the Persian kings' trials, tribulations and triumphs are brought to life.

- ***Who We Are: A "How To" Series***

How do we explain who we, as Zoroastrians, are to our neighbours, friends and co-workers? This session will explore ways to communicate to our North American neighbours just *Who We Are*.

- ***Somebody's Version of the Do's and Don'ts of Zoroastrianism***

It seems as though everyone has an opinion on what is – and is not – Zoroastrian. But, where do these beliefs originate? How does one distinguish fact from fiction? This *Somebody* will try to answer those questions.

- ***The Original Old Boys' Club: Women and the Priesthood***

Many people boast of our religions' view of gender equality. So, why then does the sense of an *Old Boys' Club* still permeate within our priesthood?

- ***What's Blood Got to Do With It?***

Conversion. Age-old debate. Still no consensus. Let's debate some more.

If you are over 18 and would like to participate in a fun, exciting, new and different sort of session inspired by the younger generation called, "*Relationship Survival Guide for the Lovelorn*", please let us know.

Please contact us by email at: [nazyc2003@yahoo.com](mailto:nazyc2003@yahoo.com) or call  
Delnavaz Mistry at 905-794-1956 or Janine Tamboli at 416-832-8519

To register for the congress please visit our website at  
[www.nexus2003.com](http://www.nexus2003.com)

## FEZANA Communications

FEZANA Member Associations are kept abreast of FEZANA activities in the following ways: (1) FEZANA Journal; (2) a periodic letter from the president of FEZANA; (3) a periodic FEZANA News Bulletin organized by the vice-president; (4) periodic circulation of information of relevance by the secretary on behalf of the FEZANA Executive; (5) periodic intimations from the assistant secretary (web manager) that the FEZANA website has been updated; periodic telephone calls from the president. Items 2, 3, 4 and 5 are email or letter communications.

Recipients of these communications are: (1) presidents/representatives of Member Associations; (2) chairs of FEZANA standing and ad hoc committees; and (3) points of contact for FEZANA small groups.

The intent of the FEZANA Executive is to share information with all members of the FEZANA community. It is important for the Executive to work through the leadership of each Member Association. Accordingly, the Executive lets the leadership of each Member Association decide what, when and how information received from the Executive is transmitted to its members.

**The FEZANA website** is typically updated in the first week of every month. An email announcing its update is sent out to various groups accordingly. As the web manager for the FEZANA website, Farrokh Mistry welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement from all interested individuals. Material to post on the FEZANA website is also welcome.

**World body.** All information published by the FEZANA Working Group is on the FEZANA website.

**Elections of FEZANA Executive.** The call for nominations is circulated by the secretary. Once the nominations are received from Member

## Celebrating Festivals Together

While we may continue to observe our preferred calendars for religious reasons, can we consider observing our festivals together?

By Maneck N. Bhujwala  
San Jose, California

By and large, we Zarthushtis are a practical people. Our religious teachings exhort us to think rationally and our history shows how we have succeeded when we have followed the path of wisdom in making any new changes. In ancient times with poor communications, lack of literacy, and other handicaps to bring a new message to the common people, our prophet went to King Vishtaspa to explain the revelations he received from Ahura Mazda. When the king accepted the wisdom of his teachings, he facilitated the spread of his teachings to the people of his kingdom and beyond.

When our ancestors realized, after resisting the Arab invaders for several hundred years, that they must find a new home to save the religion, they decided to take the difficult decision to migrate to India, where they made concessions to the Hindu king in order to get his permission to settle there.

One of the issues that I think is important for our communities to promote unity, is that of celebrating our festivals together. With our very small numbers, the influences of modern societies are having significant adverse effects on our community in terms of scattered living, loosening of family ties that existed previously in joint family living, and children marrying outside the community with their progeny opting for the more dominant religion, etc. It therefore becomes more critical for us to celebrate together, so that we can keep our community together and improve the odds for our young people to meet life partners within the community.

Due to differences in calendar systems, we currently observe festivals at different times of the year. While calendar reform is a controversial issue in itself, with many lines of reasoning that have some merit on their own, we can look at the issue of festival celebration from an independent perspective. We can continue to follow different calendars and still decide to celebrate our festivals together in geographically common communities.

Many of our festivals are somehow connected to the seasons. This is true especially of our gahambars, that are one of the mandatory observances designated in our religion. Gahambars are tied to the different seasons that signify changes in nature such as harvesting of crops, etc. By tradition, the new year, Nouruz, was tied to the beginning of spring; and the birth of our prophet was also traditionally observed in the spring, when the flowers were blooming and nature was bursting with new life.

So, while we may continue to observe our preferred calendars for religious reasons, we could consider observing our festivals of gahambar, new year, and birth of our prophet, together in most of our communities. People in the northern hemisphere could celebrate together according to our seasons, and people in the southern hemisphere – those living in Australia and New Zealand could celebrate together according to their seasons.

Sometimes instead of beating an old problem to death, like that of calendar reform, we can think outside the box, and look at things that can make a positive difference without forcing unpleasant changes on people. ■

*[Continued on next page]*

# Mark your calendars for the XIII North American Zoroastrian Congress

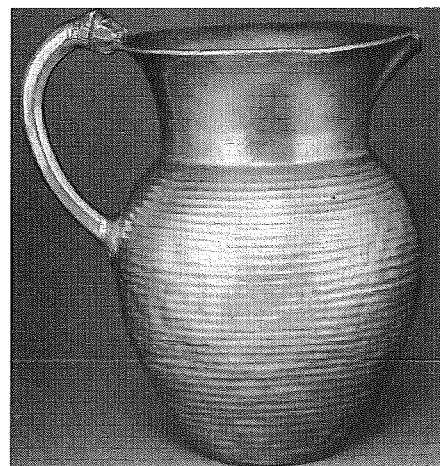
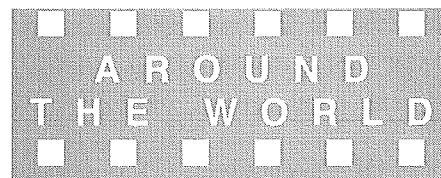
**"Being Zarathushti: Looking at issues; Searching for answers"**

**In the beautiful San Francisco Bay area  
December 29, 2004 - January 1, 2005  
with a gala New Year's Eve celebration**

**We promise you no snow on the ground and temperatures  
between 45 - 65 degrees Fahrenheit (8 - 18 Celsius)**

*Watch for further details!*

Contact Nazneen Spliedt at (650) 624-8888, email: nazezler@aol.com.



*Gold jug from the Oxus Treasure, Achaemenid period, 5th-4th c. BCE, British Museum. PHOTO COURTESY "ANCIENT PERSIA" BY JOHN CURTIS.*

## **Achaemenid treasures at Miho Museum, Japan**

Objects belonging to the Achaemenid period were recently put on display at the Miho Museum in Japan. The collection resembles the Oxus treasure, which dates back to 559-530 BCE and is currently in the British Museum, London. What is surprising is that no one knows where such a large cache of valuable gold object came from, after all these centuries.

Dr. John Curtis, curator at the British Museum, says, "All we know is that the Miho Museum bought the entire collection from a dealer. It is not known where the dealer acquired it from. Both the Miho and Oxus collections Dr. Curtis says could have been organized near the Oxus river (in present day Tajikistan).

The treasures include gold and silver figurines, clocks, vessels, model chariots and armlets, seals, rings, figures of priests holding barsoms (used in Zoroastrian religious ceremonies). Research into their origin and history continues. ■

*[From a posting by Houtoxi Contractor on creatingawareness@yahoo groups.com].*

## **IN COMING ISSUES OF FEZANA JOURNAL**

*Summer 2003:*

**Treasures from the Avesta:**  
**Daily Prayers**  
*Guest Editor:*  
Sarosh Manekshaw

*Fall 2003:*

**Aging**  
*Guest Editor:* Dolly Dastoor

*Winter 2003:*

**Treasures from the Avesta**  
*Guest Editor:*  
Jamsheed Choksy

## **FEZANA Communications...**

*[Continued from previous page]*

Associations the secretary prepares the ballot that includes a short bio on each candidate. This too is circulated and then it is put on the FEZANA website. Results of the election are announced at the AGM, circulated as pointed out earlier and then put on the website. ■

*Khorshed F. Jungalwala, chair  
FEZANA Publication Committee*



## **16th FEZANA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**When: May 24 - 25, 2003**

**Where: Boston, MA**

FEZANA member associations, committee chairs, executive officers and small groups are invited. Observers welcome.

Sherazade Mehta, president of the host association, ZAGBA welcomes all to historical Boston, "where revolutions were fought, presidents walked, intellectuals learned and history was made. This cultural city has a lot to offer - museums, churches, Duck Tour, walking trails, shopping at Newbury Street, Harvard, MIT ...

Contact FEZANA secretary  
Arnavaz Sethna at ahsethna@  
yahoo.com.



## Khatami visits India, praises Zoroastrians

On a five-day visit to India as a guest of honor for the Indian Republic Day celebrations in January, President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, reiterated Iran's commitment to a multi-pronged relationship with India ...

Speaking to a gathering at the Iranian Consulate, Khatami called on the Government of India and the people to "treat Muslims as assets of this country" and protect their dignity and rights.

“ Khatami had a special word of praise for the Zoroastrians whom he complimented for being exemplary ambassadors of Iran and its culture and said that with their industriousness, compassion and nobility, they had added glory to the country of their origin. ”

He said that Indian Muslims should, on their part, forsake the path of confrontation ... and added poetically that Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Zoroastrians and people of other religions were like flowers of the same garden. He called on all Indians to walk like brothers in arms on the path of progress.

Mr. Khatami was given an emotional welcome by the Iranian community ... Visibly moved by the reception, he called on them to work hard and contribute to their host country's society and economy.

He had a special word of praise for the Zoroastrians whom he complimented for being exemplary ambassadors of Iran and its culture and said that with their industriousness, compassion and nobility, they had added glory to the country of their origin. ■

[From The Hindu, January 29, 2003]

FEZANA JOURNAL – SPRING 2003



**Hind Ratan Award for NRIs.** Two Zarathushtis, *Rusi K. Dalal* of London, UK, and *Russi J. Patel* of Dubai, were among thirty NRIs awarded the Hind Ratan Award at the 22nd International Congress of NRIs, for their "outstanding services, achievements and contributions". The awards were presented by past president of India, Shri K. R. Narayanan, at a gala ceremony at the Hotel Le Meridien, in Delhi, on the eve of the Indian Republic Day in January. Dalal is a professional consulting engineer and past president of ZTFE. Patel is a managing partner in an international accountancy firm.

## India lays out red carpet for NRIs

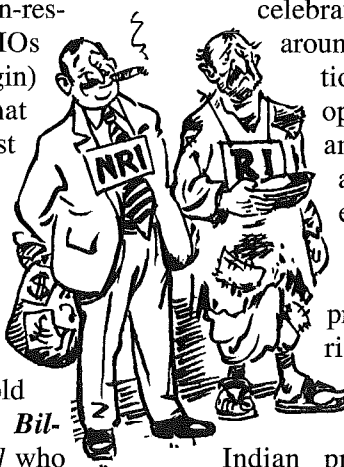
Several Zarathushtis were among the 2000 NRIs (non-resident Indians) and PIOs (people of Indian origin) from 66 countries that participated in the first *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* convention in Delhi, January 9 - 11.

Among the more prominent NRIs toasted at the gathering, was 41-year old entrepreneur, *Karan Bilimoria*, [see page 98] who was voted "Asian of the Year" in the UK last year. Bilimoria's Cobra Beer has become one of the better known beer brands, and was served to guests at the *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* events.

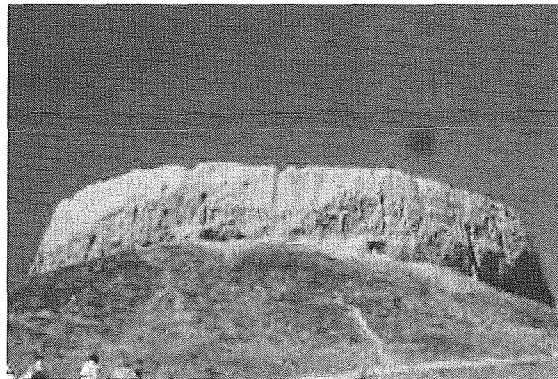
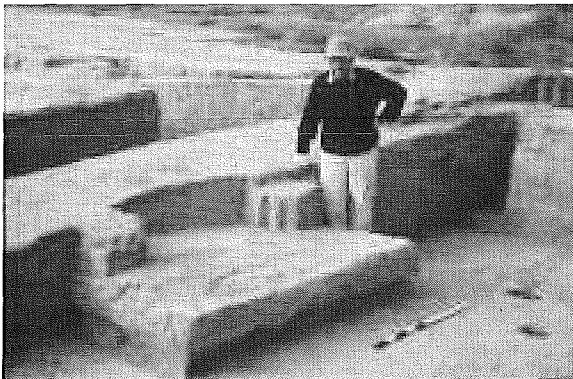
Organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and

Industry (FICCI), "to recognize and celebrate people of Indian origin around the world", the convention provided an excellent opportunity for networking and showcasing products and services. The lavish expenses for the Bollywood style shows and banquets, did however prompt some cynical editorials in the local press like this Laxman cartoon.

In his inaugural address, Indian prime minister Vajpayee announced '*dual nationality*' for PIOs from selected countries (including USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore, New Zealand and EU countries) which will allow PIOs to hold an Indian passport (thus obviating the need for visas) and own businesses and properties in India. ■







*l. to r., fire altar at temple complex excavated at Tash-Kirman; early Zarathushti Tower of Silence (dokhma) at Chilpik.*

## Excavations reveal fire temples and dokhmas

Recent archeological explorations by the University of Sydney, in Uzbekistan, (ancient Chorasmia) an early stronghold of the Zarathushti faith, have uncovered a number of fire temples and towers of silence.

**E**xcauation of a Zarathushti temple has just been completed by a team of archeologists from the University of Sydney at a dig site in the Tash Kirman oasis in Uzbekistan. Over the past few years, Russian, Uzbek and Australian expeditions have uncovered a number of fire temples, dokhmas (Towers of Silence) and ossuary burials in this region, believed to be the homeland of Zarathushtra's ministry.

The expedition was established to study the history and archaeology of ancient Chorasmia (present Uzbekistan) broadly in the period from the 7th century BCE to the 7th century CE. It is an ancient land surrounded by deserts, comprising the delta region of the Amu-Dariya River, known in antiquity as the Oxus.

Exploration of Chorasmia began in the 1930s under the leadership of S.P.

Tolstov. With members of the Chorasmian Archaeological Expedition, Tolstov rediscovered an entire lost ancient land, known only from fragmentary Greek, Persian and Chinese texts. Following the depredations of the Mongols and Tamerlane, this once verdant land had reverted to desert.

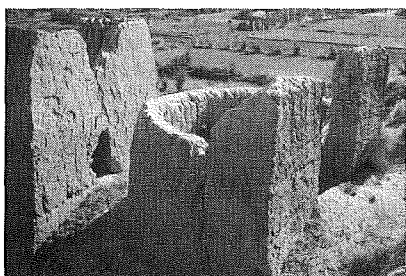
With camels, trucks and biplanes, the expedition set out to explore the many spectacular ruins preserved among the sands. When Uzbekistan gained its independence in 1991, the way was open for collaboration between local scholars and overseas partners. The current project was established in 1994.

The work of the current expedition is focused on the Tash-kirman oasis, one of the last preserved archaeological zones in Chorasmia. Three sites are under excavation: **Kazakli-**

**yatkan** is one of the largest fortified sites in the land and may have been a capital of ancient Chorasmia or a major sacred center between the 4th century BCE and the 1st or early 2nd century CE. **Tash-kirman-tepe** is a monumental religious complex with a fire temple which may date back to the early stages of the Zarathushti religion. **Kara-tepe** is a small fortress which appears to have been founded in the Kushan period around the 2nd century CE, with occupation upto the 7th century CE.

*[By Roshan Rivetna, based on emails forwarded by M. Bhujwala, J. Bagli and M. Damania. Sources: Dr. Alison Betts, director of the University of Sydney Central Asian Programme (USCAP), [alison.betts@archaeology.usyd.edu.au](mailto:alison.betts@archaeology.usyd.edu.au); <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/archaeology/CentralAsia/worldofzoro.htm>.]*

### "World of Zoroaster" tour of archeological sites, Uzbekistan, May 20 - June 5



University of Sydney archaeologists, keen on sharing their recent findings with the Zarathushti community, are offering a 17-day tour, "The World of Zoroaster", to visit Silk Road cities and archeological dig sites in Uzbekistan.

The tour will include 8 days visiting the Silk Road cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva; and 5 days at dig sites of the Karalpak-Australian Expedition.

Cost (not including air-fare) is US \$2200 or UK £1380.

For more information, visit the website and contact sources listed above.



In a series of meets in January, world Zarathushti leaders (regrettably, Iran was conspicuous by its absence), gathered to discuss matters of global import, notably: to launch the India chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce; to move further towards forming a properly structured world body for Zarathushtis; and to address an assortment of projects and issues facing the community. Recognizing the need for dialog and networking among the growing Zarathushti communities of the diaspora and motherlands Iran and India, the meetings were initiated by Rohinton Rivetna, and convened and hosted by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet in Mumbai and the Delhi Parsi Anjuman in Delhi.

- By Roshan Rivetna



*From left, DPA president Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Adi M. Sethna, MP Dr. L. M. Singhvi, WZCC director and DPA trustee Dadi Mistry, and WZCC founding president Rohinton Rivetna, at the India chapter inaugural conference in Delhi.*

## WZCC (India) inaugurated in Delhi

Over 150 dignitaries, guests, business persons, entrepreneurs and local Zarathushtis celebrated the inaugural conference for the India chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, hosted by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, on January 12.

"Name any sphere of life – industry, science, armed forces, law, philosophy, medicine or music – Parsis have excelled and led the country," said Chief Guest Dr. L. M. Singhvi, MP, at the inaugural function of the India chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, on the grounds of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, on January 12.

The high profile event, hosted with flair by the DPA, was aired on national Zee-TV, and drew congratu-

latory messages from the President of India, Ministers of State and WZCC (central) directors.

After an invocation by the children's chorus, *The Farohars*, DPA president and member of the Minorities Commission, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Adi M. Sethna welcomed the assembly of business persons and guests from abroad including WZCC president Rohinton Rivetna (as the "moving spirit behind the Zarathushti Chambers of Commerce"), Zareen Karani

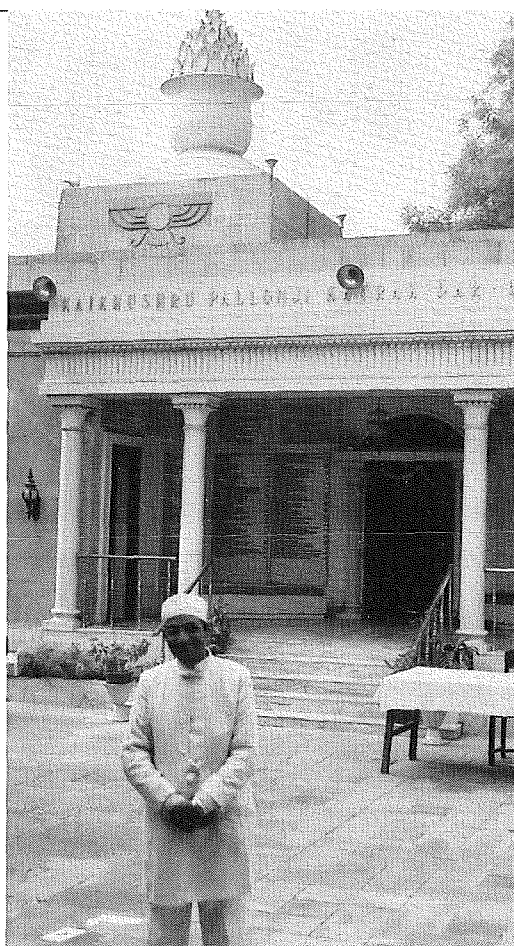
Araoz (developer of the Z-chamber and ZWIN networks) and WZCC New York chapter chair Rusi Gandhi. Distinguished speakers included industrialist Dr. Gurpreet Singh, banker A. K. Bhargava, Cobra Beer founder Karan Bilimoria, Lt. Gen. A. Natarajan and Air Vice Marshall Fali Major. Excerpts from a film on soldier-entrepreneur Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw were screened.

After a sumptuous buffet lunch, local entrepreneurs and business persons shared their experiences. In closing, WZCC director and DPA vice president Dadi Mistry hoped that January 12th each year be commemorated as Zarathushti Pravasi Divas.

**Core group.** A number of Delhi business persons, including Brig. Parvez Cawasji, Veera Mavalwala and Farrokh Rustomji have offered their talents and technical resources to help get the new chapter on a sound footing. For information, contact Dadi Mistry at [mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in). ■



*Cobra Beer founder Karan Bilimoria of UK and author-benefactor Piloo Jungalwalla, at the Delhi meet.*



*Clockwise, Er. Cawas Daraius Bagli, head priest at the dar-e-mehr; his mother, Mrs. Dhun Daraius Bagli, who manages the dharamshala; and anjuman VP Dadi Mistry with his wife Nergish (who is Dhun's sister).*

## Delhi Parsi Anjuman, dharamshala and dar-e-mehr

In the heart of a busy, over-crowded, squalid area near Delhi Gate, the peaceful, gated grounds of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman dharamshala, the Kaikhusro Pallonji Katrak dar-e-mehr and the Bhiwandiwalla Hall, offer a veritable oasis for Zarathushtis.

The dharamshala, offers excellent lodging facilities and delicious, home-cooked Parsi meals, all at very reasonable prices. After the untimely passing of her husband, Ervad Daraius Bagli, Dhun Bagli, helped by son Cawas and daughter-in-law Benaifer, manages the dharamshala. All day, every day, Mrs. Bagli holds sway over the house-keeping, kitchen, accounts, bookings, travel and tour arrangements and all major and minor needs of the guests, with equanimity and a smile.

The dar-e-mehr, served with dedication by head priest Ervad Cawas Bagli, celebrated its 40th anniversary last year. A massive fund-raising drive is under way for renovation/addition to the dar-e-mehr, dharamshala and hall.

The Delhi Parsi Anjuman (formed in 1925), now ably led by president Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Adi M. Sethna and vice president Dadi Mistry, well serves the community (of under 700 Zarathushtis) in Delhi while it continues to take a leading role in national and global Zarathushti matters (e.g. FPZAI, the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India, WZO and WZCC) as well as in the inter-religious and Indian political arena. - *By Roshan Rivetna*



*Interested persons gather after the WZCC India Chapter inaugural in Mumbai, to form a core group to carry the work forward. Kersi Limathwalla (seated far right) will lead the Mumbai core group; among several persons who volunteered, were Kersi and Zarine Commissariat, Meher Gazdar, Merzi Chinoy, Viraf Chiniwala and Rustom Cursetji.*

## Launch of WZCC (India) celebrated in Mumbai

The launch of the India chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce was celebrated with professional flair at a conference hosted by the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, in Mumbai on January 18 and 19.



*Anu Aga, conference chair Minoo Shroff and Cyrus Guzder*

"We have the tradition, we have the vision, we now look for action," said founding president Rohinton Rivetna, at the launch of the India chapter of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, as he urged the new chapter to take the lead in fulfilling the WZCC vision of energizing Zarathushti business and enterprise.

The two-day conference, ably chaired by Senior Trustee of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, Mr. Minoo Shroff, was convened and hosted with flair, by the BPP, at the West End Hotel on January 18 and 19.

A number of luminaries from the business scene were slated for Day 1: Anu Aga, chairperson of Thermax Limited, who, with her late husband

Rohinton Aga, had grown the company from a small tin shed to a Rs. 650 crores multi-divisional, multi-products company manufacturing heating, cooling, power and cogeneration equipment; Cyrus Guzder, chairman and managing director of AFL Limited (formerly Airfreight Ltd); and Hosi N. Sinor, Joint Managing Director of ICICI Bank. Management consultant Mr. Rangnekar defined success as "ability multiplied by effort, further multiplied by luck."

A moment's silence was observed for the tragic death of industrialist and chair of the Zoroastrian Investment Corporation, Khusroo Byramjee, who had been slated to speak at the conference.

Pheroze D. Patel, described *two venture capital initiatives* set up by the BPP: the Centre for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship promotes self-employment through financial support; and the Zoroastrian Investment Corp. Pvt. Ltd., with an authorized capital of Rs. 5 crores, offers consultancy, underwrites shares, negotiates loans and lends monies.

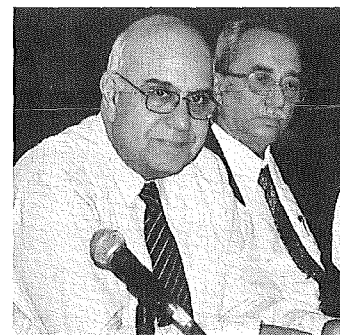




From top, Hosi Sinor; Pheroze D. Patel; Firdosh Mehta, "Z-chamber" network coordinator Zareen Karani Araoz and WZCC New York Chapter chair Rusi Gandhi.

While Day 1 was devoted to inspirational presentations, Day 2 was focussed on organizational matters and drew a number of budding young (and 'young-at-heart') entrepreneurs.

**Core Group.** A number of enthusiastic business persons volunteered to form the core group. BPP has generously offered office space and staff. The core group will be headed by Kersi J. Limathwalla (tel: 2361 6169, kersi@bom3.vsnl.net.in).



Trustees, clockwise, Minoo Shroff (chair), Dinshaw Tamboly, Maneck Engineer, Silloo Kavarana, Dinshaw Mehta, Burjor Antia and Dadi Engineer.

## The Bombay Parsi Punchayet - revisited

The success of the Mumbai meetings is in no small measure attributable to excellent organization by the BPP. The four days of meetings at the West End Hotel were orchestrated with generous funding and professional flair and finesse by the BPP, primarily president Minoo Shroff ably assisted by chief executive Behram T. Dastur and staff [photo next page]. Gone are the days of musty, yellowed, hand-typed foolscap papers – here the presentations were in hi-tech PowerPoint and the brochures glossy, full-color productions, as is the quarterly *BPP Review*, edited by public relations officer Godrej N. Dotivala. Minoo Shroff conducted the meetings in a highly professional manner, keeping the meeting focused and conclusive.

The tremendous talents and resources, both financial and human, at their command, make BPP unique among community organizations. When approached for office space for the new Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce, without batting an eyelid, trustee Dinshaw Mehta showed several possibilities, along with furnishings, equipment and part-time staff. We were amazed to see the workings of the BPP permeate so many spheres of Parsi life, far beyond the "housing" front for which it is generally recognized (and sadly, so often maligned!). Witness the two venture capital initiatives [see page 18] spawned by BPP. Witness the 'polyclinic' at Gamadia Colony for Parsi medicos. Witness the countless hostels, dharamshalas, day care centers, museum, grants, scholarships, career guidance ... Hats off to the seven trustees and staff of this venerable institution!

It is easy to decry the BPP trustees. Charges – of inefficiencies, of lethargy and even of corruption and bigotry – abound. While some things in the system could do with an overhaul (such as the antiquated election system), the dedication and commitment of the trustees is above reproach, and their openness and forward-looking approach reassuring. Belying its archaic image, the BPP, which heretofore has been focussed primarily in India, now appears well-equipped and poised to take an international leadership role in world Zarathushti affairs.

- By Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna



# Gathering of world leaders in Mumbai

Community leaders from the western diaspora gather in Mumbai to identify, review and discuss projects and issues of global import.

**Genesis of the meeting.** Recognizing the need for dialog and networking among the growing Zarathushti communities of the diaspora and motherlands Iran and India, and pending the formation of a world body, the meeting of Zarathushti world leaders was conceived and initiated by Rohinton Rivetna, with the goal: "for the leadership of our world Zarathushti community to come together and identify, review and discuss matters of global import".

The meeting was hosted by the BPP at the West End hotel in Mumbai, chaired by BPP president Minoo Shroff, and organized by BPP staff headed by chief executive officer Behram Dastur [photo below]. Day 1 (January 21) was devoted to the world body issue [see page 22].

Day 2 (January 22) began with a benediction by BPP trustee, Ervad Burjor Antia. *Messages* were read from anjuman leaders who could not be present. *Toxy Cowasjee*, former president of the Karachi Zarthushti Banu Mandal, cited dwindling population, lack of mobeds and proper methods for disposal of the dead as major problems faced by the Zarathushtis in Karachi. *Russi Patel*

*of Dubai*, UAE sent a plea for the government to reconsider the "Resident but Not Ordinarily Resident" provisions of the Income Tax Act, and its attendant impacts on tax benefits and concessions for NRIs. *Meher Bhesania of Dubai* wrote of excellent business and professional opportunities in the UAE. A very poignant message from *Solly Shapurjee of Capetown*, South Africa conveyed the steady decline in population, down to 80 persons in Johannesburg, Durban and Maputo, and made a plea to "overseas Zarathushti brethren to immigrate to this beautiful country. We need your guidance, support, both financial and moral, good wishes and strong resolve, to pull our community out of the swamps."

The program opened with the looming issue of *Demographics and Concerns of Declining Population* by Dinshaw Tamboly. His statistics, limited to India, estimated about 500-600 births every year in Mumbai, compared to 1100 deaths recorded at Doongerwadi last year, giving a decline of 600 persons a year in Mumbai (whose Zarathushti population TISS places at about 55,000 in

1999). "The issue of our declining numbers is the single most dominant issue that we should all be grappling with," said Tamboly, "Are we going to read the writing on the wall and do something about it ..."

Rohinton Rivetna spoke briefly on the need for an organized effort to aid in the *Resettlement of Emigrants* from Iran and other countries.

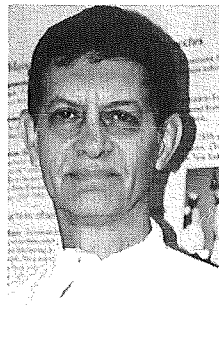
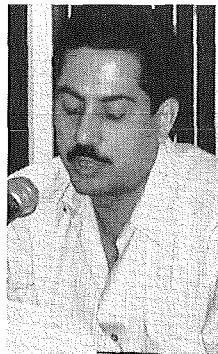
Behram Dastur summarized some important issues: a *unified calendar*; *merger of agiaries* in towns with decreasing populations; revisiting *out-dated adoption laws*; barring *entry of non-Parsis* to pay last respects to the departed; encouraging *Mobedi as a profession*; growing rate of divorces among Parsis (10% of marriages fail). BPP has constituted a *Committee on Divorce*, with eminent lawyers and social workers; growing number of *marriages outside the community* (1 in 3 according to some published data); growing rate of *emigration to the 'West'*, e.g. an average one family per week leaves Bombay for New Zealand. The worry here is for *assimilation of our next generation* in the sea of non-Zarathushtis in those countries. This could possibly be the most formidable of our problems.

Dr. Meher Master Moos [photo next page] president of Zoroastrian College, Sanjan, made an impassioned plea for support of *Zarathushti Revival in Tajikistan and parts of Central Asia*. There is dire need for financial aid, business and industrial development, mobeds to help train and establish fire temples, religion education and Avesta, kushtis, etc.

Rohinton Rivetna recognized the increasing participation by India as well as all anjumans in the western diaspora, in the *Interfaith arena*, and

*BPP staff: from left, chief executive Behram Dastur, financial officer Mehli Colah, executive secretary Sheroo Master and Public Relations Officer and editor of the BPP Review Godrej Dotivala.*





*l. to r., Moos, Araoz, Karanjia, Palkhiwalla, Dhalla and author, publisher Marzban Giara.*

stressed the important role Zarathushtis could play in bringing about peace and understanding.

Zareen Karani Araoz encouraged women to join ZWIN, the **Zoroastrian Women's International Network** (ZWIN3-subscribe@yahoo groups.com), students to join the **student network** (zwinzish-subscribe@yahoo groups.com), and businesspersons to join the **Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce network** (zchamber-subscribe@yahoo groups.com), all three of which Zareen manages. Rohinton Rivetna and Minoo Shroff encouraged Zarathushtis to join the new India chapter of the WZCC, **World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce** (www.wzcc.net).

Dinshaw Tamboly spoke about the need for coordinating **Social, Medical, Welfare Assistance** and mentioned the projects undertaken by WZO Trust India; Dorab Mistry on coordinating assistance for **Academic and Religious Studies**; and Firdosh Mehta on the need for endowment funds for providing scholarships in **Sports, Music and Arts**, for exceptionally gifted young Zarathushtis. Firdosh presented a suggestion by Behram Pastakia, for a **Zarathushti toll highway** to Atash Bahrams.

Ervad Ramiyar Karanjia [photo above] principal of the Dadar Athornan Madressa in Mumbai, spoke about **The Priesthood** and priest training institutions. There is a need, not yet addressed, for defining linkage among the Mobed Councils around the world, as well as with the community infrastructure. Firdosh (for Kayomarsh Mehta, chair of

FEZANA Religion Education Committee) presented the need for **common religion education materials**.

The **Save Udvada** project was presented by Mrs. Thrity Taleyarkhan [below, left] widow of late Padma



Shree Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan who spearheaded the multi-crore project to build rock and concrete breakwaters to prevent serious erosion of the Udvada beach front properties. Dr. Z. Tarapore, Dr. V. Meherhomji [photo page 34] and Mrs. Homai Modi [above, right] assisted in the project.

Khojeste Mistree [photo page 35] of **Zoroastrian Studies** spoke on "**The Zoroastrian Response to Change and the Preservation of a Zoroastrian Identity, Globally**".

Sarosh Bana, president of WZO India Youth Wing, briefed the assembly about **Project Udvada** [see page 34] aimed at social rejuvenation of that major pilgrimage center. Projects include a new museum and community center, a pilgrim lodge and a holiday home. All funding is raised independently by the Youth Wing.

Sarosh Palkhiwalla of FOZYA [photo above] described plans for the **Third World Zoroastrian Youth Congress** [see page 9]. Dorab Mistry

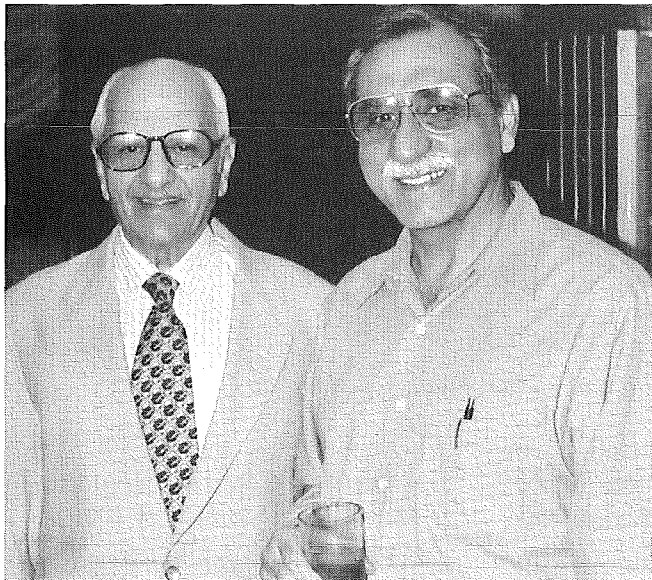
announced that the Eighth **World Zoroastrian Congress** would be in London in the Summer of 2005.

Dr. Homi Dhalla [photo above] president of the **World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation** reported on its various initiatives to preserve art, music, literature and traditions of the Zarathushti heritage. Most notably he spoke with excitement of the treasures of Parsi history being uncovered at the **excavations in Sanjan**, [pages 32, 78] from whence he had just come, and at **Bahrot** [pages 26,76]; and of the **solar panels** installed at Doongarwadi to address the issue of **scarcity of vultures**.



ZTFE librarian Malcolm Deboo [at left with manuscript of the **F104 Rivayet**], spoke of the urgent need for **building renovation and restoration of many rare and valuable manuscripts** dating back to the 16th century, at the First Dastur Meherjirana Library in Navsari [see page 28].

Journalist Bachi Karkaria (bachi@mid-day.com) described her upcoming book commissioned by Viking-Penguin – a seriously researched **study of contemporary Zoroastrians**. Another notable project is Dr. Shernaz Cama's (shernazcama@hotmail.com) **UNESCO Parzor project** for preserving Parsi Zoroastrian culture and heritage. ■



Working towards a world body for Zarathushtis: from left, BPP president Minoo Shroff, meeting coordinator Rohinton Rivetna, FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta and ZTFE president Dorab Mistry, FPZAI secretary Keki Gandhi and Delara Mistry, secretary, Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, Perth.

**D**ue to the importance and urgency of coming to some convergence on the long-standing “world body” issue, discussion of that topic was allocated a full day (January 21) of the 2-day world leaders meeting.

The meeting was convened jointly by leaders of the three major regions of India, North America and UK, hosted by the Bombay Parsi Punchayet at the West End Hotel, Mumbai and chaired by BPP president Minoo Shroff.

**Attendance.** Participants included: *from India*, FPZAI (Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India) secretary Keki Gandhi and all the BPP trustees and staff; *from UK*, ZTFE (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe) president Dorab Mistry, past president Rusi Dalal and other ZTFE officers; *from North America*, FEZANA president Firdosh Mehta, past president Rohinton Rivetna, and FEZANA World Body Working Group (WG) chair Khorshed Jungalwalla and member Farrokh Mistree. The sole delegate *from Australia* was Delara Mistry, secretary of ZAWA, the Zoroastrian Association of Western Australia, Perth. This was a closed meeting, however, several interested persons from India, UK

and North America, were in attendance. It was most unfortunate that the fourth major region – *Iran*, chose not to participate in the meetings. Behram Avari, president of the *Karachi Parsi Anjuman* had to cancel due to illness in the family, but sent his support.

The London based *World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO)* had declined to participate in an official capacity. Though three WZO International Board Members – Dinshaw Tamboly (also chair, WZO Trust Funds and BPP trustee), Dadi Engineer (also president, WZO-India and BPP trustee) and Sarosh Bana (also president, WZO India Youth Wing), as well as Burjor Antia (trustee,

WZO Trust Funds and BPP trustee) – were present, they did not participate on behalf of WZO.

**Morning session.** In their opening remarks, participants expressed their expectations. *Rohinton Rivetna*: “looking for a breakthrough in the spirit of understanding”; *Minoo Shroff*: “small community ... speak with one voice, approach in spirit of understanding”; *Dinshaw Tamboly*: “join WZO, and make changes from within”; *Maneck Engineer*: “must unite, even governments are run by coalition”; *Burjor Antia*: “sink our differences and form one world body”; *Firdosh Mehta*: “FEZANA constitution works well ... key is to go forward on issues where there is

## Progress in world body discussions

As testimony to the wisdom of collective thinking with an open mind, a breakthrough develops during world body discussions in Mumbai on January 21.



consensus and not on issues where there is controversy, work for one world body”; **Keki Gandhi**: “too much time has been spent on discussion, it is time to act, believe in a ‘body of bodies’ like FPZAI; **Khorshed Jungalwala**: “WG has remained scrupulously fair and made no recommendations”; **Dorab Mistry**: “travel that extra yard to form a united, single world body” ... All expressed deep appreciation of the work done by the FEZANA WG.

**“Looking for the Nexus”**. In his presentation, “*Looking for the Nexus*” Rohinton Rivetna gave a timeline showing the tortuous path in world body developments since the 1970s, explained the current status, and shared a future vision.

It is generally accepted that: (1) the existing WZO (with individual memberships) is eminently structured to serve as the world level socio-welfare-charity organization, but is not representative; and (2) there is a need for a properly structured, truly representative body where federations/anjuman of the world come together to give a unified direction to the Zarathushti “nation” and represent the interests of Zarathushstis in international forums.

“The challenge we all have been wrestling with,” said Rivetna, “is to find the ‘nexus’ (linkage or interconnections) between the charity/wel-

fare body (or WZO or Council of Individuals, COI) and the Representative Body (the proposed WCZF or Council of Federations, COF).

The restructured WZO 2001 model proposed by WZO offers such a nexus in the form of the International Board and a common general body. The WCZF 2002 model, proposed by Houston based closely on the original WCZF (World Council of Zoroastrian Federations) model, offers the nexus by giving representation to individuals through WZO as another ‘region’.

Rohinton presented other possible forms of a nexus (such as WZCF 2002 within a WZO ‘wrapper’) and made a plea for the gathered assembly to think of other creative forms of nexus that would have agreement from all stakeholders.

He further presented the vision of extending the nexus to a future “**Global Alliance**” of many world level institutions of humankind (government, welfare/charity, business and enterprise, religion, science and arts, culture), where these institutions (each completely autonomous) could come together in a loosely-knit alliance for mutual support and information sharing.

**FEZANA World Body Working Group briefing**. Khorshed Jungalwala and Farrokh Mistree summarized the monumental efforts, analyses and recommendations of the

WG since its appointment in May 2001. At the outset, Khorshed stated that the WG is not an advocacy group, but is committed to analyzing all world body models dispassionately and fairly, working with the sponsors towards improvement and then documenting and circulating its findings.

Khorshed outlined a five-phase plan towards convergence: during Phase 1, completed in February 2002, the WG evaluated various models and recommended a course of action; in Phase 2, completed in May 2002, it clarified issues; in Phase 3, which is in progress, they will develop all models further and report to the community; after further clarifications (in Phase 4), they hope that the world community will be ready, in Phase 5, to converge on a model.

The WG’s approach was to evaluate each model against a list of ideal characteristics for a world body, which they broadly listed as: should embody the principles we hold dear; representation, allocation of voice, vote and responsibility; organization, how we conduct business; laws and tax exemption implications; feasibility and workability; structure must be robust; all members should have a stake, no group should feel threatened or excluded on the basis of doctrinal difference; checks and balances; proportionate representation at all levels; simplicity of administrative structure; and ease of modification to reflect changing needs of the future.

Farrokh then presented the status of two models under consideration: WZO 2001 and WCZF 2002. Both are workable but with different levels of efficacy. Major ‘showstoppers’ with the WZO 2001 model (July 2002 draft) include: 50/50 parity of voting in the general body; membership structure and possible double counting; membership of associations in the Council of Federations if the parent federation does not join WZO; qualification of Individual Members (as “persons born into and/or professing the Zarathushti faith”); and parity of membership on the International



Board. WZO has not responded to the WG's requests for clarification.

The WG is working with the sponsors of the WCZF 2002 model to fine-tune/improve it. The model is workable, but its efficacy depends on WZO's acceptance to be one of the proposed 'regions' with proportionate votes. Farrokh then briefly presented a new "Two-chamber" model proposed by the WG, where many of the issues of the previous two models are resolved.

Khorshed closed the WG report with some options for the elected leaders to consider: join WZO; establish WCZF and work out a memorandum of understanding between the two; establish WCZF with WZO as part of it and create an enveloping body called WZO 2003; work further on improving both models; or continue to seek something new and simple (such as the WG's Two Chamber model).

She urged that Working Groups be established in major regions to evaluate and add value to the FEZANA WG's report, and subsequently move towards a Constitutional Convention where the elected world leadership could converge on the final model.

**Current status of the restructured WZO charter.** Dinshaw Tamboly and Dadi Mistry explained where the latest restructured WZO draft charter stands. At a WZO summit meeting in London in September 2002, WZO's International Board unanimously adopted the draft charter (with some changes). Changes since the July draft are substantial but could not be discussed. The charter is currently before London lawyers. Upon return from the lawyers it will be sent to the federations; if federations choose not to join, it will be sent to associations with an invitation to join.

**Afternoon session.** After a sumptuous buffet lunch at the West End

hotel, the rest of the day was allocated for open discussion, under the able chairmanship of Minoo Shroff.

Upon request from the floor for elaboration of the issues with the Restructured WZO 2001 charter, Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna presented scenarios illustrating serious problems with the voting structure at the general body level which could lay the world body open to manipulation by special interest groups; and in



FEZANA Working Group member Farrokh Mistree and chair Khorshed Jungalwala.

the membership structure that could potentially cause breakup and disharmony within the anjumans.

They pointed out that the nexus between the COI and COF, as proposed in the WZO 2001 model (namely the common general body and the International Board) was complex, unwieldy and had serious structural flaws, and suggested the gathered assembly come up with a simpler, cleaner nexus (such as a limited partnership).

To help the elected leadership decide on a plan of action, Khorshed and Farrokh (in their individual capacities) identified three possible options: continue caucusing, meeting, in the hope of a miracle breakthrough; pursue a 'one world body' outcome; or pursue a 'two world body' outcome (or one world body with two arms).

Keki Gandhi suggested that as a positive outcome from this meeting, the COI and COF start functioning informally. In the context of a two-body scenario, Dorab Mistry said he "looks forward to a long courtship between WCZF and WZO followed by the consummation of marriage."

**A breakthrough emerges.** As a testimony to the wisdom of collective thinking (aided of course by years of background study and analyses by many including the WG) during the course of the afternoon discussions, a breakthrough emerged, recorded as "*The Sense of the Meeting*":

"One world body with two independent 'Councils' be launched simultaneously under one umbrella (WZO). Each Council will be totally independent of the other. One will be truly representative of individuals; the other will be truly representative of federations. There will be no common boards, and no common general body.

"Both Councils will be registered separately as not-for profit organizations (not under Company's Act). Each will be considered an independent arm of the WZO. The two Councils will exchange information, views and recommendations which will be considered by the other Council with no obligation to agree or implement.

"The objectives have been well defined in the original constitution of WCZF and the WZO 2001 and any misunderstanding should be resolved through amicable discussion. The mechanism for resolution of differences should be spelled out. We request a response as soon as possible, but no later than March 31, 2003."

The meeting further appointed a **Coordinating Committee** "To seek and develop response to the Sense of the Meeting in Mumbai, from WZO and the Federations, and provide clarification where necessary towards convergence" to be coordinated by Rohinton Rivetna, with members Minoo Shroff (FPZAI), Firdosh Mehta (FEZANA), Dorab Mistry

(ZTFE), Rumi Sethna (WZO), Rustam Dubash (WZO) and Dinshaw Tamboly (WZO). Dinshaw expressed concern about including Rumi and Rustam's names without their OK, since they were not present. Dinshaw Tamboly and Dadi Engineer wished to record that they have participated in the discussion, have appreciated and understood the viewpoints expressed and will convey the same to the WZO International Board. Their participation in this meeting should not in any manner be deemed to be an agreement of the Sense of the Meeting expressed.

Firdosh Mehta commented that the concept of One World Umbrella will give the best possible model and will comply with FEZANA resolutions.

In conclusion, the meeting recorded deep appreciation of the work of the WG, which provided a fine backdrop for this meeting; and encouraged various regions to establish their own working groups, who could, if they choose, draw upon the expertise of the WG. Firdosh requested the WG to continue their analyses and support the Coordinating Committee.

Rohinton thanked the BPP and noted that it has now established for itself a new global dimension, and is poised to take on a leadership role.

The participants sincerely thanked Rohinton for conceiving and promoting the meeting, the BPP for hosting it and Minoo Shroff for chairing the discussions in a manner that resulted in a harmonious and positive outcome.

**Addendum:** Subsequent to the Mumbai meeting, Firdosh Mehta met WZO officials in London and conveyed the "Sense of the Meeting" to them. Firdosh's initial meetings with WZO, as well as with ZTFE officials in London, are encouraging [see page 4]. With some accommodation on all sides, we may finally be close to achieving the one sound world body we all yearn for. ■

[By Roshan Rivetna, based on notes recorded in real-time by Farrokh Mistree].

## Jamshed Guzder named "Chairman Emeritus"

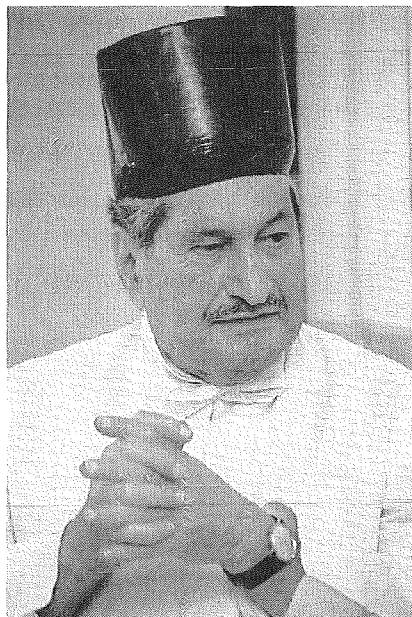


PHOTO: BPP REVIEW, DEC2002

In recognition of his long-standing stewardship of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, as trustee since 1975 and chairman/president since 1993, Jamshed Guzder, was conferred the title of "Chairman Emeritus of the BPP", upon his retirement in January 2003.

A successful businessman and entrepreneur, Mr. Guzder, 86, has been director/chairman of 15 large companies with an annual turnover of over Rs. 2,000 crores, encompassing a wide gamut of enterprises – freight forwarding, air cargo, travel and tours, chemicals, petrochemicals, agrochemicals, automobiles, laminates, engineering equipment and breweries.

His business acumen is matched by the Guzder family's philanthropy. Profits from the family businesses N. S. Guzder and Company and Airfreight, Ltd. are plowed into a family trust, whose largesse extends to the poor and needy as much as to a plethora of community projects. A cherished dream was recently realized with the inauguration of the Jamshed and Shirin Guzder English Medium School, the first of its kind in South Gujarat, at Gandevi, from where his family originally hailed.

A prominent figure in the social and cultural life of Mumbai, Guzder is trustee of over 20 public charitable organizations, is the seniormost member of the Rotary Club of Mumbai, and has headed numerous prestigious national and international councils and chambers of commerce.

Jamshed Guzder (as also Mr. Fali Nariman) was felicitated, with tributes and garlands upon garlands of flowers, at a glittering function on January 25th, on the Cusrow Baug lawns, attended by over 900 persons. [By Roshan Rivetna; sources Parsiana, April 1993 and BPP Review, 2001 & 2002]

## Calling all alumni of Young Collegians' Zoroastrian Association (YCZA)

The Mumbai-based YCZA, now celebrating its golden jubilee is inviting all ex-YCZA-ites, from around the world, to get in touch and join their new YCZA Alumni Association. Well-wishers and patrons are also welcome to join as associate members. YCZA, with chair Er. Prof. Nadir Modi and vice chair Prof. Khurshed Sheriar, brings together young Zoroastrians by organizing weekly activities – recitals, religious talks, hikes, picnics, heritage walk, tours and more. Founding trustee Kersi Commissariat writes: "In the fitness of God's time, nature did its work ... Over the years we have had a mile-long list of young Zoroastrians who met their life partners through YCZA. Some are grandfathers and grandmothers now." Those interested in joining YCZA or its new Alumni Association, please contact Kersi in Mumbai, at 2287-3888, email: kcommissariat@yahoo.com

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The earliest extant account of the coming of the Parsis to India, and subsequent settlement in Sanjan and other towns on the west coast, is in the *Kisseh-i-Sanjan*, written by Dastur Bahman Kaikobad of Navsari in 1600 CE. This first documentary evidence was written 8 or 9 centuries after the arrival in Sanjan, making its accuracy rather dubious. There is, in fact, no reliable and coherent historical record of the early Parsis. This lends added significance to the recent archeological explorations at several sites, among the richest of them being Sanjan [see page 32 and 78], Bahrot [below and page 76] and Ajmalghad near Bansda [see page 30].

## The Bahrot Caves



*Left, archeologist Roxana Irani at cave No. 7 at the Bahrot site. Above, the main cave at Bahrot, where the Parsis sought refuge with their sacred fire, for 12 years (1393 - 1405) following the onslaught of Sanjan by Sultan Muhmad.*

Twenty kilometers south of Sanjan, in the Thane district of Maharashtra, are a group of hills known as Bahrot, reaching a height of 1,760 feet. The summit of one of these hills, has traces of shelters where the Parsis preserved their sacred fire from the onslaught of Muslim invaders. After the fall of Sanjan, they lived in hiding in the Bahrot caves for 12 years, from 1393 - 1405 (though the dates are placed over 100 years later by some researchers) and then moved to Ajmalghad and Bansda.

Explorations in the area of the Bahrot caves was carried out by archeologist Roxana S. Irani, in the 1980s and 1990s. A site map prepared by Irani shows seven structures, located along the periphery of the summit, on the steep side of the hill. These are artificial pit structures made of hewn basalt blocks, natural rock shelters which have been further worked and numerous cave structures. Most enigmatic is, according to local informants, "a tunnel that starts from the top of the hill and ends at the Sanjan river". The largest cave is presumed to have been the depository of the sacred fire.

Realizing the significance of Bahrot as an important link in Zarathushti religious history, the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF) headed by Dr. Homi Dhalla, has garnered the support of the Maharashtra State government and leading archeologists at the Indian Archaeological Society (IAS).

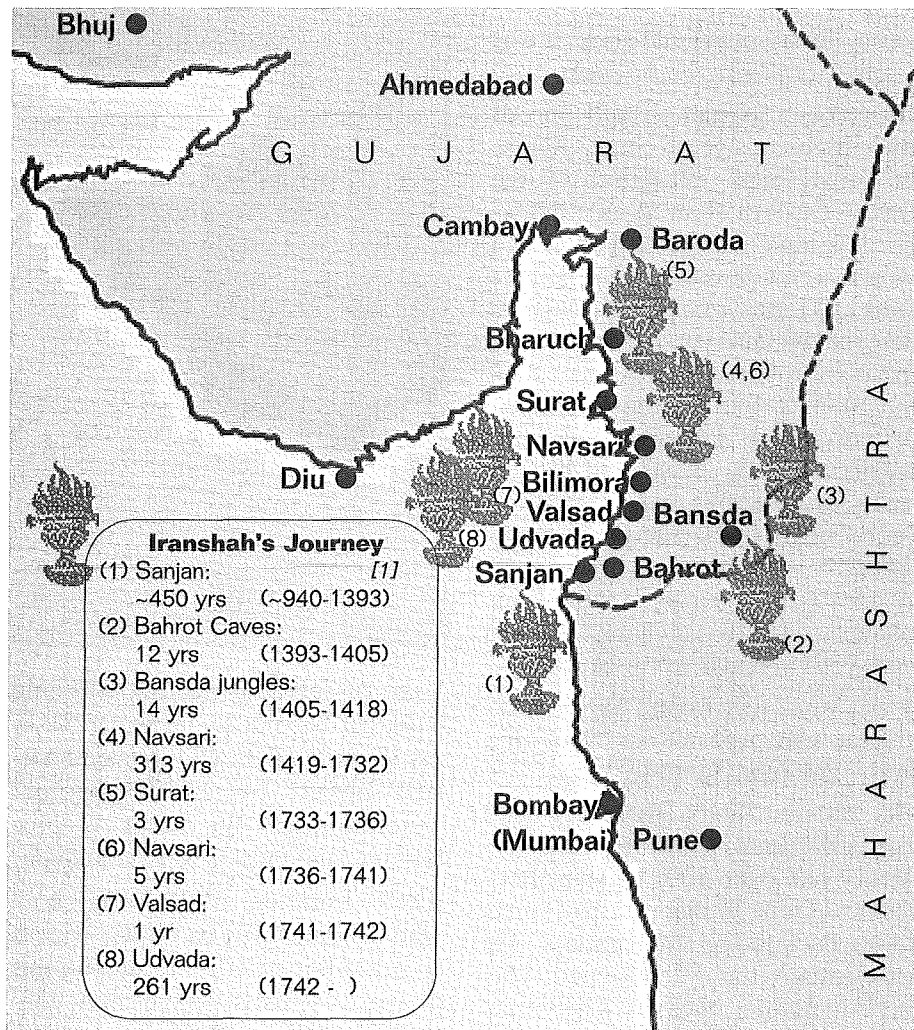
The Bahrot Project, initiated in early 2000, will focus on immediate conservation and preservation of the caves as the first priority, followed by environmental upgrades with plantings and pathways, with the ultimate goal to make Bahrot a pilgrimage center for Zarathushtis and a world cultural heritage site.

While some monies have been raised (such as a grant from the Indian Council of Historical Research, and personal donations from IAS chair, Mr. Gupta and Mr. Jamshed Guzder) donations are sought to cover the estimated project cost of Rs. 1 crore. [By Roshan Rivetna, based on materials from Dr. Roxana S. Irani and Dr. Homi Dhalla, [wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in](mailto:wzcf@bom8.vsnl.net.in)].

# On the Parsi heritage trail

A visit to the  
ancestral Parsi  
towns of Navsari,  
Sanjan and  
Udvada, all  
steeped in history,  
all home to the  
Iranshah fire temple  
at various times.

By Roshan Rivetna



**Strongholds of Parsi history on the west coast of India.** *Diu* is the port of initial landing of the Zarathushtis who fled from Iran seeking refuge from Arab oppression. The first settlement and also the first home of the holy *Iranshah* fire, was at **Sanjan**, named, maybe, after the town of Sanjan or Rafsanjan in Iran. They were granted refuge by the Hindu king Jadiv Rana. The date of arrival in Sanjan is disputed, ranging from 716 - 936 CE, with most scholars now accepting the later dates. Thence the early settlers spread out to **Broach** or **Bharuch**, **Cambay**, **Variav** and **Navsari** (or 'New Sari' possibly so named after the town called 'Sari' in Iran) and other places in India.

Several centuries later, after the fall of Sanjan [see page 78] at the hands of Sultan Mahmud, Parsis fled with their sacred fire to the nearby **Bahrot Caves**, where they hid for 12 years (from 1393 - 1405) and thence to the jungles of **Bansda** (or **Vansda**) and the hills of **Ajmalgadh** for another 14 years (1405 - 1418). In 1419, at the urging of the illustrious leader of the Parsis, Changa Asha, the *Iranshah* fire was installed, with proper pomp and ceremony, at a temple in Navsari where it remained for the next three centuries.

Since the 16th century, the Parsis had inhabited the coastal town of **Surat**, which became a thriving center for trade and commerce. Due to disagreements regarding the jurisdictions of the priests, the *Iranshah* was moved (in 1733) from Navsari to Surat and then to **Valsad** for a few years. In 1742 it was enthroned ceremoniously, at the Atash Bahram in **Udvada**, where it remains to this day, as the holiest of pilgrimage places for Parsis. It was not until the late 17th century that Parsis began to settle in the city of **Bombay** (now **Mumbai**).

**SOURCES:** The following publications are gratefully acknowledged for providing source material for this article, and suggested for further reading. To order, contact Mr. Giara at [giara@bom5.vsnl.net.in](mailto:giara@bom5.vsnl.net.in) or Parsiana bookshop at [parsiana@vsnl.net](mailto:parsiana@vsnl.net).

[1] Marzban J. Giara, *Global Directory of Zoroastrian Fire Temples*, 2nd edition, 2002.

[2] Marzban J. Giara, *Dasturan Dastur First Meherjirana*, 1993.

[3] H. E. Eduljee, *Kisseh-I Sanjan*, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai, 1991.

[4] *1251st Anniversary of Installation of Sacred Iranshah Atash Bahram Memorial Volume*, 1972.

[5] Marzban J. Giara, *The Zoroastrian Pilgrim's Guide*, 1999.

[6] Mani Kamerkar and Soonu Dhunjisha, *The Story of Parsi Settlements and Absorption in India*, 2003.



## NAVSARI

**Manuscripts at Meherjirana Library.** Kaikobad Dastur Meherjirana pointed with pride to the certificate, yellowed with age, that hung in a simple wood frame in the hall of the First Dastur Meherjirana Library in Navsari, "This is the *firman* from Akbar granting land to the First Dastur Meherjirana." It took some time for me to digest that this was an original, hand-inscribed, historical document dating from Moghul Emperor Akbar's time (Akbar became emperor in 1560!); that is, over 200 years *before* the US Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776.

This priceless document was hanging on the library

wall, albeit with pride, alongside an

assorted mix of pictures and wall signs

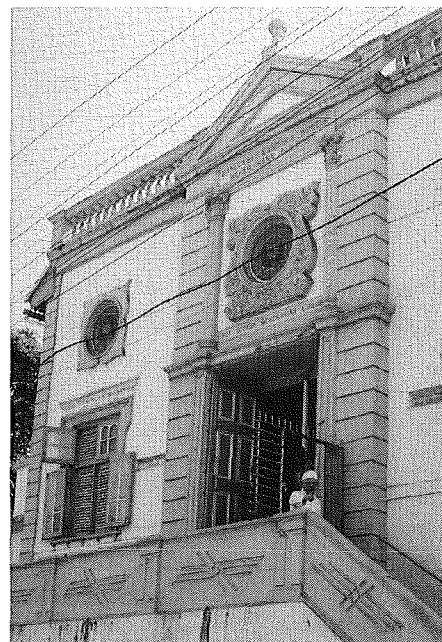
giving library hours and such! It was a rather sombering experience.

But a much greater assault on our sensibilities was yet to come. Across the small back courtyard of the library, Dasturji showed us a dilapidated building with broken doors and windows, mildewed, peeling plaster walls and rotten wooden floorboards. Here, below layers and layers of dust and cobwebs, were stacks of books and manuscripts – some on open shelves, some jammed into cupboards, some in chests and broken crates, on tabletops and even on the floor. One that we gingerly picked up [photo at right] was hand-inscribed in the Avestan script in black ink interspersed with red characters. All were yellowed and worm-eaten.

It was most distressing to see such irreplaceable pages of our history literally crumbling to dust.

Mrs. Bharati Gandhi, their very dedicated librarian, mentioned that the library has over 500 Avestan, Persian and Gujarati manuscripts, some dating back to the 16th century. All are numbered and catalogued. The more important ones are kept in an air-conditioned chamber, and many in cupboards in the main library building, but due to shortage of space and funds a large number were stored in the adjoining building.

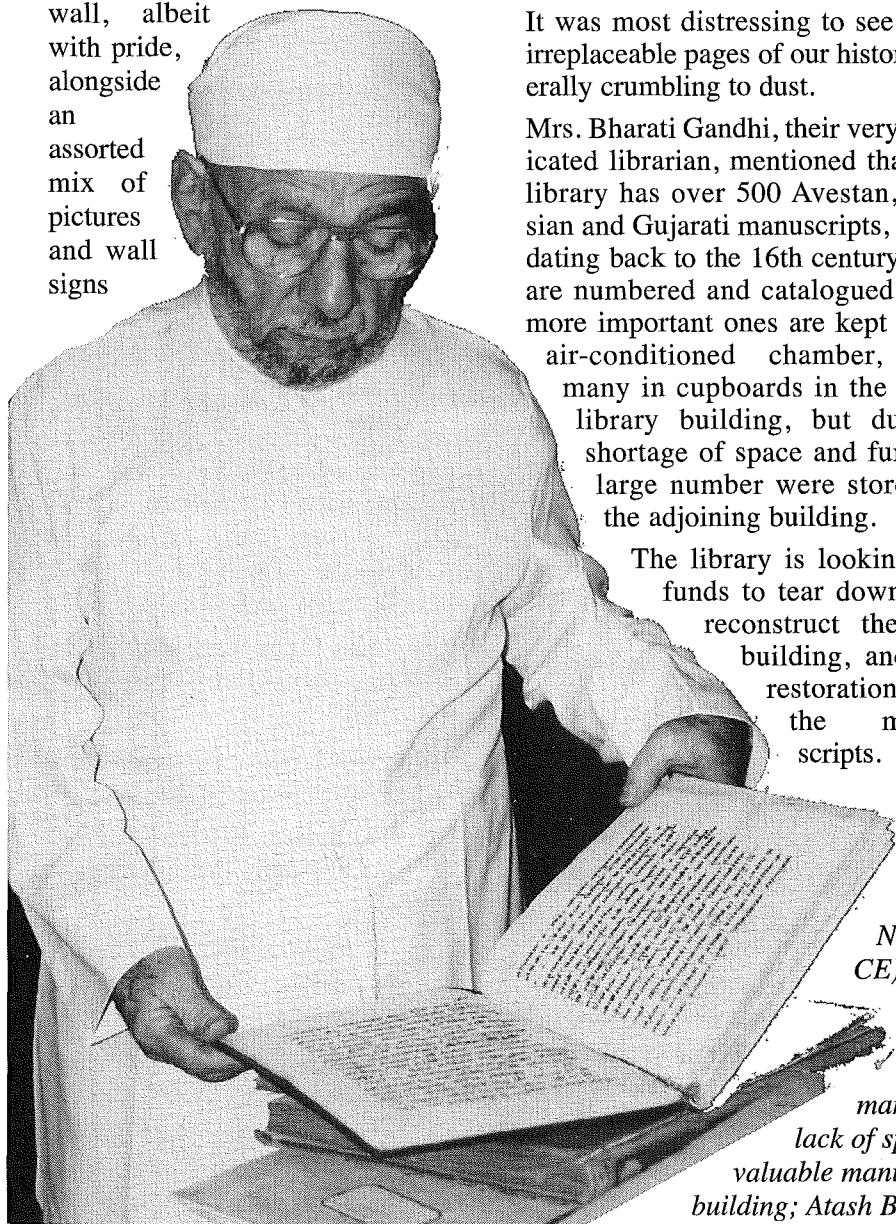
The library is looking for funds to tear down and reconstruct the old building, and for restoration of the manuscripts.



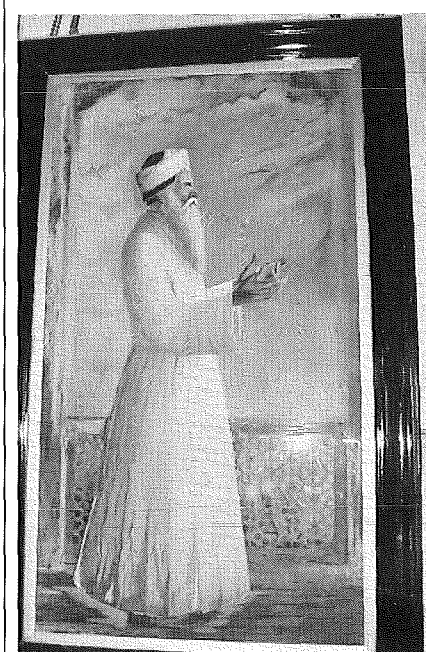
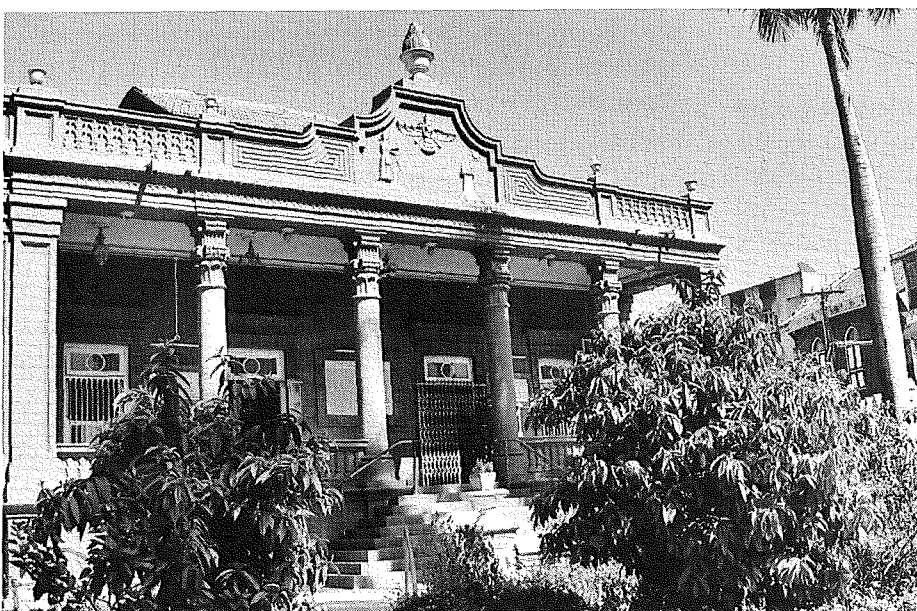
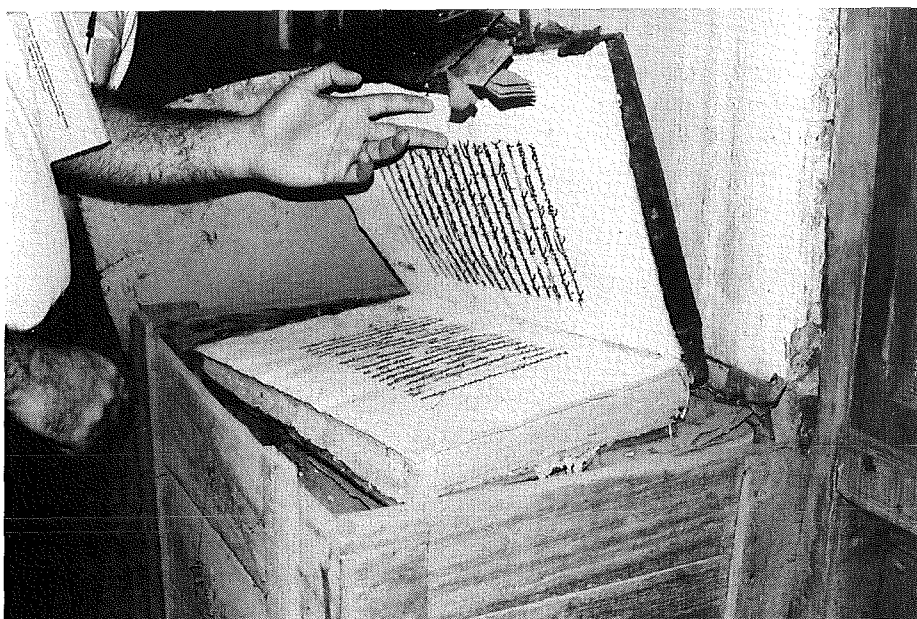
Some preservation and microfilming work has been done, under Dr. Shernaz Cama's UNESCO assisted PARZOR project, but costs for proper restoration of the books is prohibitive, and most is to-date undone.

ZTFE librarian Malcolm Deboo, who accompanied us on the trip, is spearheading an effort to support this project. Interested persons may contact him at [library@ztf.com](mailto:library@ztf.com).

**Navsari visits.** The rest of our visit to Navsari (where about 3800 Zarathushtis now live) was on a more upbeat note. The Meherjirana library was the first stop on our two-day pilgrimage trip. Our group of seven had arrived in Navsari from Mumbai by the early morning Gujarat Express. We are deeply grateful to Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboly for making all the arrangements and personally accompanying us on this trip.



Left, Kaikobad Dastur Meherjirana at the library in Navsari with the T-66 manuscript, written by Rustom Dastur Noshervanji, completed in 1173 YZ (~1804 CE). Above clockwise, facade of the First Dastur Meherjirana Library in Navsari; dilapidated building in the back courtyard of the main library where books and manuscripts are temporarily stored due to lack of space in the main library; one of many valuable manuscripts in storage in crates in the old building; Atash Bahram in Navsari.



*Painting of First Dastur Meherjirana at the Navsari Atash Bahram*

### **Moghul Emperor Akbar and the First Dastur Meherjirana (1510 - 1591)**

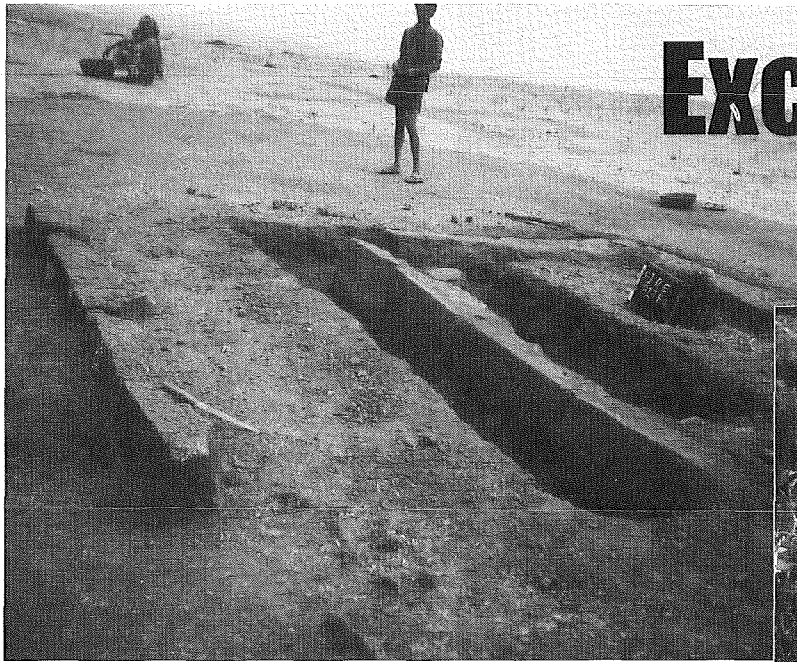
The legendary First Dastur Meherjirana of Navsari, is immortal in the annals of Parsi history.

This saintly priest had been invited to a gathering of learned men of all religions, at the court of Emperor Akbar in 1576. The Dastur's deep knowledge of the religion, his unmatched brilliance, and divine powers, so impressed the Emperor, that historians have recorded that Akbar, a Muslim, took to revering fire and the sun: "On Navroz day of the 25th year of his coronation, Akbar paid obeisance to the sun and fire ..."

Akbar developed a new religion, *Din-e Elahi* based on Zarathushti beliefs, and adopted the Zarathushti solar calendar. Jashans were observed at the royal palace and 14 jashan days were declared public holidays.

*[From "Dasturan Dastur First Meherjirana" by R. F. Besania, published by Marzban Giara].*





# Excavations at Ajmalgadh



*Above, floor plan of structures at the Ajmalgadh site. The round structure at right of the picture is where the stone afarganyu (fire altar) was kept. Right, Two cup shaped, rectangular stone bases found 'in situ' (in place), are believed to be bases for an open air fire altar.*

The *Kisseh-i-Sanjan*, written in 1600 CE, documents the flight of the Parsis, from Bahrot to Ajmalgadh to avoid the wrath of the Muslims. They sought refuge here, with their sacred fire, for 14 years (1405 - 1418) until the Iranshah fire was moved, once again, on its tortuous journey, to Navsari.

An ancient, abandoned fort atop the hills of Ajmalgadh (*Ajmal* is a Persian word meaning 'beautiful' and *ghad* a Gujarati word for 'fort') near Bansda, in Gujarat's Valsad district, provided natural protection for the fleeing Zarathushtis.

Several seasons of excavations were undertaken there in the 1990s by archeologist Dr. Roxana Irani, of the Deccan College, Pune, who has done extensive research on early Parsi settlements. "In 1995, I ventured out on my mission, alone," she says, "Normally when we go on such excavations, we stay in tents near the site, however I was lucky to meet wonderful Parsi families who insisted I stay with them. For the first 20 days, I went up the hill every day and started excavating all by myself."

Roxana was later joined by her husband Mohanty, also an archeologist at Deccan College; they employed about 25 local laborers to help with the excavation. Costs were covered by grants from WZO, BPP and other Parsi trusts.

The habitation site is strewn with a number of structures, of stone blocks and kiln burnt bricks. The floor of one of the structures was full of ash. Two stone slabs found 'in situ' with a cup-shaped hollow, and nails under it, are believed to be the base for an afarganyu that is no longer there. This structure is very similar to open air fire altars of ancient Persian times. Another structure, with a circular pit, where a few human bones were found, could have been a place for the dead. All the structures also reveal pottery, terracotta beads and other antiquities. In a letter to FEZANA Journal in April 2001, Roxana writes:

"What is so sad is that no one has taken interest in preserving the government or the Indian Archaeological Society, into pursuing this link to our past ... and the only open air altar site (like a mini-Persepolis) in India may be destroyed forever.

"I had excavated the site and left it open for preservation. In 1997, the militant Hindu resurgence started, and the local tribals built a small Hindu temple on the top of my site ... My only evidence – the two rectangular stone bases with the cup-shaped hollow – were left 'in situ', as they were very difficult to bring down the hill ... I was so sad and shocked about it that I have not visited the area again."

[By Roshan Rivetna]

In Navsari, we stopped at the new Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy Senior Citizen's Centre, built by the WZO India Trust and funded by the M. P. B. Jeejeebhoy trust; and managed by Soli Vandrewalla. Here excellent boarding and lodging is provided, for 45 seniors (to be extended soon for another 20 seniors). Those in need of greater care stay in the nearby infirmary, where a new 35-bed building has been funded, again, by the Jeejeebhoy trust.

Khorshed Variava, in charge of the Center's kitchen, served up a right royal Parsi lunch – of *dhansakh*, *papri ma kavab*, *sahn jinga* (lobster-prawns) fresh *rotli*, and an assortment of *achars* and chutneys; and to top it all off – *lagan-nu-custer* and *dodhi-no-murambo*.

We paid our respects at the Navsari Atash Bahram [photo on page 29], an imposing building set in an idyllic garden, in the midst of town, in whose darkened marble walls of the

inner hall, believers can see an image of the First Dastur Meherjirana. Navsari also boasts the oldest known dar-e mehr in India, the Vadi Dar-e-mehr, established in 1142 CE.

As we drove through town, the workings of the BPP and WZO Trust funds were evident everywhere: in the blocks of high-rise flats and in building restorations throughout town. We saw Firdosh Mehta's family home in Lashkari Vad.

After a sumptuous high tea of warm, flaky, *dar-ni-pori*, *nankhatai* biscuits and more, at the Senior Center, our party left in a WZO minivan for the village of Sanjan, which now has a population of only 15-20 Zarathushtis.

### SANJAN

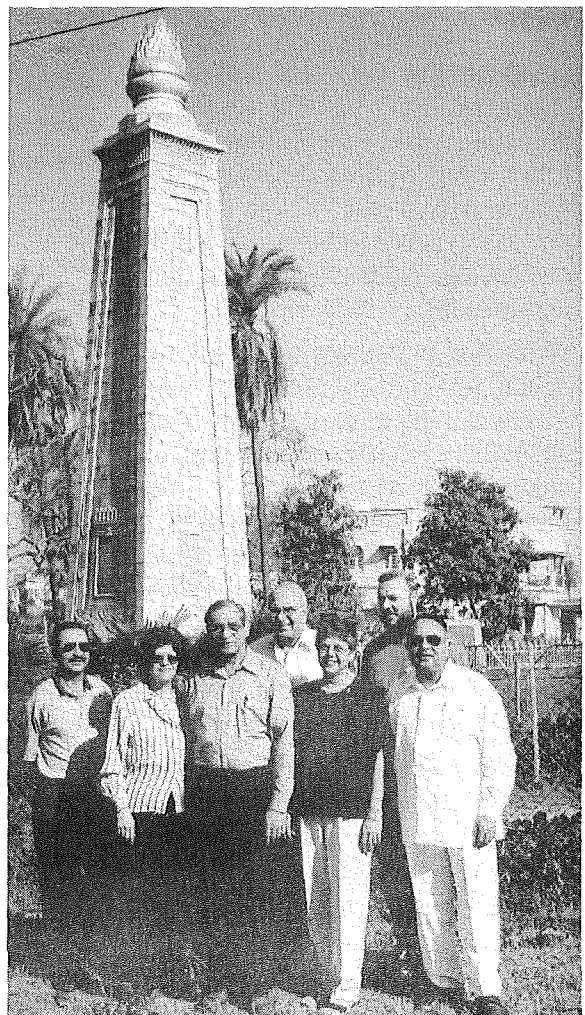
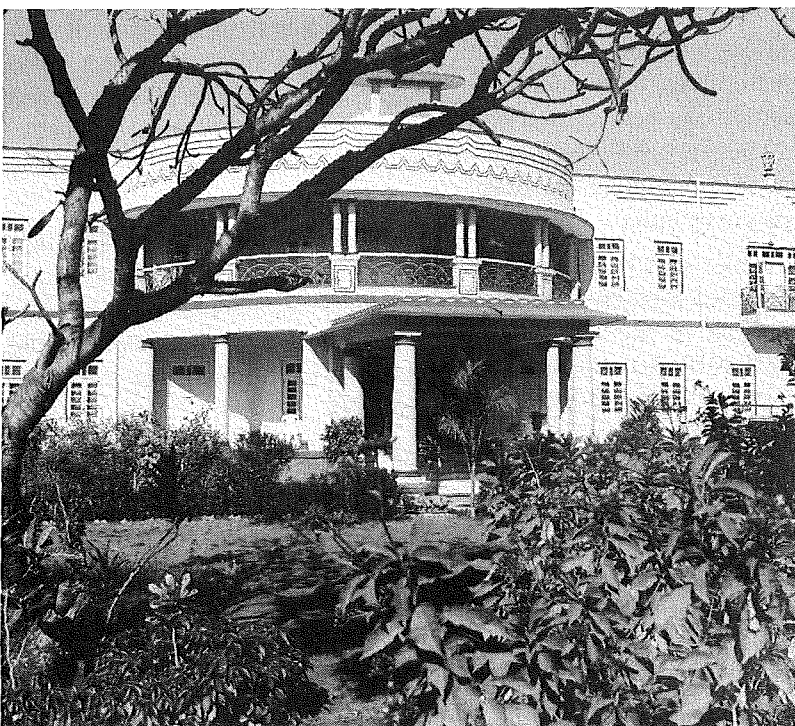
We arrived in Sanjan at night, a little shaken, after a 120 km, white-knuckle drive at break-neck speed, on the one-lane highway – I mean one-lane, the center one, for **both**

directions, or so it seemed, since the sides of the road were taken up by assorted carts, bicycles, animals, people or were just dug up.

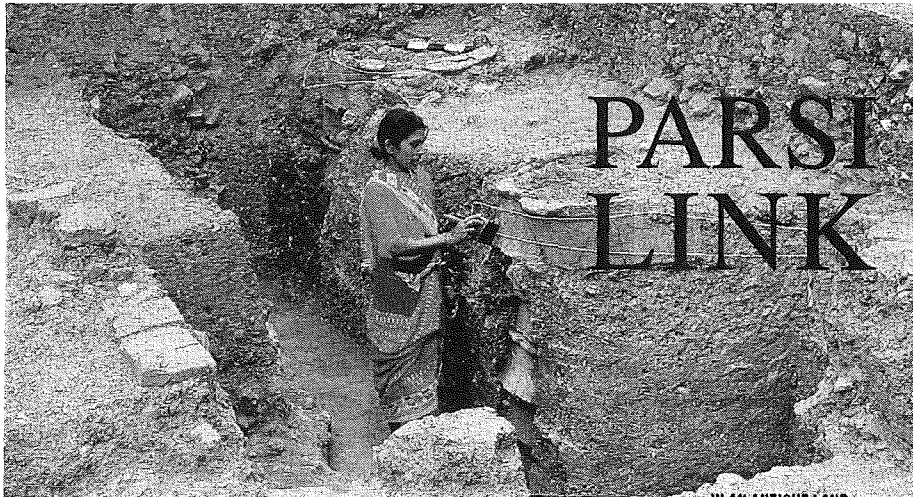
The palatial Sanatorium (recently purchased from the Davierwala family and refurbished, again funded by the Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy trust through the good offices of the WZO Trust), offered a warm welcome; much like the refuge offered on this spot 13 centuries ago, to our founding fathers, after **their** hazardous journey.

Managers Dadiba and Coomi Dordi awaited us with a huge dinner – of chicken curry, *bhajidana-ma-gos*, *bheja-na-cutlace* and more. And yes, a few hours later we were down in the dining room again, after a good night's sleep, ready for breakfast. This time it was *poro-pau*, thick *malai* and Bachi's homemade *vasanu*, which I was told was made with 38 ingredients, including vari-

*Right, at the Sanjan Memorial Column, site of the landing in India about 11 centuries ago: Kersi Commissariat, Roshan and Rohinton Rivetna, Dinshaw and Bachi Tamboli, Malcolm Deboo and Firdosh Mehta. Below, the palatial Bai Maneckbai P. B. Jeejeebhoy WZO Sanatorium, next to the Sanjan column.*








Excavation at Sanjan, one of the first Parsi settlements in India, provides new insights into the community's flight from Iran and the Arabia-Deccan sea route

■ By Rohit PARIHAR

STANDING AT AN excavation site at Sanjan in Gujarat, S. P. Gupta, chairman of the Indian Archaeological Society (IAS) studies the earth that holds chunks of history in its many layers. A metal shard at the bottom of the trench brings a glint to his eye ... The man who has struck "jackpot" at Sanjan has ever since been deliriously piecing together the Parsis' India calling more than 1,400 years ago.

When Gupta and his team reached Sanjan in February 2002, they were merely hoping to unravel some facts about the arrival of a tired and persecuted group of people at a little-known principality then ruled by a local chieftain, Jadi Rana ... Now, as the IAS team shovels the earth and strikes upon more pieces of priceless debris, its belief that there is a lot more of Parsi history than can be unearthed is becoming stronger ...

Gupta has already pieced together a one-foot turquoise blue ceramic ware and a small china celadon dish. Blue pottery is believed to have been manufactured at Siraf in Iran and at Basra in Iraq in the seventh and eighth centuries ...

The IAS team has also found 32 coins and pieces of glass bangles, beads, even an intact bottle the size of an inkpot that could have come from Iran, Iraq or Egypt ... S. Gokhale, retired professor of Deccan College, Pune, dates five of these coins to the seventh and eighth centuries.

Gokhale has also found allusions to a fire altar... on one of the coins. The Sultan of Sindh and a fire temple etched on two more coins dating to the ninth and 11th centuries provides further evidence of Parsi habitation.

The archeologists are understandably excited ... the findings lend credence to the belief that the persecution of the Parsis ... began 1,400 years ago and that Sanjan was among the first Parsi settlements in India ...

**T**he evidence that India was on the Arabian Sea Trade route dates back to the Harappan civilization (2000 BCE) and then in the Kushan period between the first century BCE and fourth century CE when it was also known as the Roman or spice route ... The Parsis were big players in Arab trade even before the second century. Khambat and Bharuch on the Gujarat coast had sea trade links with Persia as did Kamraj near Surat which, Gupta believes, was a major port for the

Roman trade. The Parsis' traditional links with India could be a plausible reason for them to choose the country as their second home.

It is believed that the first group of Parsi migrants arrived in Diu where they stayed for two decades before moving on to Sanjan which had better port facilities ... The discovery of a thumb-sized figurine of a Hindu god could indicate their subsequent co-existence.

"A common ideology and religious beliefs must have helped the Parsis and Hindus to live together," says Mumbai-based historian Dr. Mani Kamerkar.

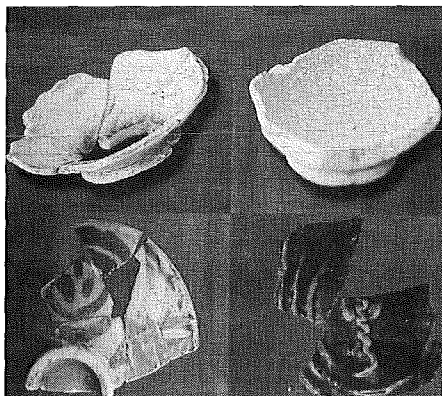
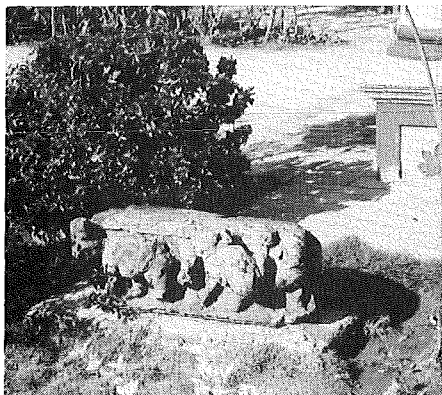
"Thanks to the Hindus, we could stay on and contribute to India," says Homi Dhalla, president of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF), Mumbai. It was WZCF that got the archeologists to focus on Sanjan. At a meeting, Gupta offered Rs. 10,000 to get the project going. Soon, others followed, including Jamshed Guzder, who heads the Bombay Parsi Punchayet.

The Indian Council of Historical Research has initiated a project, "Historical and Archaeological Study of Parsi-Zoroastrian Religious Places of Importance in Western India", with special reference to the Bahrot caves, 15 km from Sanjan. It was here that the Parsi survivors, who fought for the Hindu kings against the Muslim invaders in the 13th century, took shelter and kept the holy fire burning.

Euphoric over the findings, Dhalla is approaching the Parsi community – its 70,000 members have made a disproportionately large economic contribution to India – for financial assistance.

Archaeologists are also planning two more excavations at Sanjan. At one of the sites is buried a Tower of Silence, a circular structure where the dead were left for vultures ...

The site may yet throw up more priceless relics for Gupta to piece history together. ■



*Top, carving found during construction at the Sanatorium in Sanjan; below, pottery found at the archaeological dig site in Sanjan.*

ous flours, herbs and spices, dried fruits and nuts, *ghao-nu-doodh*, and of course pure ghee.

**Archeological excavations.** We walked outside towards the Sanjan column in the adjoining property. In the garden by the front entrance of the sanatorium are two stone carvings [*one is shown in the photo on top*]. “They were dug up by construction workers during the building reconstruction,” we were told. No one knows the age or history of these carvings but they looked very old and weather-worn.

They may be of the same vintage as the exciting finds being made in the vicinity, at the archeological excavations underway, just a few kilometers away. Here, in a project spearheaded by Dr. Homi Dhalla, president of the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation (WZCF), teams from the Archaeological Survey of India, the Indian Archaeological Society and WZCF

are unearthing exciting evidence, including coins, pottery and glassware [*photo left, below*] of Roman and Sasanian origin that may help unravel the mystery of the arrival of the Parsis and the little-known history of their early settlements along the west coast of India.

We visited the Memorial Column, erected in 1917 (per the plaque):

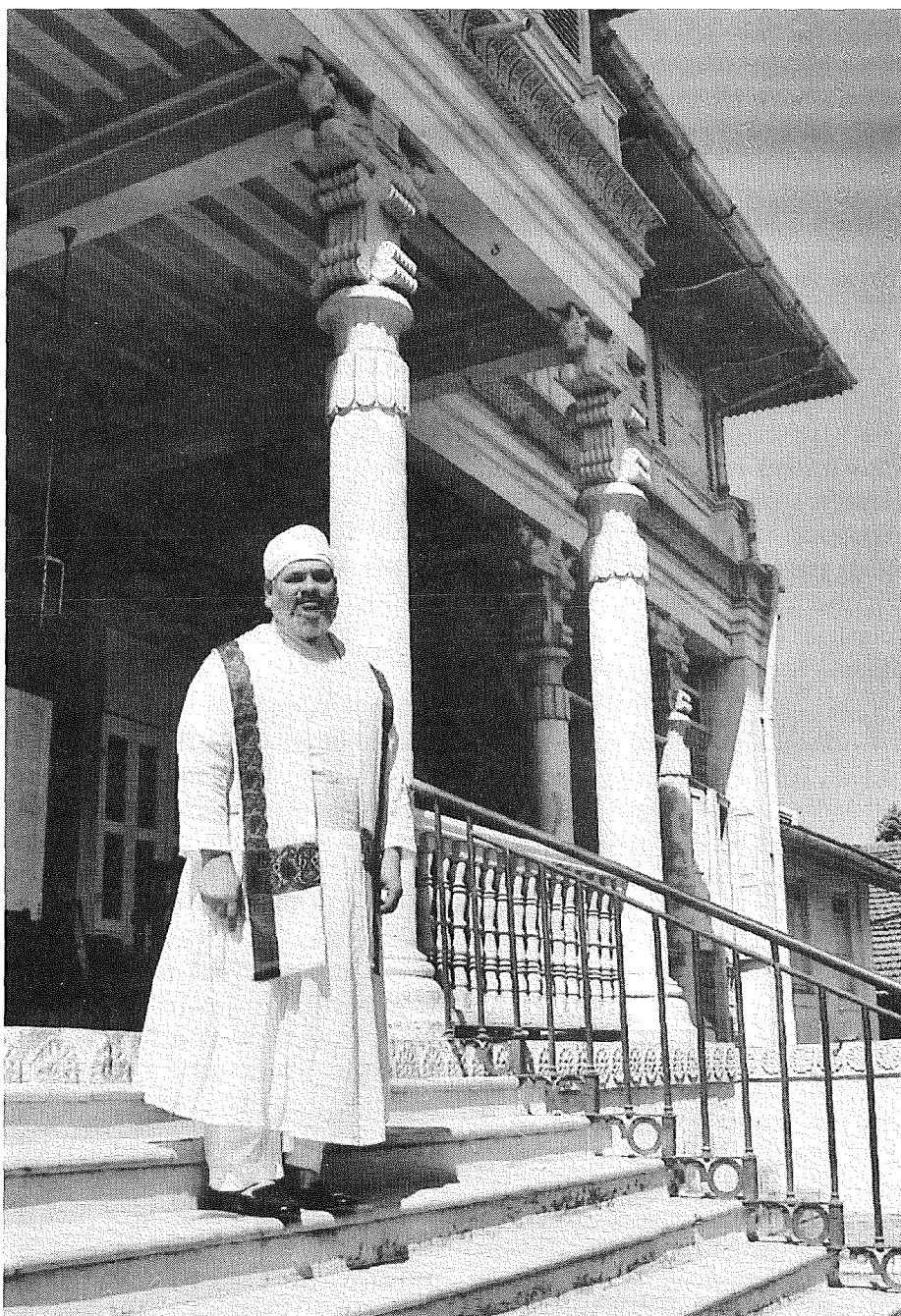
“... by the Parsis of India in pious memory of their noble Iranian ancestors, who, after the downfall of their empire under the last monarch, Yezdezerd Shahriyar, for the sake of

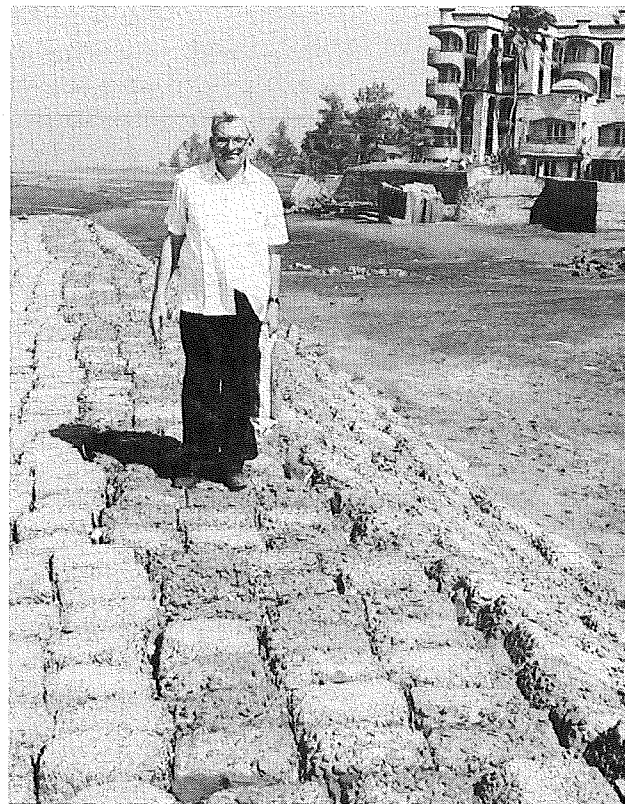
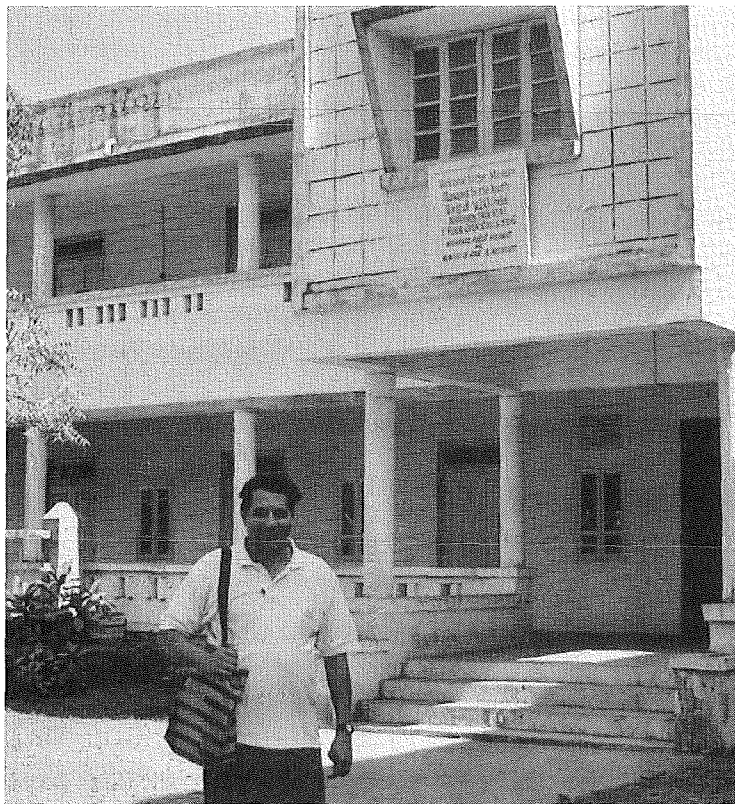
their religion dearer than life, left their native land and suffering innumerable hardships, at length, landed at this once famous port of Sanjan and settled under the protection of its kind Hindu ruler, Jadi Rana ...”

Next to the column is embedded the Time Capsule, commissioned by the BPP, as a legacy project of the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, in 2000. It contains (per the plaque):

“... replicas and miniatures of items which exemplify the heritage of our community ... May our community thrive in India and abroad and may

*High Priest Dastur Khurshed Kekobad, at the Iranshah in Udvada*





Above, Sarosh Bana at the Dastur Kayoji Mirza Museum; and Dr. Meherhomji on the seawall at Udvada beach.

we hand down to the generations to follow a rich heritage of our religion and culture.”

#### UDVADA

After a short van ride, we arrived in Udvada, a small coastal village, with a population of about 100 (many aged) Parsis. It draws Zarathushti pilgrims from around the world, to its Iranshah Fire Temple, where the original fire, first consecrated in Sanjan, has been enthroned since 1742.

We offered our prayers in the dimly lit hall, before the roaring flames of this holiest of holy fires. Later, we met Dastur Khurshed Kekobad, who has, just this year, succeeded his father Dasturji Kekobad Dastur Firozji, as High Priest (Vada Dasturji) of Iranshah.

Spiritually inspiring as the trip to Udvada is for Parsis, most pilgrims, stay over afterward, at one of the dharamshalas or resort hotels such as the Globe, Paradise or Noshirvan, to enjoy the traditional Parsi foods for which the area is noted. We had a big lunch at Hotel Mek, of *gos-nopullav*, *dar*, *sali ma marghi*, fresh

fried *boi* and more, washed down with a tall glass of cool *toddy* (fermented *neera*, sap of the toddy, or palmyra, palm tree). Other favorites of the area are *papri-nu-oombaryu*, slow-cooked in earthen vessels buried in the ground, over coals; and *doodh-na-puff*, delectable light puffs of frothy milk, which for some reason, must be made at dawn, after leaving them outside on a cool night.

We took a trip to the beach with Dr. Meherhomji, ecologist-engineer on the “*Save Udvada*” beachfront preservation project, spearheaded by the late Padma Shree Homi Taleyarkhan. With grants from the Government of India and BPP, six stone and concrete breakwaters [see photo above] have been constructed to contain the fury of the ocean. Further work, expected to cost 2-3 crores of rupees is still needed.

The very dedicated Sarosh Bana, president of the WZO India Youth Wing, showed us some of the “*Project Udvada*” initiatives aimed at cultural and social rejuvenation of Udvada. We visited Katila Lodge,

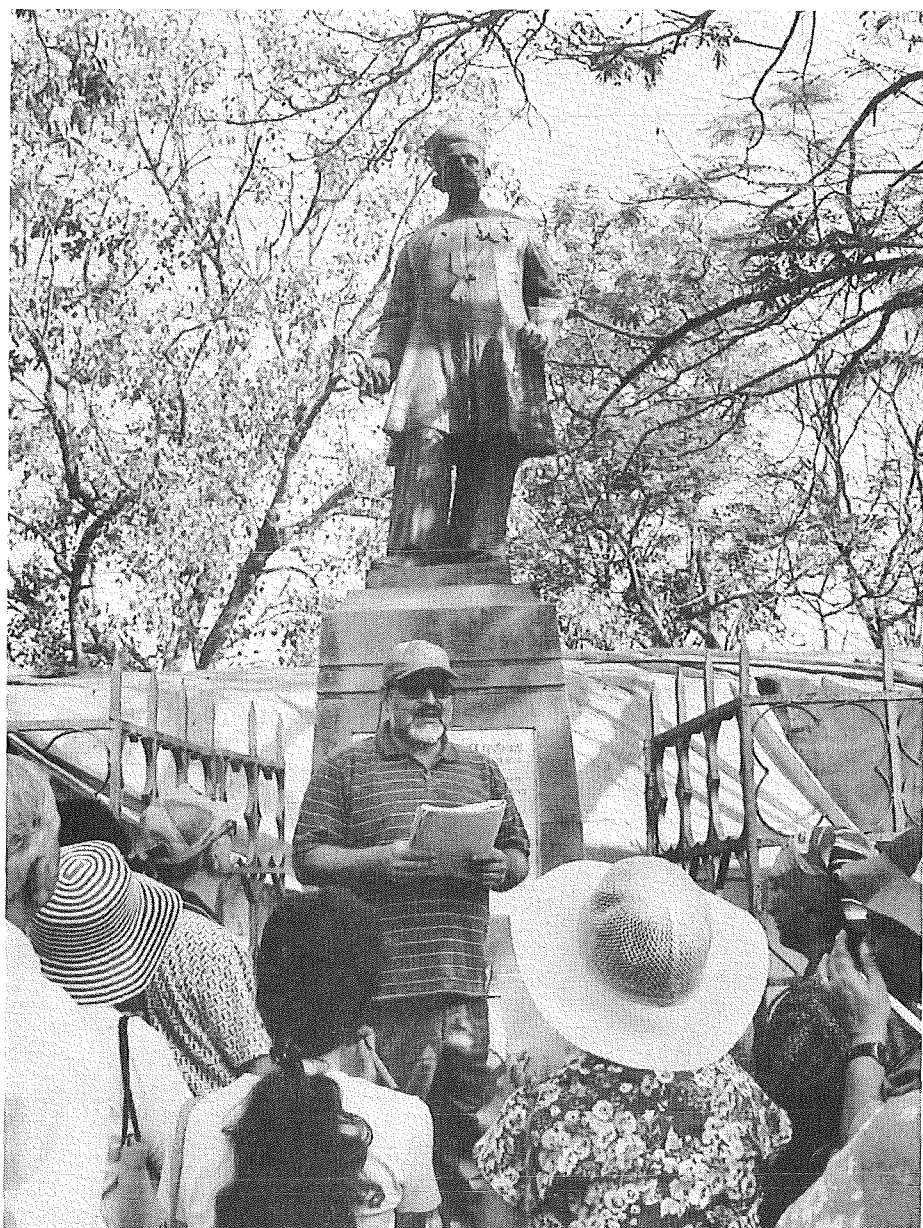
which provides low-cost lodging and breakfast for visiting groups; and the Dastur Kayoji Mirza Museum on Udvada and Iranshah, which is looking to build up its collection of Parsi memorabilia. They, along with a core group headed by Dinshaw Tamboly, have plans for a number of projects, including a Holiday Home for schoolchildren and seniors; planting avenue trees and greenery; an annual festival in Udvada; a heritage walk and a tourist circuit of the Iranshah heritage trail.

The Governments of India and Gujarat have recognized Udvada – “the finest example of the cultural tradition of our country”, as a *pavitra yatra dham* (pilgrimage center), and recently released grants of over Rs. 121 lakhs for its rejuvenation.

#### RETURN TO MUMBAI

We rushed to catch the Saurashtra Express back to Mumbai. At the railway station, we resisted the *targola* or *galeli* (palm fruit), but did break down and buy a basket of *chickoos*, which our ecologist friend informed me is called *Sapota*, in English.





*Khojeste Mistree on Heritage Walk, at statue of Sir Hormusji Adenwala.*

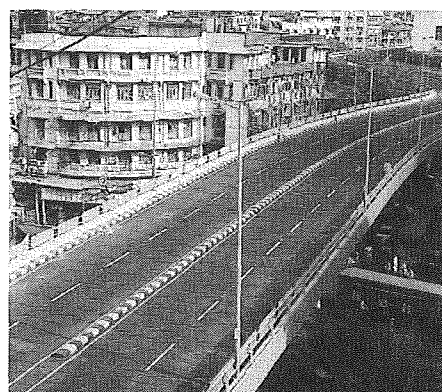
We reached Bombay Central later that night, tired, spiritually inspired and, alas, about five pounds heavier.

In Mumbai, the next morning, we took Khojeste Mistree's **Heritage Walk** of Parsi statues and landmarks organized by the Young Collegians' Zoroastrian Association [see page 25], around the Fort area of Mumbai. Attired in walking shoes and sunhats, the group of 30, gathered at the *Bhika Behram well* between Churchgate and Flora Fountain. "The first Parsi came to Bombay in 1640, Dorabji Nanabhoy Patel," said Khojeste, as he recounted the early history of Parsis in Mumbai.

In his inimitable way, Khojeste related interesting tid-bits of Parsi history, as we stopped at each statue along the Walk, first walking towards Churchgate up to the Eros Cinema, and then via Flora Fountain towards Dhobi Talao: Sir Hormusji Adenwalla, Sir Dinshaw Vatcha, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Sir Pherozechah Mehta, Sir Dinshaw Mulla, Dadabhai Naoroji, MP, Sir Dinshaw Petit and more.

But we did not even scratch the surface; Mr. Giara's excellent publication "*Parsi Statues*" lists (with photos) 226 statues and busts of Parsis in India – a truly phenomenal recognition for our community. ■

## Two new Parsi landmarks in Mumbai



**Flyover is named after Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy.** As a result of steadfast and concerted efforts of the Bombay Parsi Panchayet, following several meetings with the mayor of Mumbai and the chief minister of Maharashtra, the new flyover in Mumbai, from J. J. Hospital to the J. J. School of Art has been named the **Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Flyover.**

The gigantic structure, with a span of 2.4 kms, is the longest of its kind in Mumbai and a marvel of modern viaduct construction. Fitting tributes were paid to Sir J.J. when the Rs. 100 crore flyover was inaugurated by the Chief Minister in May 2002. [From *BPP Review*, Autumn 2002].

**Sir Pherozechah Mehta Bhavan to be built at Bombay University.** A multifaith prayer meeting launched the construction of the Rs. 6 crore **Pherozechah Mehta Bhavan** on the campus of Bombay University. This monument to the colorful thinker and politician, will include a state-of-the-art library and innovative academic programs. According to Nawaz Mody, head of the politics department at Mumbai University, "it is one of the biggest initiatives on campus in recent times."

Fund-raising was augmented with a donation of Rs. 90 lakhs from the philanthropist Mehraban Zartoshty and Rs. 80 lakhs from Bombay Parsi Panchayet's president emeritus, Jamshed Guzder. [From a posting by B. Pastakia on creatingawareness@yahoogroups.com.]



# zarathushtis in Sports: an honor roll

Guest Editor Porus P. Cooper

The views expressed in these articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of FEZANA or FEZANA Journal. Per its editorial policy, FEZANA Journal does not endorse or espouse any specific perspective.

# our sporting life

## For a tiny community, a remarkable track record

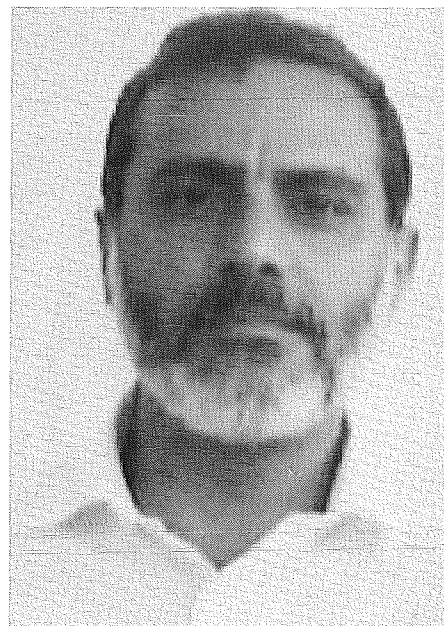
**W**e are the champions. That's what the late Freddie Mercury sang. It's unlikely he was thinking of the numerous weekend sports duffers among us. Perhaps he was thinking of himself, for during his days at St. Peter's boarding school in Panchgani, India, young Farokh Balsara was a passionate and accomplished boxer and table tennis and field hockey player. At 12 he was awarded the school trophy for Junior All-rounder.

What would we know Freddie for if he hadn't gone so much farther with that other passion of his, music? Would he have been mercury in the boxing ring as he was Mercury for the British rock group Queen?

The remarkable thing is how many true champions have emerged from so tiny a community, and in such a wide variety of sports and games. These pages provide a sample. It is not a scientific or comprehensive sample, but surely it is a representative one. Several "greats" are included, but several are not. There are not enough pages in this journal to make that possible.

But let us recount the variety of sports in which Zarathushtis over the years – women as well as men, it is important to note – have left their competitive mark: Bicycling, boxing, cricket, table tennis, swimming, tennis, badminton, martial arts, mountain climbing, polo, roller-skating, horse racing, auto racing, weight-lifting, karate, volleyball, track and field, sailing, yachting, and sports writing, commentating, coaching and administration. Somewhere in ancient Iran, perhaps it was a Zarathushti who perfected the game of chess. Iran can make a strong case for being the birthplace of that game, as well as of polo. And surely, this list is not complete.

Remarkable as this litany is, it is even more remarkable how many of us simply play sports for the fun of it, or watch sports, or talk sports – just love sports – without ever dreaming of being champions. I have no evidence to claim this as being a particularly Zarathushti trait, but there is much evidence that our community is second to none in its passion for sports. Check these pages, again, for evidence of that. ■



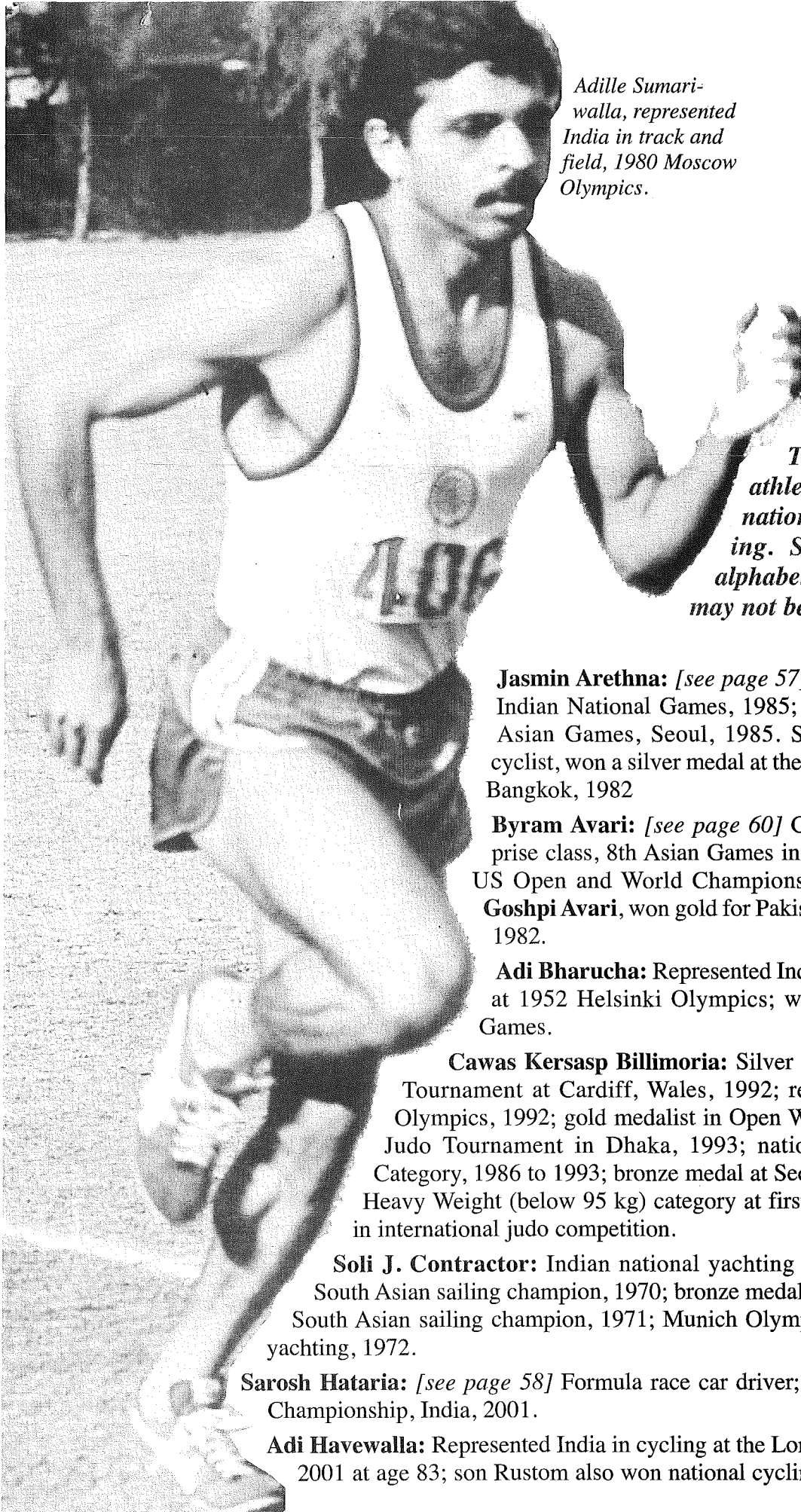
**Porus P. Cooper** is a writer in the business department of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in Philadelphia, and formerly was an editor at the paper. He has been a journalist for 30 years, starting as a trainee at *The Times of India* group of publications. There, among other things, he reviewed Hindi movies for the *Evening News of India*. He lives in Cherry Hill, N.J., with his wife Hutokhshi and two sons Malcolm and Burjis. And yes, he loves sports of all kinds and was an enthusiastic though not particularly proficient cricket, table tennis and volleyball player once. For a few seasons, he coached his son Malcolm's youth soccer team.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.

It is appropriate here to acknowledge the role of *Parsiana* magazine, which is published from India. Nearly every issue profiles a Zarathushti sporting personality. Call it living history. Much of it has been chronicled in recent years by *Parsiana* senior writer Hilla P. Guzder. The FEZANA Journal is grateful for *Parsiana*'s permission to use several of these profiles.

*Photo facing page: Parsi and British cricketers at the Parsee Gymkhana Pavilion, Bombay, 1886 [courtesy Parsee Gymkhana centenary Souvenir].*





*Adille Sumariwalla, represented India in track and field, 1980 Moscow Olympics.*

# the

**By Porus P. Cooper**  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

*The roster of Zarathushti athletes at the national and international levels is long and growing. Some are listed below (in alphabetical order) but the list, alas, may not be comprehensive.*

**Jasmin Arethna:** *[see page 57]* Cyclist, won 4 gold medals at Indian National Games, 1985; two bronze medals at Twelfth Asian Games, Seoul, 1985. Sister **Armin Arethna**, also a cyclist, won a silver medal at the Asian Cycling Championships, Bangkok, 1982

**Byram Avari:** *[see page 60]* Gold medalist, yachting, Enterprise class, 8th Asian Games in Bangkok, 1978; placed 2nd in US Open and World Championship sailing, 1981; with wife **Goshpi Avari**, won gold for Pakistan in Enterprise yachting race, 1982.

**Adi Bharucha:** Represented India in swimming and water polo at 1952 Helsinki Olympics; water polo referee, 1982 Asian Games.

**Cawas Kersasp Billimoria:** Silver medalist, Commonwealth Judo Tournament at Cardiff, Wales, 1992; represented India at Barcelona Olympics, 1992; gold medalist in Open Weight Category at South Asian Judo Tournament in Dhaka, 1993; national champion, Open Weight Category, 1986 to 1993; bronze medal at Seoul Asian Games, 1986, in Half Heavy Weight (below 95 kg) category at first appearance of an Indian team in international judo competition.

**Soli J. Contractor:** Indian national yachting champion, 1967, 1969, 1970; South Asian sailing champion, 1970; bronze medal, Bangkok Asian Games, 1970; South Asian sailing champion, 1971; Munich Olympics participant, India's first in yachting, 1972.

**Sarosh Hataria:** *[see page 58]* Formula race car driver; won JK Tyre National Racing Championship, India, 2001.

**Adi Havewalla:** Represented India in cycling at the London Olympics in 1948; died in 2001 at age 83; son Rustom also won national cycling titles.

# champions

## A national and international honor roll

**Vispy Kapadia:** *[see page 66]* Karate champion, ranked India's No. 2; awarded Kyoshi Shihan, teacher of teachers.

**Farrokh Rustom Khodaiji:** Indian national men's table tennis title, 1966 and 1967; national men's doubles titles, 1960, 1965 and 1968; national mixed doubles titles, 1965 and 1967-1971; winner of 19 national titles; represented India at World Table Tennis Championships, 1961, 1965, 1967 and 1969; represented India at Asian Table Tennis Championships, 1960, 1964, 1966 and 1968.

**Kaity Khodaiji** (nee Chargeman): Indian national women's table tennis champion in 1969, 1970, 1971; also won mixed doubles and women's doubles for the 3 years; winner of 22 gold medals at the National Table Tennis Championships from 1965-1971; represented India at the Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships in Singapore in 1971, winning the silver medal in the women's doubles; represented India at the World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan, 1971.

**Darius Marshall:** Gold medal winner, 50 meters, .22 rifle prone position event, 1999 National Shooting Championship for veterans, Bangalore, India.

**Hirjee Nagarwalla:** Represented India in the Asian Games in track and field.

**Hufrish Cyrus Nariman:** Represented India at All England Badminton Championships, London, 1980; bronze medalist, team event, Delhi Asian Games, 1982; 5th Place, ladies team event, Seoul Asian Games, 1986.

**Loveji Patel:** *[see page 64]* Boxer, Western India champion, All India runner up. In 1956, chosen to represent India in the summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. Unfortunately, because of budget cuts, the Indian boxing team never made it to Australia.

**Adille Jehangir Sumariwalla:** Record 11-time Indian national champion in 100 meters sprint; represented India in track and field, 1980 Moscow Olympics; represented India at three Asian Track and Field Championships and Asian Games; won 40 national medals, 17 international medals.

**Farokh Tarapore** and crew **Zarir Karanjia:** *[see page 61]* Won gold in 'Fireball' class yachting in the 1982 Asian Games and silver in the 1986 Asian Games. Tarapore participated in the 2002 Asian Games at Busan, South Korea, but did not win. He had won the World championship earlier in his category.

### CRICKETERS

**Pheroze Edulji Palia** of Bangalore, represented India during the 1930s as a left-handed all-rounder, orthodox spin bowler and stylish batsman. Then came **Rusi Mody**, another stylish batsman; **Nari Contractor**, opening batsman and captain of the Indian cricket team whose career was cut short when he was struck in the head by a ball hurled by West Indian pace bowler Charlie Griffith; **Rusi Surti**, a gritty middle-order batsman and an early fielding star for India, and **Farrokh Engineer**, a flamboyant batsman and wicket keeper who also delighted spectators as a player for Lancashire, England.

The following cricket greats are profiled elsewhere in this journal: **Rusi Dinshaw** *[page 70]* the only Zarathushti to be a member of a Pakistan Test team; **Diana Edulji** *[page 74]* represented India in cricket, the first woman cricketer to receive the prestigious Padma Shri award from the President of India; **Ronnie Irani** *[page 75]* the first player of Zarathushti origin to play Test Cricket for England; **Polly Umrigar** *[page 74]* all-rounder, played for India in 59 Tests, and captained the Indian team in eight Tests. ■



# flicker fracis is alive

## Or how racket sports are stoking an ancient fire – in my life and fiction

By Sohrab Homi Fracis  
Jacksonville, Florida

**M**y father, Homi Fracis, had a mean backhand flick of the ball when playing collegiate table tennis at St. Xavier's, in Mumbai. So the other players nicknamed him Flicker Fracis. Growing up, I heard story after story about the various racket games he and his Secunderabadi brothers played competitively when young. Among them was a treasured one – notably, about a loss rather than a win – of the time the Indian table tennis champ visited St. Xavier's to play friendly games with the college players. He was a Parsi by the last name Kapadia. When Dad stepped up to the table, inspired by the occasion, he had a run of great shots and, before Kapadia could adjust to the unfamiliar conditions and opponent, had reeled off a string of 10 points.

The news rustled around the grounds that Fracis was leading the champion 10-0, and more people gathered to watch. At this stage of the story, I would hear a note of rueful admiration enter my father's voice, see a wry smile come on his face: Kapadia had settled down to play his powerful game and neutralize Dad's. From that point on, the champion marched inexorably toward his win, taking the game at 21-10.

Such dramatic swings of fortune, perhaps embellished by my father's intuitive sense of narrative tension,

were bound to have an impact on a listening youngster's imagination. There are two trajectories distinguishable in the story, depending on whether it's about Dad or about Kapadia. In the first case it's a fall from up to down, in the second a recovery from down to up. Both trajectories are there to be found – or made – in the larger game of life. I can see now how an early knowledge of them must have fed my sense of the mixed fortunes in store for most of us. And looking at my own fiction, I can see how that knowledge fed my sense of story.

“ There are two trajectories distinguishable in the story, depending on whether it's about Dad or about Kapadia. In the first case it's a fall from up to down, in the second a recovery from down to up. Both trajectories are there to be found – or made – in the larger game of life. ”

Racket sports function as a background metaphor in four of the dozen stories in my book, *“Ticket to Minto: Stories of India and America.”*

*“Falling”* for instance, is told from the perspective of a college tennis player on an Indian clay court composed partly of sun-baked cow dung. Veer Paintal doesn't smell the dung at the outset; he's riding high on the confidence of youth, class comfort, and good prospects. Then he sees a rather

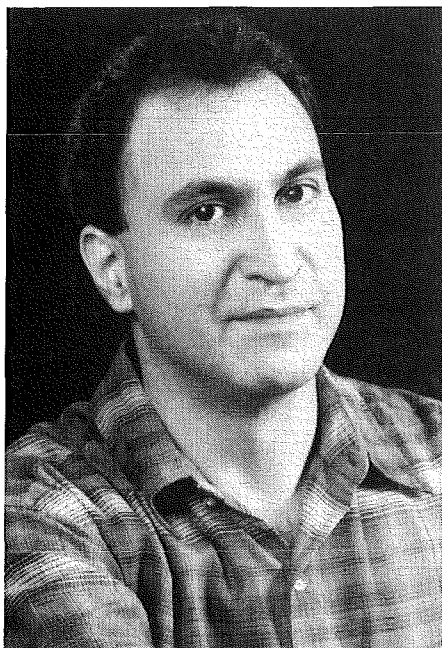
different figure, a servant girl climbing out of a third-story window overlooking the courts, in order to retrieve a utensil she'd dropped onto a ledge below it. From this precariously high point, the trajectory of her life is about to take a dive, and though Veer saves her, he cannot turn that hard life around. As a result, his subconscious confidence in the automatically benign quality of his own existence is so shaken that, back on the tennis courts, he now thinks he can smell the cow dung and cannot find it within himself to play anymore.

*“Ancient Fire,”* on the other hand, tracks the down-to-up trajectory of young Pesi Screwvala's life as he enters adolescence. I drafted it at a critical juncture in my father's life and my own, as Flicker Fracis lay on a Parsi General Hospital sickbed in Mumbai, battling a second heart attack.

Sitting by that bed, I could see that, game old fighter though he was, his light was flickering. I must have felt the need, when drafting on my legal pad, to renew the flame and keep it alive on my pages. Out of this need grew the symbolic, protective fire that Pesi, who has just fought off a deadly bout of typhoid, nurses into roaring life on the hillsides of Khandala. The boy has felt beset by the only half understood forces of life arrayed around him, in an adopted country where, even after a thousand years, he and his tiny community still feel like outsiders.

In part, those hazy forces are represented by his class bullies at Champion School: during recess, if they found Pesi playing table tennis, Carl Fontaine and Manohar Bhandari would lean over the dark green table and flick the ball out of the air, crunch it beneath their Bata leather soles, pick it up and send it cracked and skittering across the table at him.

When Pesi finds redemption, he must do it on the larger playing field of life. And he is learning that he has, in



With the publication of "Ticket to Minto: Stories of India and America" in 2001, **Sohrab Homi Fracis** became the first Indian author to win the Iowa Short Fiction Award, judged annually by the famous University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. He is working on a second book, "The Game Against Death." Fracis' literary career has unusual roots: He was a programmer-analyst for Fortune 100 companies before turning to write in a language the rest of us can understand.

his blood, the strength to do it. The fire he builds, which finally pushes Carl Fontaine back, is an ancestral one that grows and grows: "And it filled his heart, just to look at it, with wonder and assurance, a sense that things were strangely as they ought to be, that there were powers on his side." He belonged, after all, to a community of survivors, one that saw its own precipitous fall from atop the Persian Empire, then picked itself up and refused to die.

My sister and aunts and I pulled my father back from the brink that time, only to have him succumb three months later. So he never got to see "Ancient Fire" make it into print, to some acclaim. But my stories would

[Continued on next page]

Tehran, Yazd and Kerman are centers for Zarathushti sports.



In the last three years, many important sporting events have taken place in the Iranian Zarathushti community. The Zarathushti **Fravahar** Organization in Tehran promotes soccer, volleyball, basketball, chess, bicycling, track, swimming and mountain climbing. The mountain climbing and basketball teams are especially excellent. Members of the Fravahar organization in Tehran

recently climbed the 18,600-foot Mount Demavand north of Tehran. The climbers put a fravahar symbol at the peak.

The Fravahar basketball team finished No. 1, winning the gold medal, in a tournament involving seven Zarathushti teams. This is a very powerful team and there are hopes that one day it will be the equal of basketball teams all over Iran.

In Yazd, the Yazd Zoroastrian Sports Club has been active for 30 years and has done very well in competition involving teams around the state of Yazd. Teams from various neighborhoods are constantly competing.

In 2002, Zarathushti students organized a very important sports event in Tehran. It was called Jan Baktgan, for the Zarathushti heroes who lost their lives in the Iran-Iraq war. There were 12 sports and the event lasted three days. Last year was also the seventh year of soccer events for children ages 7 to 12 in Tehran.

In Kerman, a donation of land and funds from the philanthropist Arbab Ardeshir Hematti gave to the Kerman Zarathushti community its own sports facility 40 years ago. The facility hosts Zarathushti sports meets from across Iran.

Two important sporting projects are under way, involving the Zarathushti community and the Iranian national government. A sports arena is being built in the middle of Tehran and another between Tehran and Krj. The budget has been approved by the prime minister of Iran. The government will provide half of the cost and the Farvahar organization the rest. The facilities will include open and enclosed swimming pools, soccer fields, and basketball, tennis and volleyball courts. ■

## Inviting more sports stories and followup

The Zarathushti sports persons profiled in this issue of FEZANA Journal may not be comprehensive. If you know of other achievers that deserve mention or if you have followup stories about persons profiled here, please contact Porus Cooper at: poruscooper@hotmail.com. We may publish them in a future issue of FEZANA Journal.



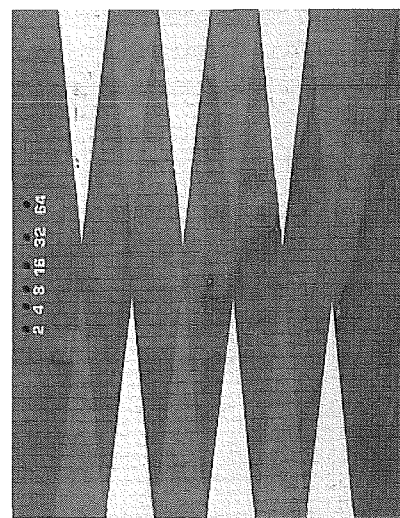
**Mehraban Shahrivini, MD**, is publisher and editor in chief of *Payk-e Mehr* magazine in Canada.

## Flicker Fracis ...

[Continued from previous page]

reflect his love for sports, a love he passed on to me. And it enriched my life. I had the coincidental pleasure of playing table tennis with Kapadia's son, my classmate Neville Kapadia at Campion. I captained my college badminton team at I.I.T., Kharagpur, and played doubles on the college tennis team. I had my own memorable moment with a former national champion, an inspired 6-0 set of club tennis doubles in partnership with seven-time Indian women's champ Nirupama Mankad.

Some chronic tendinitis later, I'm back to playing table tennis at my local Mandarin club. Though I've picked up a few minor trophies and medals at the city tournaments of Jacksonville, I play entirely for fun and exercise. That enjoyment is doubled, however, because somewhere along the line I developed a wristy backhand flick of my own. When it's timed just right, the ball leaps off my racket deep and hard into my opponent's corner. And I think Flicker Fracis is still alive. In me. ■



## Backgammon in Sasanian Iran

*The game of Backgammon (or Nard) was invented in Iran during the Sasanian period, and named after its founder Ardeshir – 'Vin-ardeshir'. The Pahlavi text Mazikan Chatrang describes the invention, by Bozorgmeher, thus:*

"I have made it in the name of Ardeshir the Great ... its board is the symbol of the earth. Its pieces that are 30 are symbols of the 30 days of the month. There are 15 pieces that are black and 15 white – symbols of night and day. Dices are the symbol of rotation of the planets. Each number on the dice has its proper connotation. One is Ohrmazd, sole God of the Universe; two is symbol of the earth and sky; three is the Good Thought, Good Deed and Good Speech; four is the four elements and the four points of the earth – east, west, south and north; five is the lights – sun, moon, stars, fire and lightning; and six is the six gahambars, seasonal Zarathushti feasts ... when the pieces are overcome, they shall be like men who pass from this earth, and when they are rearranged they resemble men who become revived at the time of *frashogard*."

- Roshan Rivetna



# polo's origins

A royal  
Persian sport  
that was  
exported to  
the world.

Excerpted from "Polo, a Beautiful Game with Persian Ancestors" by Dr. F. Dowlatshahi, courtesy *Persian Heritage Magazine*.

Most historians who have made inquiries about the birth of polo have concluded that it was born in ancient Persia. These authorities maintain that according to historical documents and illustrations, polo, or as the Persians called it, *Choegun*, was played there as far back as 600 B.C., in almost the same way as it is played today.

There are also indications that the sport spread from Iran to India, Turkmenistan, Tibet, China and Japan in the east and to Asia Minor and Egypt in the west. In the 16th century, *Choegun* was exported from India to England and then to other European countries as well as North and South America.

There are some vital differences between the old *Choegun* and modern polo. *Choegun* is flexible in the number of players on each team and the dimensions of the field, while polo has strict regulations for both.

*Choegun* was played by the two opposing teams on a field of a few acres whose dimensions were agreed upon by the two parties. Each mounted player is equipped with a wooden mallet called a *choegun* that is about three feet long. The aim of the game is to drive a wooden ball

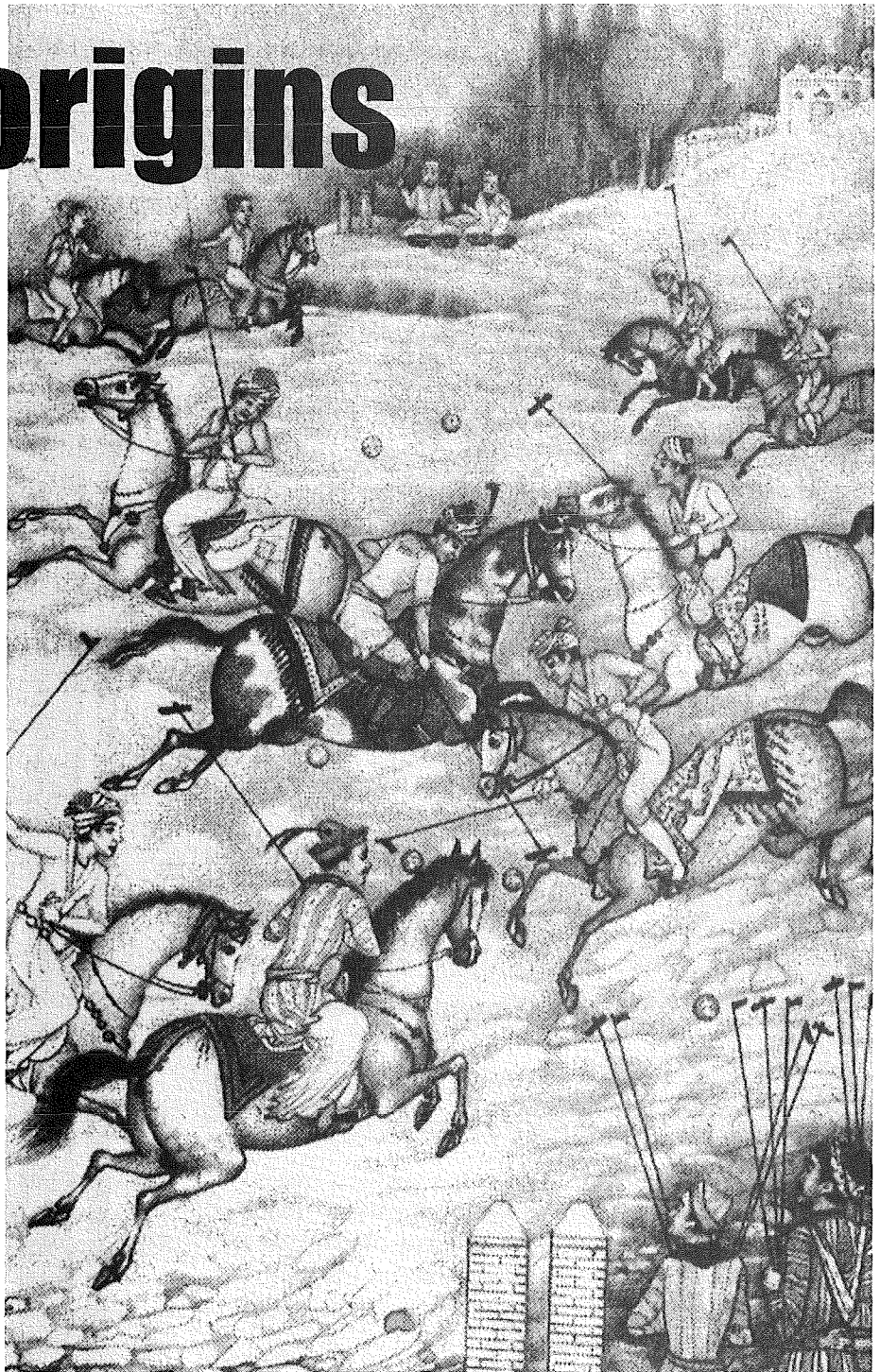


PHOTO COURTESY PERSIAN HERITAGE MAGAZINE.

through the adversary's goal. The team with the most points wins.

*Choegun* has found resonance in the works of classic Iranian writers such as Firdowsi. Here is his verse describing the way Siavash plays in a match between Time and Afrasiab:

*"From his choegun the ball  
disappeared*

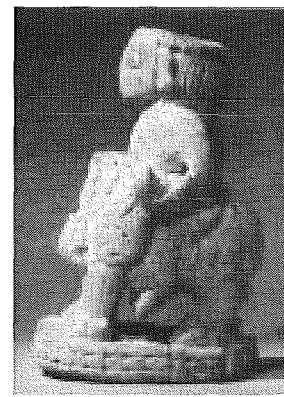
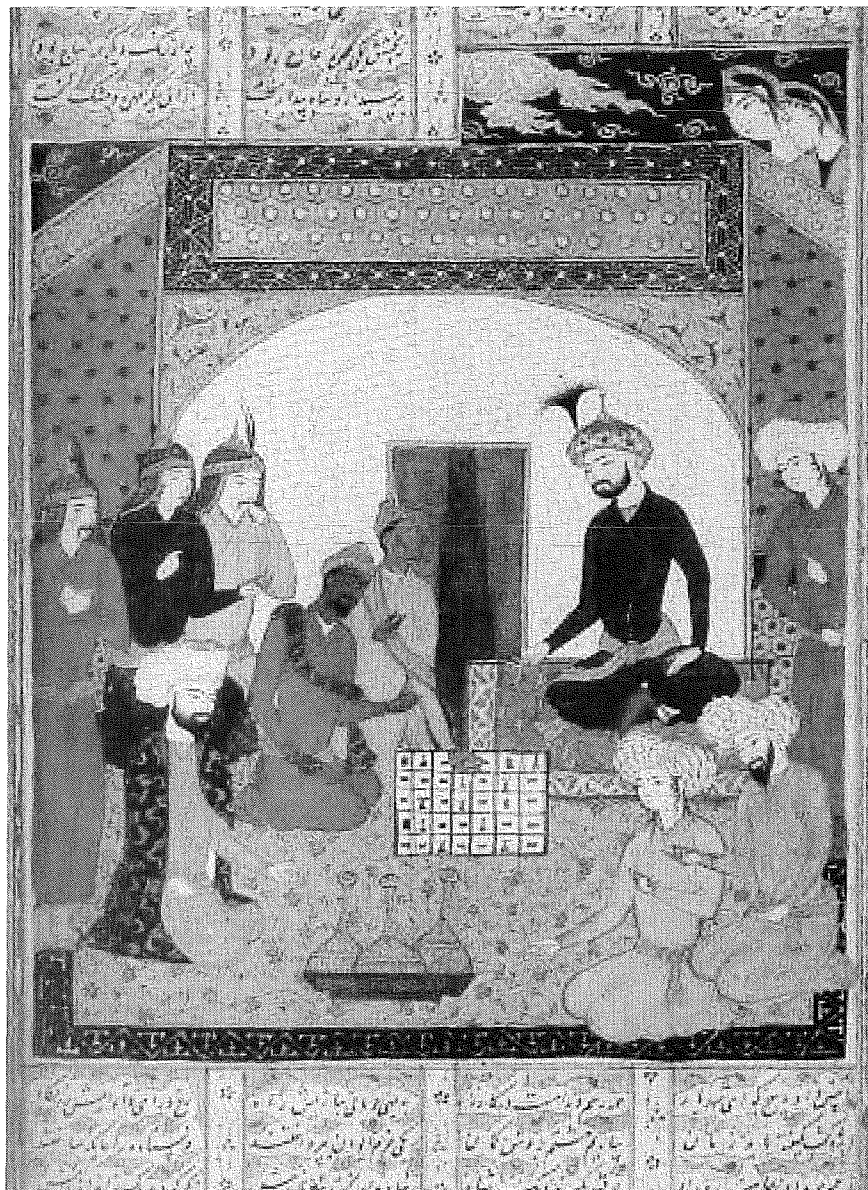
*One would say that the sky just  
snatched the ball"*

The sport is mentioned again in the 12th century *Ghaboos-Nameh* of Kayka voos ben Eskandar, a masterpiece of Persian prose:

Amr Leis, a member of the Suffari dynasty who was blind in one eye ascended to the throne of Khorasan in 878 CE. One day he went to the *choegun* field to play a game. His commander-in-chief came forward,

*[Continued on page 45]*





Left, earliest known chess piece, dating between 6th to 8th century, found at Afrasiab, near Samarkand, in Uzbekistan [FROM STATE MUSEUM OF SAMARKAND].

# origins of chess

[see painting at left], with the game of chatrang, along with 1200 camels and 90 elephants, loaded with gold and silver and jewels and clothes, with a challenge to solve the game of chess, or send revenue and tribute to the Indian king.

A Sasanian, Bozorgmeher took up the challenge: "I shall solve the game of chess, and I shall devise another game to send to the Indian king, which he shall not be able to solve; then I shall exact double the tribute from him.

Bozorgmeher then proceeded to explain the game of chess thus: "Chess is like war: two generals – the Kings are essential, the *farzin* (now the Queen) resembles the chief of the warriors, the elephant (now the castle or rook) resembles the chieftain protecting the rear, the knight resembles the chief of the horsemen, and the pawns resemble the foot-soldiers who lead in battle." After this, Bozorgmeher played the game with Takhtritus and thrice defeated him. Great joy prevailed in the kingdom.

Bozorgmeher then devised a new game, *Vin-ardeshir*, named after the emperor, and took it to India. That game is now called backgammon [see page 42]. Even after 40 days, there was nobody among the sages of India that could explain the new game. And Bozorgmeher returned to Iran with riches and honors – including 12,000 Arab horses bedecked with gold and pearls. [Compiled by Roshan Rivetna, source: [www.chez.com/cazaux/origins.htm](http://www.chez.com/cazaux/origins.htm)].

The riddle of the origins of chess has not been conclusively resolved – it is most likely somewhere along the Silk Road, in Persia, India or China. One school claims a Persian origin for chess (known as *chatrang*), mainly supported by the fact that some of the oldest texts referencing the game are in Pahlavi (even though they tell the story of an arrival from India) and also because the oldest known chess pieces were excavated in Central Asia, which was once in Persia.

One of the earliest references to chatrang, is found in the Pahlavi text *Karnamak-i-Artakhshir* (circa. 628 CE), written in honor of Ardashir, founder of the Sasanian dynasty. The section reads: "By the help of Providence, he [Ardashir] became more victorious and warlike than all, on the polo riding ground, at chatrang and at *Vin-ardeshir* (the Persian name for backgammon)"

The Pahlavi *Chatrang Namak* (750 - 850 CE) describes the arrival of Takhtritus, emissary from the Indian king, to the court of Sasanian king Khusrow I, Noshirwan

## Polo's Origins

*[Continued from page 43]*

took the reins of his horse and said to him, "I will not let you enter the field and hit a ball."

The king, who was surprised by the officer's behavior, retorted, "Why not?"

The officer replied, "Your majesty, if the ball gets to our eye, we will lose an eye and still have another eye. But if this happens to you, you will have to bid farewell to the throne."

The king said, "You are speaking the truth. I accept your advice and I will not play Choegun as long as I live."

In Persia, the cradle of Choegun, this game has had many ups and downs. A review of history shows that the game had three periods of glory and distinction, two of them in ancient Persia, during the reign of the Achaemenids and Sasanians, and the third during the time of the Safavids (1502 - 1736 CE).

From the international perspective, although polo does not today enjoy the luster of one century ago, it is still played in many countries of the world. During May, June and July, international clubs arrange matches and tournaments that attract the best polo players from every corner of the globe.

Another good thing about the game is that it is no longer a lonely traveler, as it was in the days after it left its birthplace. For now, choegun has produced offsprings, some even more popular than itself – called 'Hockey', 'Golf' and 'Baseball'. ■



*Things turn out  
best for people  
who make the  
best of things.*

- Henry Ford



*At Sharjah, UAE, 1981: the author [in straw hat on right] and another umpire walk to the pitch. A portable cabin in the background serves as a pavilion.*

# Sharjah memories

## How a patch of desert bloomed into a world capital of cricket.

**By Rusi R. Sorabji  
Campbell, California**

**T**wenty-five years ago, in 1977, when I first set foot in Sharjah, the emirate resembled a no man's land in which sea, sand and 'sabh' – dirt roads embedded with the detritus of the ocean floor – fused indistinguishably. For decades it was a desert airstrip for the British.

When I left 20 years later, Sharjah and neighboring Dubai and Abu Dhabi were transformed into one of the world's great playgrounds, lush with greenery. They now offer the world's best in cricket, golf, soccer, Formula One racing, ice skating, polo, speedboat racing, horse racing, tennis, yachting, and synthetic ski slopes on sand dunes.

My "Auld Lang Syne" visit to United Arab Emirates in April 2002 coincided with The Sharjah Cup Cricket

Series and also the Dubai Gold Cup, the richest horse racing event in the World.

This day, once again, Pakistan was playing Sri Lanka, as in the very first One Day International played on the Sharjah Cricket Association Grounds exactly 18 years before. I was invited to watch the game from the cool comfort of the high-tech Pavilion end.

Cricket enthusiasts worldwide who watch the games on TV are familiar with this beautiful stadium. But to walk on that turf in the desert is like treading barefoot on a thick wool carpet. It is amazing how this place has blossomed into a beautiful Test cricket venue despite the severe environmental constraints.

It was one May afternoon in 1983 that I first played on this newly laid ground with the Father of Cricket in

UAE, Abdul Rehman Bukhatir. A passionate cricketer, he had the impossible dream of planting the seeds of cricket in desert sands.

“ A passionate cricketer, he had the impossible dream of planting the seeds of cricket in desert sands. ”

At the time, the partly covered stadium had a seating capacity of 8,000 or 9,000. Seats were of molded fiberglass and the benches had no back rests. All that has now been replaced with the best available and the capacity increased to 28,000. The venue now hosts five-day Test matches. The West Indies played Pakistan in the first ever two-Test, five-day series in January and February 2002. In October of the same year Australia played Pakistan in a three-Test series.

Back to the 2002 Sharjah Cup. As we wait for the game to commence, my eyes close as I draw deeply on the cool sea breeze mingled with faint traces of 'luban' from the adjoining VIP boxes. My memories drift into a fast rewind to a time some 25 years ago, when this ground at the far end of the Industrial Area was a wasteland where rain water took weeks to dry up.

A friend, Chandru Bhan of the Lancashire Cricket League, had introduced me as a cricketer to three great lovers of the sport, the visionary Abdul Rehman Bukhatir, banker, industrialist, owner of hotels and resorts, and two enterprising Iranian brothers, Abdul Latif and Abdul Rahim Galadhari, merchants, bankers, industrialists, hotel magnates, automobile dealers and newspaper owners.

Every weekend, which happened to be Thursdays and Fridays, from September-end to May, teams of expatriates from the subcontinent,

Britain and other cricketing countries would gather to indulge in their favorite game, on grounds that they had sculpted out of sandy wastelands, using their companies' earth-moving equipment.

At the Al Khan Cricket Grounds behind the Sharjah Industrial Area, where the Air India-Dubai team played frequently, surplus bricks and concrete blocks from construction sites were used to raise the seating area around the boundary. Seats from scrapped cars in a nearby auto graveyard and discarded office chairs provided seating. In 1977-78, there were about a dozen cricket grounds like the one at Al Khan.

The Galadhari employees were mostly expatriate Indians as were the members of their cricket team. Bukhatir's staff included former Pakistan Test captain Asif Iqbal and many other past and present Pakistani Test cricketers.

Most weekends, the Bukhatir team played the Galadhari team. I was invited to play for the Galadhari team, but ended up umpiring the game. I later noticed this happened every time the Galadharis were present as spectators.

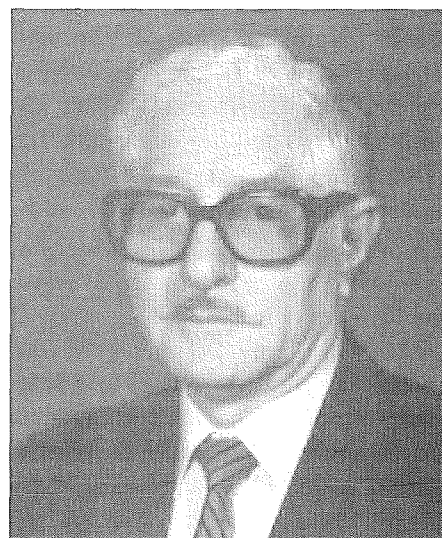
“ Rustom why do you think we assigned you the umpiring job? We know you are a Zaar-thosty. ”

One Thursday evening, with the last man in and 11 runs required in two overs, the brother of Pakistan's great batsman Hanif Mohammed hit a four and a two, then in trying to snatch a single to garner the bowling at the other end, completely missed the last delivery. The ball hit his right leg plumb in front of the wicket. The wicketkeeper and other fielders appealed. My right index finger

pointed towards the heavens and the batsman muttered something before departing.

At a party after the match, I asked one of the players what the batsman said, and this is what I was told: "Do you know, had you not declared the last man leg before wicket, you would have received a handsome gift."

I had heard rumors of heavy betting on the outcome of these friendly matches, but had never imagined that umpires could be influenced. Some weeks later when I mentioned this to one of the Galadharis, he told me with a grin, "Rustom why do you think we assigned you the umpiring job? We know you are a Zaar-thosty." ■



**Rusi R. Sorabji**, a resident now of Campbell, Calif., spent years in the Gulf and is an avid sportsman. He played cricket, tennis, badminton, hockey and table tennis at the university level in Delhi. He also was captain of the Engineers India Ltd. cricket team. Sports runs in his family. Sorabji's grandfather, Jal Dhanjibhoy Bomanji Irani, was a big game hunter. His Mother Kumi also was a fine markswoman and champion equestrian. His nephew, Ashish Thakur, a stylish all-rounder, was a schools and junior level cricket star in Delhi and a mainstay of cricket teams in the United Arab Emirates.





From left, Julia N. Irani captained Pakistan's first International swimming meet in 1997, which brought home 10 medals; Meher D. Unwalla [standing 2nd from right] with Pakistan's women's cricket team.

# pakistan torchbearers

A tradition of being versatile  
and of women athletes showing the way.

By Sunnu Golwalla  
Karachi, Pakistan

Cricket, hockey, tennis, snooker, track, swimming and sailing. Pakistani Zarathushtis have excelled at a variety of sports over the years, often well enough to make a mark nationally. But the most remarkable thing is that, in our Islamic country, Zarathushti **women athletes** have pioneering accomplishments to their credit:

- In cricket, Zarathushtis helped form the Pakistani women's national cricket team and **Meher D. Minwalla** was among the 11 who played Denmark at Bangalore in 1997.
- In swimming, **Julia N. Irani** was the captain of Pakistan's team at the Islamic Women's Solidarity Games in Tehran in 1997. The team brought home 10 medals.
- **Nadia Kharas** was declared overall champion at the Sindh

Women's Open Swimming Championship in 1995 at age 15.

● **Shaan D. Kandawalla** was the winner of the First Sindh Open Swimming Championship in 1992.

● In tennis, the most outstanding performer was **Meher J. Patel** (nee Dubash), who in 1926 won a tennis trophy at the age of seven and then at 13 became All-India tennis champion. In 1986, Karachi Gymkhana during its centenary celebrations honored Meher as "Sportswoman of the Century".

Men, too, have distinguished themselves in **tennis**. In 2002, **Mahveer B. Pestonji** of Lahore won the boys doubles at the Services Club Championship. Multan has its own interesting record of the game. In the 1930s the **Minwalla** and **Muncherjee families** had tennis courts in their residential areas and community matches were played there. In the

1980s, **Dr. Jamshed Bomanjee** won the singles tennis championship at the King Edwards Medical College, Lahore, and in the same year, he won the doubles title with his class fellow Dr. Noor Syed.

In **table tennis**, **Parveen H. Minwalla** outclassed the reigning national ladies champion in straight sets in 1972, according to Karachi Parsi Institute (KPI) archives. Other distinguished performers in table tennis have been **Hoshang S. Anklesaria**, **Thrity Dinshaw**, **Savak B. Baria**, **Zareen F. Wania** and **Jamshed S. Gati**.

**Freny B Pestonji** (nee Engineer) of Lahore finished second in an inter-collegiate championship in 1978, as did her daughter **Anya B. Pestonji** in 2000. Between 1988 and 1996, **Isphanyar M. Bhandara** of Rawalpindi was table tennis champion in his school and college. **Byramjee H. Ghadially** won gold in



Left, Pakistan's No. 4 cueist, snooker champion Azdiar H. Mobed; above, Parveen H. Minwalla, in 1972, outclassed the reigning national ladies champion of table tennis.

men's doubles at the Seventh Zarathushti Games in Houston in 2000.

**Badminton** was the forte of **Tim M. Kamdin**, **K. Kabraji**, **P. J. Mehta** and **N. T. Hazari**, who won the KPI championships in the 1940s. In 1960, **Boman B. Boatwalla** won the KPI triple crown. **Munch E. Rana** excelled in the game at the Grammar School of Quetta in the 1950s.

Zarathushtis of Lahore have their own sporting hero, **Rustom E. Bharucha**, who played in the Punjab Championship and represented Pakistan in badminton's Thomas Cup Championship in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1954.

In **swimming**, there is a long history of notable performances by Pakistani Zarathushtis.

In the 1940s, **Sami M. Framjee** of Rawalpindi competed in Bombay and Lahore for the national championship. In the 1970s, **Cyrus D. Kharas** was the fastest swimmer at an inter-university meet. In 1995, the same year Kharas' daughter Nadia distinguished herself at the Sindh championship, **Narius J. Shekhdar**, 14, won the

men's best swimmer award. He also took three gold and two silver medals at the 7th Zarathushti Games in Houston in 2000. His sister Sonia won the Freestyle in 2001 at the Sindh women's open.

Young **Autrin J. Yazdani** at age 6 created her own record in 1999 at the KPI by completing 500 meters. In 2000, **Anya B. Pestonji** of Lahore won the second position in a breast-stroke event in her school.

The other water sports in which Zarathushtis have won national acclaim is **sailing** [see profile of **Byram** and **Goshpi Avari**, page 60]. In 2002, **Mahveer B Pestonji** of Lahore finished second in yachting in the PAF Inter-School Sailing Championship held in Karachi.

**Cricket** has been remarkably popular with Pakistani Zarathushtis, and they have played it with gusto.

A large ground at the Karachi Parsi Institute has nurtured talent through the years. **Nadir M. Dinshaw** scored nearly 8,000 runs in the 1920s while **Manchi Mobed** was nicknamed the 'Sind Jessop', after one of the greatest of English hitters, in the 1940s.

**Rusi N. Dinshaw** [see page 70] was the only Zarathushti to have represented Pakistan in a Test match. **Soli Mavalvala** played in the provincial matches while **B. R. Irani** and **Homi F. Mobed** played for the national Quaid-e-Azam Cricket Trophy in the 1950s.

Brothers **Perviz** and **Shahrukh Rustonji** played cricket in their school in Quetta in the 1950s while **Cyrus J. Pestonji** of Lahore in the 1970s was the cricket captain of his university team. **Isphanyar M. Bhandara** of Rawalpindi was declared best bowler and man of the match while playing during his academic years in the late 1980s.

From 1959 to 1992 **Minoo Mavalvala** participated in the national billiards championship and represented Pakistan in the 1960s in Bombay, Calcutta and in New Zealand where he scored an enviable break of 174. In 1987, **Azdiar H. Mobed** made his debut at the national level in snooker, playing in the All Pakistan Billiards and Snooker Championship. He rose to be Pakistan's No. 4 cueist. World champion Mohammed Yusuf

remarked that "Azdiar beats his opponent with his mind."

In **hockey**, brothers **Nariman** and **Mehernosh Bharucha** of Quetta played on the national team in the 1940s and **Jal P. Pestonji** of Lahore played at the district and provincial levels from the 1930s to the 1950s.

**Sheroo Giara** (nee Guard) participated in **athletics** at the national level in Dhaka, Lahore and Sahiwal in the 1960s and secured the first position in many of the events. In 1992, her daughter **Annahita Khumbatta** won four gold medals for track and volleyball at the Fourth Zoroastrian Olympics at Los Angeles in 1992. Annahita also played basketball with the women's national team in 1994. **Hoshang G. Purveyor** and **Kaeyan B. Quettawalla** won the men's relay and volleyball at Los Angeles in 1992.

We are also proud of our all-rounders. **Homi Mobed** represented

Karachi University in cricket, hockey, tennis, swimming and athletics and was awarded the all-rounder medal at the KPI in the 1980s. **Peshotan H. Bomanjee** of Multan played cricket, table tennis and squash at the college level and **Shehroo Giara** excelled in netball, tennis and track in her school days.

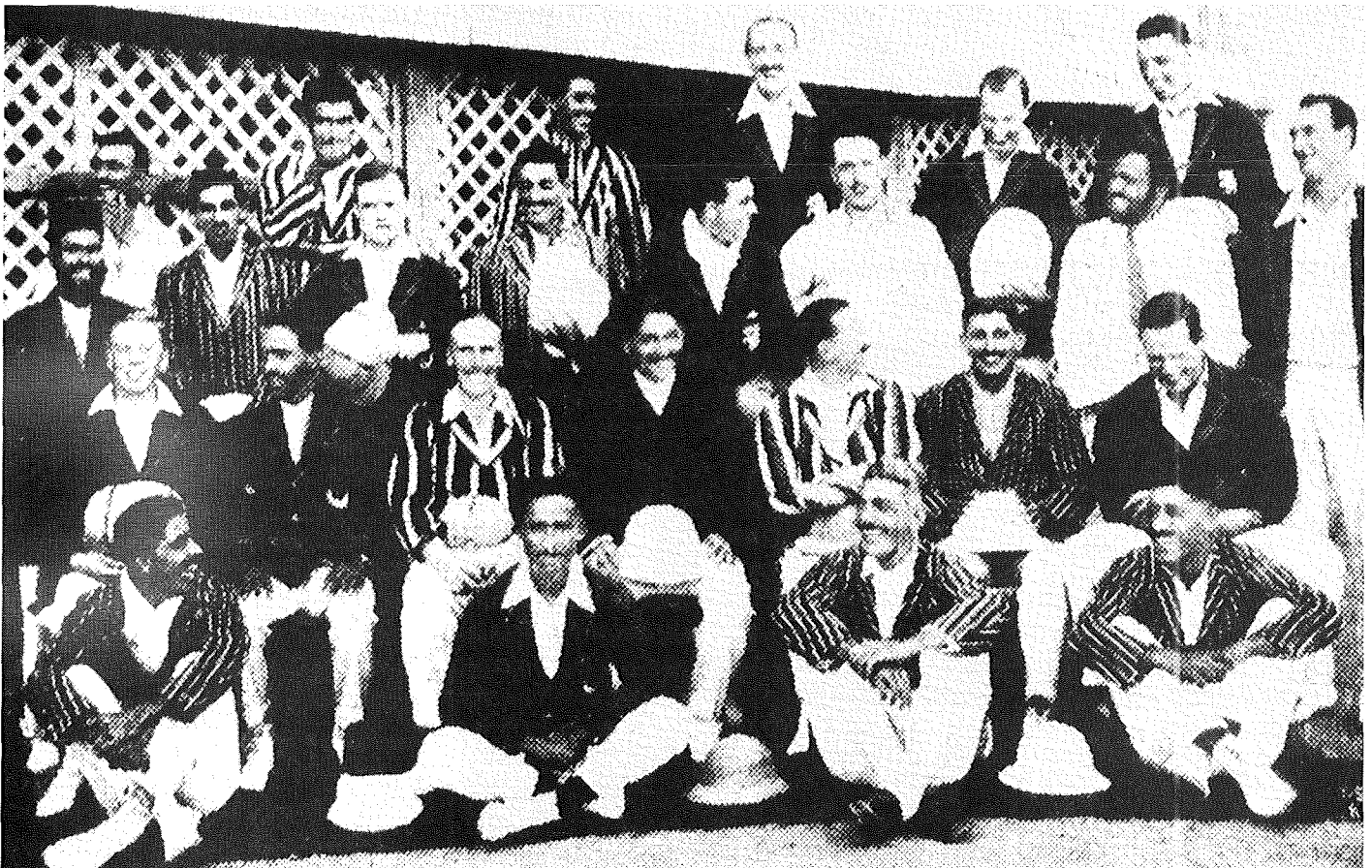
In Multan, volleyball was played in the late 1960s by **Kamal Vatcha** (nee Minwalla) and **Soonu Khursigara** (nee Bomanjee) at the district level. In Karachi, the Inter-Parsi Volleyball Tournament has been played with fervor since 1971.

**Billy Engineer** of Lahore informs that "the Lahore Parsi Club flourished between 1969 and 1984, when 25 to 30 children participated in annual tournaments of badminton and table tennis where shields and cups were presented. Mass migration of families from Lahore has brought these activities to a standstill." ■

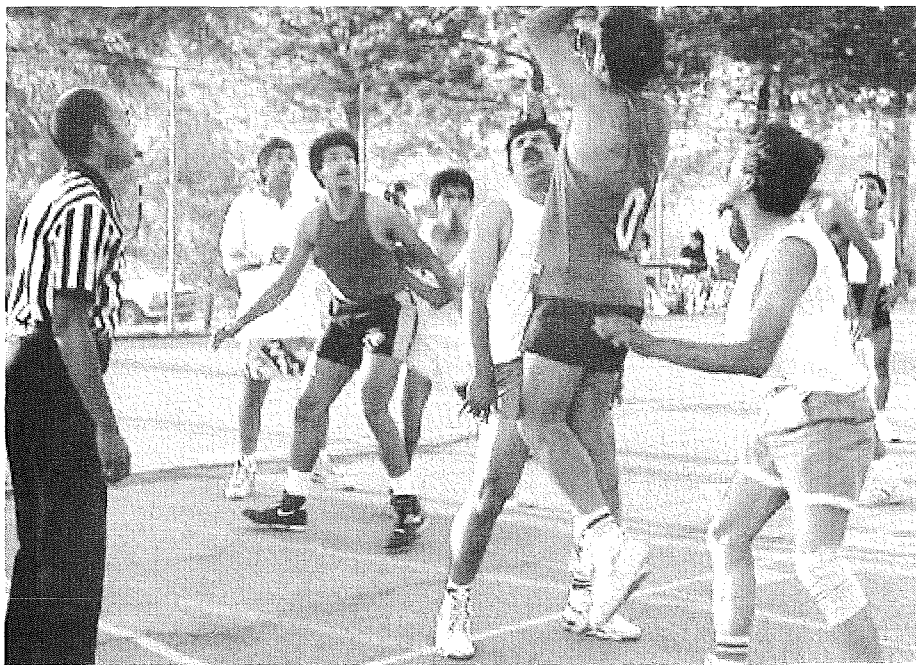


**Sunnu Golwalla** is a secretary and has promoted her profession by conducting workshops, creating a magazine for secretaries and introducing a professional secretaries award in Karachi, where she lives. She is vice president of the Karachi Zarathosti Banu Mandal (KZBM). Recently she published the book "**Sands of Time**", covering the history of KZBM and 34 other Zarathushti associations in Pakistan.

*MCC Teeam with Parsi cricketeers in 1926. Parsis in picture are Dinshaw Mobed, Maneck Dastur, Manchi Mobed, Nadir Dinshaw, Lovji Wania and Byram Minwalla.*





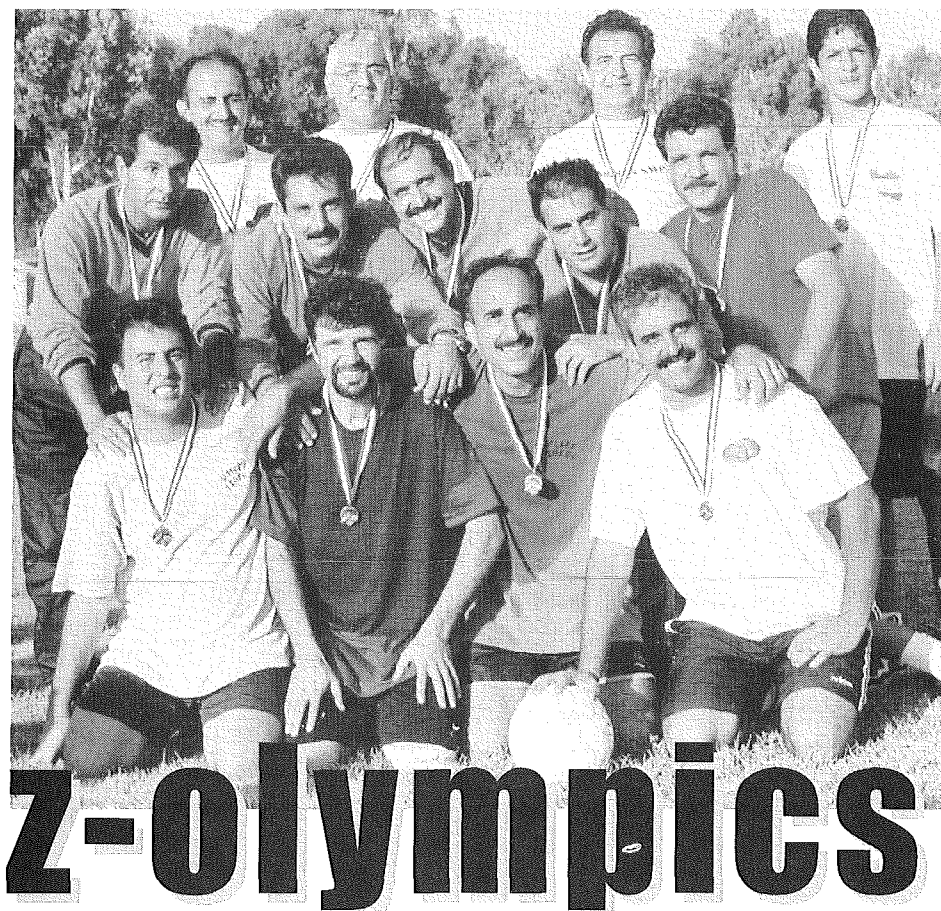


*Clockwise from left, 5th Games, CalState Dominguez Hills campus, 1994; 3rd Games, San Jose darbe mehr, 1990; 1st Games, Taft High School, Los Angeles, 1988; 4th Games, CalState Long Beach campus, 1992; soccer players at tournament in Irvine, CA, in 1998.*

**The First Z-games** were held on July 4th 1988 at Taft high school in Los Angeles. About 35 - 45 persons, participated, mostly from California and one from Iran. Events were only basketball and ping-pong. There were 3-4 basketball teams (San Jose, LA, Orange County and Valley). Games were officiated by Zarathushti volunteers and held on outdoor courts. Registration fees were only \$5-10. The table tennis event was held at a vacant house that was going to be turned into an apartment complex later that summer. This house sponsorship was offered by the late Cyrus Namiri who supported the Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) from the very first event. Volleyball and Track had not yet been added to the Games.

**The Second Z-games** were held on July 4th, 1989 at Uni-High in west Los Angeles. We had an event the following year and track was added to the venue. Participants were mostly from Northern and Southern California. We had the same number of participants as the first Games.





World Zarathushti Games and Unity Cup Soccer events are organized periodically by FEZANA's Zoroastrian Sports Committee



**The Third Z-Games** were held on July 4th, 1990 at dar-e mehr in San Jose, California. This was the first event that offered housing and meals (at a minimal cost at dar-e mehr) to the participants. It was also the first event that the basketball games had official referees for the semi-final and the final games. There were about 60 participants.

**The Fourth Z-games** were held on July 4th 1992 at the Cal State Long Beach campus, in California. The word had spread about the Z-games and we had more and more requests from participants eager to attend. This was the first event that was held in a campus environment (with an indoor gymnasium) and offered housing, meals and games to participants. It was also during these games that children's track event as well as other fun activities were offered. Volleyball was also added to the events during this period. About 90 - 110 persons participated. It was also during this time that ZSC introduced social activities during the games,

including a disco night and a cruise night. Registration fees were about \$45 for the Games only and \$110 with accommodation.

**The Fifth Z-games** were held on July 4th 1994 at the Cal State Dominguez Hills campus in California. We had participants from India, Iran, Pakistan, Canada, Florida, Texas, Kansas and California at these Games. This was the first time we had so many participants from different parts of the USA and abroad attending. We had about 120-150 participants. This time, we also had the volleyball and basketball games officiated by outside referees. ZSC held a disco night on campus and a banquet event at a hotel in Los Angeles. Registration fees were about \$55 for the Games only and \$120 with accommodation.

**The Sixth Games** were held, July 1-4, 1999, at Cal State campus, in Los Angeles. Children's track events gained more popularity and they started showing much interest in having official basketball games for kids which was implemented during these Games.

**The Seventh Games** were held in conjunction with the Seventh World Zoroastrian Congress, at the Klein School campus, in Houston, Texas. Over 400 Zarathushti sports enthusiasts flocked to these Games. Registration for the Games started at \$25 for individuals, and \$75 for families.

**The Eighth Games** were held July 3-7th, 2002, at the Cal State Northridge campus, in California. Registration started at \$199 for the full package including 4-days accommodation and meals; and \$50 for the Games only.

The Zoroastrian Sports Committee (ZSC) established in 1988, is the official Sports Committee of FEZANA. Contact [zsc@fezana.org](mailto:zsc@fezana.org), website: [www.fezana.org/zsc.htm](http://www.fezana.org/zsc.htm).

[By Roshan Rivetna, based on materials sent by Ava Parsi]



**By Porus P. Cooper**  
**Cherry Hill, New Jersey**

*[This article blends excerpts from the foreword to a brochure marking the Ninth Asian Games, held in New Delhi in 1982 with information from the book, "With Cyclists Round the World" by Adi B. Hakim, Jal P. Bapasola and Rustom J. Bhungara, and a recent account of the adventure by Eryad Marzban Hathiram, grand nephew of Gustad D. Hathiram.]*

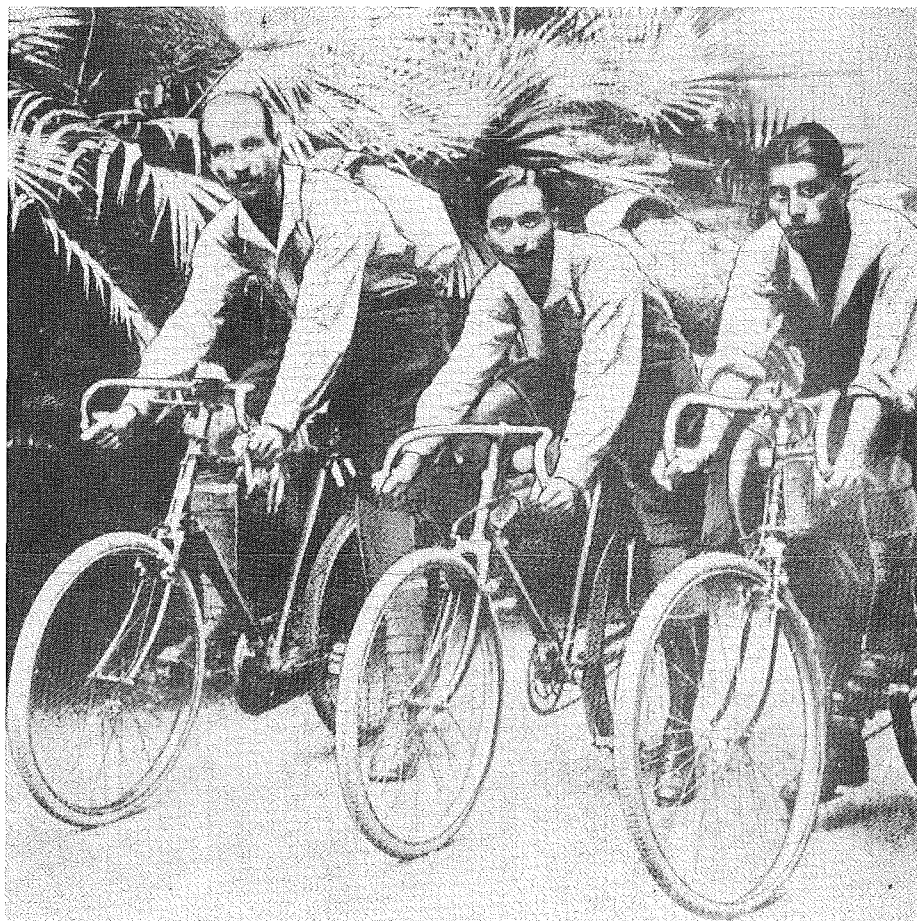
In India, they described it as "a great feat of endurance." In Iran, the young men were told, "You have upheld the glorious tradition of your illustrious ancestors." And in the Mesopotamia of those days, they said: "You Indian boys were very brave and very courageous."

These were among the encomiums heaped on six young men from Bombay who set off to bicycle around the globe. Three of them completed the journey; two turned back at different points; one decided to go no farther than America.

**A feat of endurance.** The saga began at dawn on Oct. 15, 1923, at the Bombay Weightlifting Club as the six – Jal P. Bapasola, Rustom Bhungara, Adi Hakim, Gustad D. Hathiram, Nariman B. Kapadia and Keki D. Pochkhanawalla – set off to a cacophony of a brass band and fire crackers.

Kapadia decided Tehran was as far as he wanted to go; he turned back to return to his fiancé. Then Hathiram, Pochkhanawalla and Hakim proceeded to Europe, while Bapasola and Bhungara went on to Jerusalem. The five would meet up again in New York, but here Hathiram announced that he was going to stay and rejected entreaties from the others to change his mind. Heartbroken, Hathiram's closest friend, Pochkhanawalla, decided to return home by steamer.

Bapasola, Bhungara and Hakim pressed on.



*Top, Around-the-world cyclists Jal Bapasola, Rustom Bhungara and Adi Hakim; below, Gustad Hathiram, Keki Pochkhanawalla and Adi Hakim.*



# endurance

## A bicycle journey around the globe in the 1920s electrified a nation

Over four years and five months, they would travel 44,000 miles, at times in searing heat, at times in Alpine blasts, some days without food, at times with scant water. Sometimes they traversed pirate-infested territories, at times they had to cross swamplands. They had to stare death in the face more than once.

They survived by their wits, earning their way sometimes by entertaining groups with feats of strength and agility. They were body builders, after all.

They recorded many 'firsts' as they pedaled around the globe. They were the first world cyclists to cross the deserts of Iran, Mesopotamia, Syria and the Sinai. They were the first to cross Korea, then known as the Hermit Kingdom, a place usually sealed to outsiders. While the going was slow for the most part, they set a speed record by going 171 miles in 16 hours on one occasion. They scaled the Alps and Rockies and pedaled through a war zone in China.

Bapasola, Bhungara and Hakim would go on to write a book about their adventures. The story so impressed Jawaharlal Nehru, who would go on to make history himself by becoming independent India's first prime minister, that he wrote the foreword to the book:

"I envy the young men who have made this book. I too have some of the red blood which seeks adventure, something of the wanderlust that ever drives one forward. But fate and circumstances have prevented me from satisfying it in the ordinary way. I seek adventure in other ways and I envy those who, like our young friends, have girdled the globe and

tasted of adventure to the full. I hope other young men will read this brave record and that it will fire their imagination and make them do great deeds."

**Search for Hathiram.** Not around to share in the festivities at the end of the adventure was Hathiram. His family was grief stricken that he did not return home, according to his grand nephew, Ervad Marzban Hathiram:

"My grandfather, Dinshawji Hathiram, the older brother of Gustad, was inconsolable. In 1930, he received a letter asking for some sudreh (the sacred shirt worn by Zarathushtis) and a prayer book. In the letter, Gustad firmly asked that he did not want to be contacted again. My grandfather complied, and that was the last we heard of Gustad Hathiram.

"A month ago, while surfing the Internet, I reached the genealogy site Ancestry.com and spotted this tantalizing offer: 'Search for your missing ancestors.' Half-heartedly I typed in 'Gustad Hathiram' and a few seconds later found myself staring at a screen that read: 'One death record found.' This revealed that Gustad Hathiram had died in the sunny town of St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1973. My joy at finding my grand uncle was tempered with sadness at the circumstances. His death certificate told us he had worked as an auto mechanic and that he had never married.

"Why didn't he contact us all these years? What were his final thoughts? These and a myriad other questions will always haunt me." [Er. Marzban invites families of other cyclists on the voyage to contact him at [marzban@cdrindia.com](mailto:marzban@cdrindia.com).]

[Below is an excerpt from the book, "With Cyclists Round the World", by Adi B. Hakim, Jal P. Bapasola and Rustom J. Bhungara. The cyclists are journeying through Iran and are about to set off from Yazd.]

Our stay at Yazd was prolonged for various reasons. We were running short of funds. We decided to convert into cash the physical training we had received at Bombay. With the assistance of some of our hosts, a performance was organized.

Physical feats, such as bar bending, stone-breaking on chest, fencing, boxing and jiu-jitsu featured in the programme. The notables of Yazd – the governor, the British vice consul, the superintendent of police – and a huge crowd of 5,000 persons witnessed the show. People of Yazd do not often come across free entertainments of this character, and so, we have no doubt they enjoyed it well, especially as it was paid for by others.

On a fine Sunday morning, a large crowd of Persians, mainly of ladies, bade us farewell. The ladies, as usual, took great interest and each of us had to submit himself to a little ceremony, which we were told was a sort of insurance against ill-luck throughout the journey. The homemade insurance consisted of the ladies making circular passes over our heads, with an egg in hand. This was then smashed close to our feet. Amidst tender mutual good wishes we left Yazd, on the 30th of March, a few of our friends riding with us.

The track was bad, and so by the time the sun went down, barely a dozen miles were covered. The roads grew worse the next day, as in addition to fine sand, we now began to come across stones. To add to our trials, it began hailing. There was scarcely a place to shelter ourselves in. Blinded by the hail, struggling and falling, we arrived at Aliabad at 7 in the evening. Alas, the homemade insurance did not avail us against the fury of the elements.

We rested at a *manzilgah*, or traveler's bungalow. The little village is situated at the foot of a mountain shrouded with snow. The day's journey through the hail storm necessitated rest for another day. The exhaustion was too much to permit further progress. Again that night there was a snow storm. The whole village was wrapped in a shroud of snow. Next day, the sun shone in gay splendor and we left. Except for pools of water we came across now and then, there was little to indicate that a snow storm had spent its fury the night before in the region.

But the track was bad; and soon it became worse. We walked miles after miles, riding our machines wherever we could. The strain of cycling over rough roads was too much. The free-wheel of one of our cycles gave way twice. We journeyed on; once again our stock of food gave way; the sun was shining brightly, in fact it was very hot; the contents of the last flask of water disappeared rapidly with the heat of the sun and on account of the fatigue of the journey. The prospects of our journey were not very encouraging when what we feared most happened.

A terrible head wind, as if in conspiracy with other circumstances, began blowing when least wanted. Its velocity increased with the lapse of time and fine sands bombarded our faces till we were black and blue. It was the worst wind that we had ever experienced. At times we could not

even stand against it. We toiled for five long, weary miles through blinding sands, tired, hungry and thirsty. What a relief it was to us when we came across a pool of rain water which had collected in a nook amidst stones. It was saline water and yet to us, how sweet, how precious!

Next day brought little change in the condition of our travel. Village after village was passed. At Dehbid, we had to select one of three routes to Gadirabad. The one best suited for cars measures 30 miles; the one we selected was 24 miles. The mule track is shortest, measuring 21 miles, but is good for mules only. At Gadirabad, we lodged with an opium smoker and had to make the best of the bad company.

In the course of the next day of our journey, we felt interested in several ruins that we saw en route. The tomb of Cyrus spoke, as if of fallen idol; Zindan-e-Sulleman and Takht-e-Cyrus proved equally interesting. Huge columns of stone attracted our attention.

They bore silent testimony to the transient nature of all sublunary things, to the brilliant grandeur of Persian civilization that once was old Iran. These monuments of departed greatness stood now in the desert, with none to look on them, save tourists like us who would pause for a moment and contemplate on the havoc Time had played with the glory of an ancient civilization and of a great nation.



**Hilla P. Guzder**, author of several articles in this issue of *FEZANA Journal*, is a senior writer for *Parsiana* magazine, which is published from Mumbai. Over the years, she has chronicled the athletic feats of numerous Zarathushtis, from cricketers to yachtsmen, and profiled them with sensitivity. Born in Mumbai, Guzder graduated from Elphinstone College in 1967, topping the university in political science and history. She also is a gold medalist from the Rajendra Prasad College of Mass Communications and Media.



**Cricket teams** of Parsi ladies and gentlemen. "The modern Parsis of India have made Cricket, the national game of their esteemed (British) Rulers, their own. But it appears from the *Shah Nameh*, that a game of ball-bat (**Chougan-gui**) though not like that of Cricket, was known to their ancestors, the ancient Persians. 'Chougan' means a 'bat' and 'Gui' means a 'ball'. The game was played on foot as well as on horseback." [PHOTO AND CAPTION FROM "THE PARSIS" BY Mlle. DELPHINE MENANT, TR. M. M. MURZBAN, 1917].



# a special olympian

On his way to three medals, cyclist Jehangir Ghandy had to overcome a birth handicap – and some hurdles put in his path.

**By Hilla P. Guzder  
Mumbai, India**

The road to the USA as a member of the 1999 Indian Special Olympics contingent was long and hard for 20-year-old bicyclist Jehangir Ghandy. He had to qualify first at the state level, something he had unsuccessfully tried four years before. In addition he had to contend with lack of training facilities in his hometown Mumbai and the famed Indian bureaucracy.

He overcame it all to come home with three medals – one gold, one silver and one bronze.

Ghandy, a student of the S.P.J. Sadhana School for the developmentally handicapped, had started cycling eight years earlier, encouraged by his parents Sarosh and Silla.

"There are hardly any facilities for a cyclist to train in Bombay, so we sent Jehangir for two months to Jamshedpur," Silla Ghandy said. "He built up speed and stamina on the roller (stationary cycle) and practiced on the

quiet roads of the Tata Iron and Steel Company's residential complex and the undulating test track there" under the care of coaches, she added.

Unlike four years before, Ghandy made the cut and was called to attend a training camp in Hyderabad and then another camp in Bangalore, where competitors with the best timings were selected for the trip to Raleigh, NC. The final hurdles in his way were simply described by his mother as "cruel and insensitive" bureaucracy.

In Raleigh, June 25 to July 4, 1999, Ghandy was one of 7,000 special athletes from 150 countries. Right at the opening ceremonies, there was a thrilling announcement: the names of all of the athletes from around the world would be put on a compact disc and carried into space to be kept on the international space station, *Mir*.

"We had sent him with a non-g geared cycle, but since other competitors were riding geared cycles, Silla managed to procure one for him too. Fortunately, he had ridden a geared cycle

earlier, so he was familiar with it," Sarosh Ghandy said.

Jehangir Ghandy went on to win a gold for the 10-kilometer race, a silver for the 5-kilometer and a bronze for the open road race.

The youngest of five children, Jehangir stands 6-foot-4. He is "good-looking enough to be a model," said Radhika Khanna, vice principal and art teacher at the Sadhana School, where at the time of his Olympic feats he was taking a vocational course in handicrafts such as drawing and stencil painting.

Recreation includes swimming in summer and playing golf. "Jehangir has very good hand-eye coordination and has learned to play golf practically on his own," Sarosh said.

The parents themselves have the hearts of champions, according to Khanna: "They tried very hard to secure donations for the other students to meet their expenses," she said. "Not all parents are like that."

*[Courtesy of Parsiana magazine]*



**By Adil J. Govadia**  
**Bangalore, India**

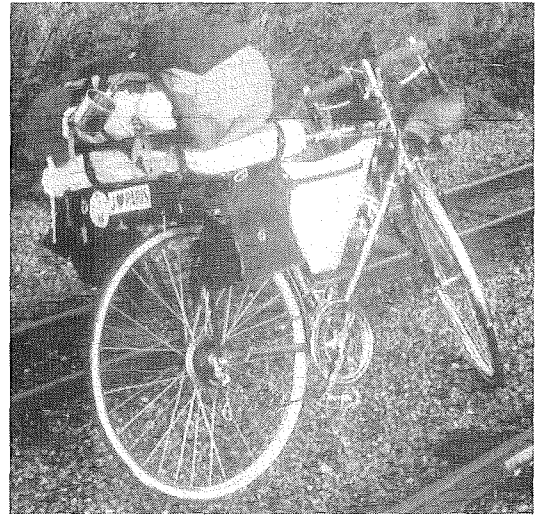
**T**he Olympics were my obsession. In 1978 I got the notion to go to the 1980 Moscow games – on a motorcycle. I did not get a visa. But I continued to have this dream: I would travel around the world, visit exotic places, meet people and ‘participate’ in the Olympics. In 1980, I decided to visit the Los Angeles games – on a bicycle. I would fly or take public transportation, where necessary.

I was not seeking glory or trying to break records. I simply wanted to live my dream. As I prepared, my mind conjured up a kaleidoscope of scenarios: I was crossing the desert, ascending the Alps. But first, I had to gain the government’s permission to leave India. My shoestring budget and flimsy mode of transport raised eyebrows. Help was solicited from many a dignitary. There also were wars all along my route – from Afghanistan to Lebanon – to contend with.

Still, one day, in December 1982, I finally left home in Nagpur, armed with my dear parents’ good wishes, the grand sum of Rs. 200 and a 10-speed Japanese bicycle I named ‘Flying Pigeon’.

I carried a lightweight tent, some extra clothes, a sleeping bag, medicines, tools and spares, a camera, and introductory letters. I also carried a small frying pan, plastic plate, spoon, salt and pepper, tea bags, sugar, gas lighter, water bottle and a Swiss army knife. It was the bare minimum, but Flying Pigeon looked overloaded.

It took me a year and a half to cross the Middle East, Europe and the United States to reach Los Angeles. A cheap People’s Express flight, paid for from odd jobs I did along the way, had brought me across the Atlantic. When I reached the Olympic village, my body was lighter by 11 kg and I had traveled through 47 countries,



# an olympian obsession

## A restless spirit propels bicyclist Adil Govadia from India to '84 Los Angeles Games

logging 20,000 kilometers through rain, heat and snow.

I received honors along the way. In Austria, I got a trophy for being the ‘most distinguished tourist’ of the year. The mayor of Philadelphia invited me to his office for tea and cake. The mayor of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein, invited me to hold the Olympic torch.

I cycled about 100 km a day, though some days I could not clock even 24 km. Strong headwinds and poor roads were irksome. I had several accidents and Flying Pigeon was scarred all over. Often I had to go without food for days while I searched for a temporary job.

At a hotel in Athens, I peeled boiled eggs by the hundred by night and promoted hotel sales to tourists by day. For that I got 80 drachmas per day (approximately \$1) plus free stay on

the hotel terrace! In Frankfurt, I lifted crates at a supermarket. In Paris I cleaned toilets, washed cars, and bathed dogs at an animal boutique.

On July 28, 1984, I made it to the opening day of the 23rd Olympiad. As the Olympic flames burst into life high over the Coliseum, I thanked God for making my dream come true. An Indian sports official helped me see events for free. My biggest regret is that my father passed away while I was still cycling somewhere on the West Coast of the United States. ■

**Adil Govadia**, now living in Bangalore with his wife and two sons, has worked in sales and marketing for 25 years, including for a time as a marketing consultant and sales trainer. For two years in the late 1990s, he was posted in the United States.

# Remarkable feat

At 1985 Indian National Games, cyclist Jasmin Arethna was unbeatable.

By Niloofer J. Madon  
Mumbai, India

**O**ne week before the Indian National Games of November 1985, cyclist Jasmin Arethna was not sure she could take part at all. She was seriously ill.

She not only participated, but also went on to win every event in which she raced, winning four gold medals and breaking two national records. If that was a surprise to her and those around her, a bigger one awaited at the end of the games in New Delhi: She was named the games' "Outstanding Sportswoman."

"I was too stunned to speak, I was really shocked," Jasmin, then 18, recalled in an interview later. No one in her family had expected her to win that overall honor, she recalled, and her mother and uncle who had accompanied her from Mumbai to New Delhi had returned before the closing ceremony. Phone calls flew all over, including to her father, Rohinton Arethna, an in-flight supervisor for Air India, who was in London at that time.

The national recognition only validated Jasmin's and her whole family's longstanding passion for bicycling. An uncle, Yezdi, introduced the sport first to Jasmin's older sister, Armin, who went on to become a national champion and won a silver medal at the 1982 Asian

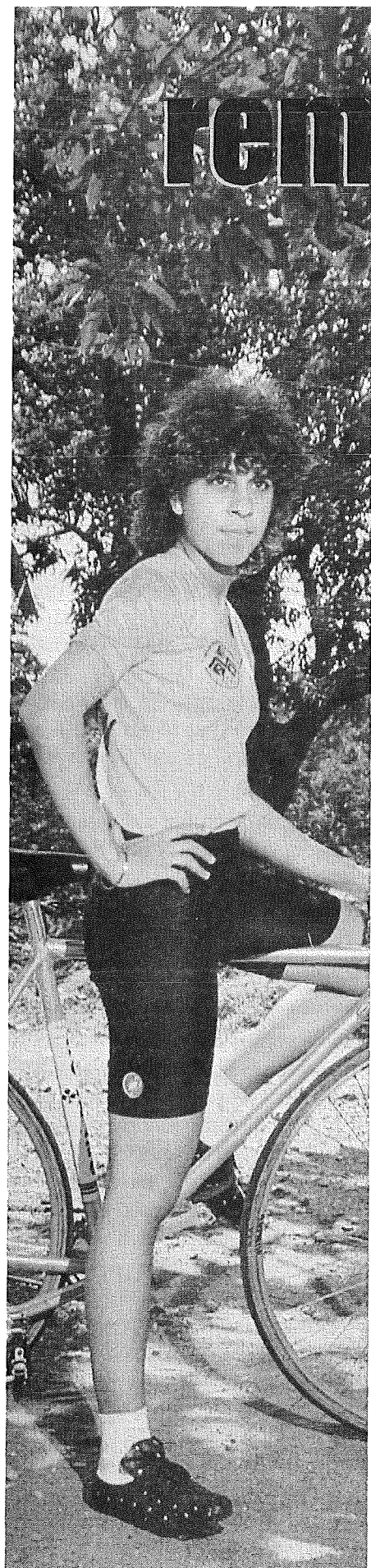
Cycling Championships in Bangkok before retiring from competition. Jasmin took up the sport seriously at the age of 13. Dad Rohinton encouraged, coached and brought home equipment from abroad.

In the early days of Jasmin's training, the whole family practiced together mornings at the Vallabhai Patel Stadium at Mumbai's Worli sea-front, or along highways. But the family camaraderie would soon be replaced by grueling training camps organized by the Cycling Federation of India. The trainees would be up before 6 and in bed by 9:30. The camp facilities were spartan. Eight toilets to be shared among 50 athletes and no hot water for baths.

Jasmin's winning ways began with her very first year of competition, in 1981. She won five gold, two silver and one bronze medal at the Junior Nationals in Hissar, Haryana state. Later that year, she won two more gold medals at the sub-junior nationals in Trivandrum, Kerala.

In 1982-83, she stopped training and competing to focus on her upcoming Secondary School Certificate examinations. After her triumph at the 1985 National Games, she went on to win two bronze medals at the Twelfth Asian Games at Seoul, South Korea. ■

*[Courtesy of Parsiana]*





Navaz Bhathena, India's leading lady driver.

# formula for success

Sarosh Hataria has his eyes set on Formula 1 racing

By Hilla P. Guzder

**W**hen he claimed the JK Tyre National Racing Championship in the Formula Maruti Class in December 2001, Sarosh Hataria, then 22, took a big first step in trying to fulfill a life-long dream to one day be a world class Formula 1 race car driver.

Hataria took to the track in July 2000, entering the only Formula event in India, the JK Tyre National Racing Championship near Sriperumbudur, outside Madras, the only such track in India. With the financial

totally humiliated. Then there is so much of speed, danger. Somewhere along the way the families have objected and that's why women have stayed away because it's dangerous. It's like, 'Why do you have to go and smash your face or scar yourselves?'" Navaz attributes her own entry into the sport to the influence of her family. "I myself was not that interested in racing, but accompanying my brother and later participating in various rallies and events, the excitement got within me," Navaz said. "Maybe in a sense it was easier for me to join in since my whole family is into racing. Any other woman without this kind of support system would not have survived." ■

# motor sports

Navaz Bhathena, India's first lady of auto racing and rallying

By Porus P. Cooper

**T**he Bhathenas of Mumbai have been called the first family of motor sports in India. The family's fascination with making four wheels go fast began in the late 1960s with Darayus Bhathena and his wife Katie. Then each of their three children took up the cause – Farad, Navaz and Zoru.

Whether racing or rallying, each helped to set the standard for a sport which has come a long way in India since the older Bhathenas started racing decades ago, but in many ways is still nascent. While the rewards have improved over the years and at least one Indian publication is dedicated now to the world of automobiles, the sport is still looking for more substantial sponsors, public recognition and prize money.

The focus these days is mainly on Navaz, whose name generally appears in Indian publications with the description, "India's leading lady driver." She has raced, rallied, officiated events and evaluated cars.

In a published interview Navaz recalled that when her parents began racing, "it was more like a hobby."

Races were usually held in a disused airport at an old army base in Pune, near Mumbai, said Katie. Car rallies – in which points are lost for arriving too early or too late and the emphasis is not on sheer speed – were in the early days restricted to Mumbai, Madras and Bangalore. Now virtually every state has a car rally.

And there were few women. Back then, Katie said, the women whom one might encounter on the racing tracks most likely were Zarathushtis because the community tended not to discourage women from fields that society traditionally presumed to be manly pursuits.

"I think women are more headstrong and dominating in our community," Navaz added. "It's what we are inherently. It's in the nature that you just go ahead and do what you want to and nobody stopped you ... fortunately!"

There still are very few women in the sport, the world over, she said. "Women who do get into the sport are very, very good. I don't think you would survive if you weren't that good, the men wouldn't let you. The moment you don't perform, they make it so difficult for you that you are



and moral support of his parents, Per-ooze and Uma and grandparents Soli and Dhinoo Hataria, he placed second overall on this, his very first, try.

"So I decided to give myself one more year of racing the Formula Marutis. Lap after lap, race after race, the challenge of pure precision driving saw me making mistakes and learning, honing my skills to perfection," said Hataria, who in 2002 was in the final year of doing his BA in History at Loyola College in Madras.



With a series of good drives in earlier rounds, Hataria revved up for the final round on Dec. 9, 2001, at the top of the pack,

with 63 points, an 11-point lead over his nearest rival.

"Every single driver was trying his utmost and since tires, engines and gearboxes are controlled, it was really down to the driver's skill," noted the magazine *Auto Motor and Sport*. In the 10-lap race, Hataria took the early lead, but another driver stayed close behind for several laps, before forging ahead at a hairpin bend on lap four. Hataria, however, flashed past the checkered flag a bare four-tenths of a second behind, good enough time overall to take the championship.

"Only after it was all over did one come to know that Sarosh had put the pain of a hairline fracture in his foot behind him all weekend long and raced nevertheless – exactly the stuff champions are made of," said *Over-drive* magazine.

"I want to step up the motor sport ladder and emulate the likes of Narain Karthikeyan," Hataria said after the race, referring to the Indian Formula 1 racer. Motor sport is an expensive undertaking and Hataria, like other racers, seeks sponsors. He can be reached at sarosh\_hataria@hotmail.com.



Rehan Poncha [far right] receiving a trophy from Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee [second from left].

# swimming phenom

## Rehan Poncha is India's 2002 Male Athlete of the Year

By Hilla P. Guzder

The National Games in Hyderabad, India, in December 2002 turned out to be a celebration of 16-year-old swimming phenomenon Rehan Poncha. He was named the Male Athlete of the Games after hauling in three golds, three silvers and a bronze in individual events and two more golds and a silver in relay events in the pool.

How remarkable was Poncha's feat? The Bangalore junior college student was one of 7,000 competitors from all over India participating in 32 sports. Add the other odds that sportspeople in India have to overcome, from a paucity of facilities and training to bureaucratic hurdles, and Poncha's achievement demanded notice.

The 'best athlete' title goes to the best performing sportsperson of the Games on the basis of points earned in his or her respective sport.

Poncha was sub-junior and junior national champion in 1999, 2001 and 2002, the senior state champion in the state of Karnataka in the same years, and the youngest swimmer (at age 13) to win a medal at the senior national level. He has participated in the Asian Age Group Swimming championships, winning a silver and a bronze in the 15-17 age bracket in Zhuhai, China, in 2002 and a gold in Hong Kong in 2001.

He was one of only two male swimmers selected to represent India (along with two girls) at the Asian Games in Busan in Korea in 2002. Though he did not win, he succeeded in bettering the Indian record in one event. He was also the lone Indian swimmer at the VI FINA World Swimming Championships in Moscow in 2002.

From March 2003, he is scheduled to train in Australia on a Sports Authority of India scholarship.

[Hilla P. Guzder is profiled on p. 54]

# creating sailing history

Byram and Goshpi Avari put Pakistan on the world sailing map, and son Xerxes continues the family's aquatic tradition

By Farishta Murzban Dinshaw



In 1978, at the 8th Asian Games in Bangkok, history was created for Pakistan when Byram Avari and Munir Sadiq took part in the Enterprise class yachting event for the first time, and added to this distinction by bringing home the gold.

In 1981, Byram Avari participated in many international sailing events, coming in second in the US Open and the World Championship events.

In the New Delhi Asian Games in 1982, Avari teamed up with his wife Goshpi to represent Pakistan in the Enterprise race. The sailing competition was held in the coastal city of Mumbai instead of the landlocked capital, and the Avaris won the gold

medal defeating an Indian pair (coincidentally also Zarathushti), *Jeejee Unwalla* and *Fali Unwalla*.

The couple went on to receive many national honors including having their portrait printed on a postage stamp. Byram Avari is a well-known international hotelier in addition to running several other businesses. Two decades after winning the sailing gold, Goshpi Avari is still the only woman to have won any medal

for Pakistan at a multi-national sporting event. Other female athletes have won a number of medals, but only

in competitions restricted to women.

Goshpi is also the President of the Pakistan Scrabble Association. Their son Xerxes is continuing the family sailing tradition and won the bronze for Pakistan at the Qatar International Regatta with his partner Kamil Aziz Khan. He also represented Pakistan in the 470 Olympic Class at the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea. [Farishta Dinshaw's profile is on page 72].

PHOTO: PARSIANA, JANUARY 1983

# best of breed

The Poonawallas – breeding thoroughbreds in racing and in business

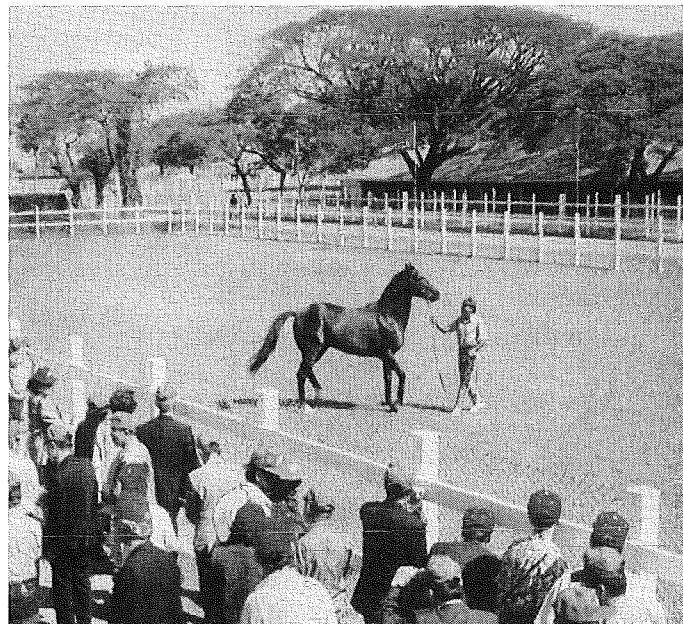


PHOTO: PARSIANA, AUGUST 2002.

*Paddock at the Poonawalla stud farm in Pune*

By Hilla P. Guzder

**T**heir thoroughbreds ride the wind to win prestigious races all over India, their champions have streaked past the winning post in Hong Kong and Malaysia. Their annual Poonawalla Breeders Multi-Million race, now more than a dozen years old, is an elegant see-and-be-seen event, attracting both diehard race-goers and families flaunting fashion.

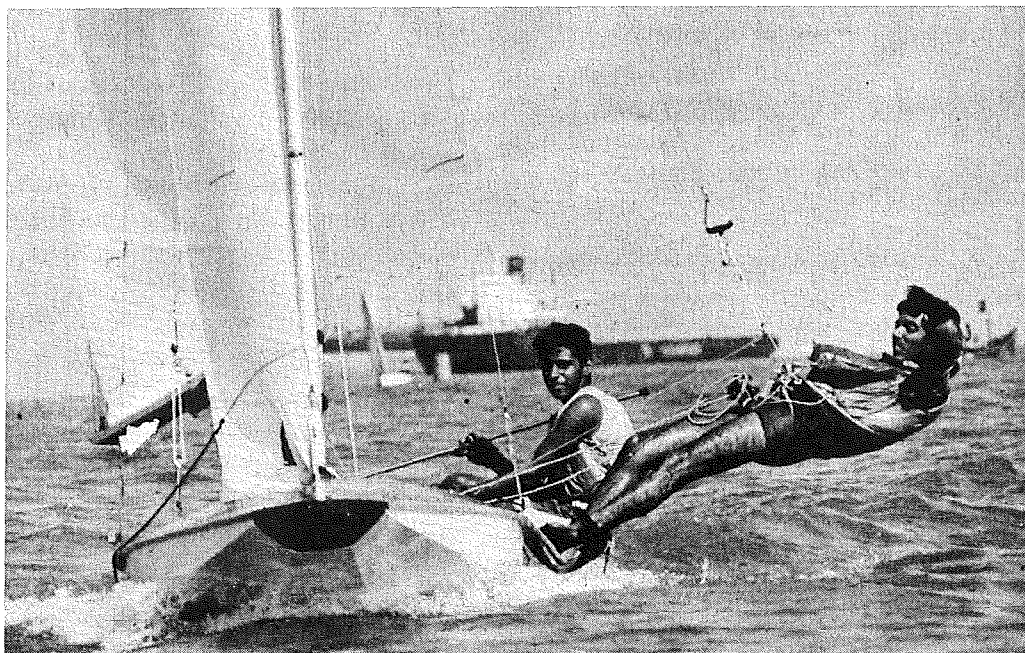
But behind the flamboyance, hats and cigars of Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla

and the winning smiles of his brother Zavaray lie shrewd business brains and long years of hard work. For their passion for horse breeding and racing is sustained by the business acumen that has made their Serum Institute of India Ltd. India's largest exporter of vaccines and immuno-biologicals.

"My career has been basically concentrated on two activities which run parallel – my quest for being number one in horse breeding and control of racing administration in India, and on the

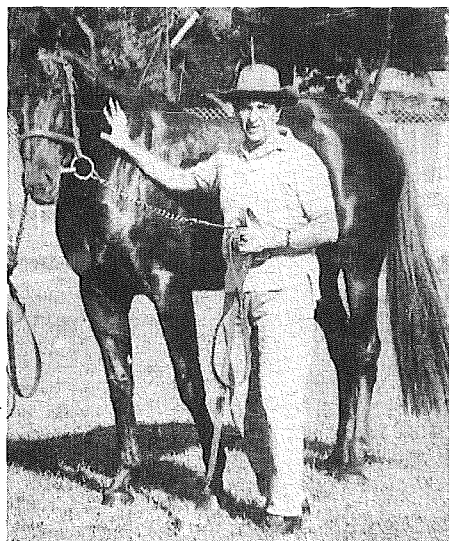
other side my professional career in the development of immuno-biologicals in the Serum Institute," said Cyrus Poonawalla. He credits his wife, Villoo, with pushing him to persevere when in the early years his breeding enterprise was not blossoming.

He has won several awards, including the Leading Breeders Award and has been chairman of the Royal Western India Turf Club as well as of the apex body, the Turf Authorities of India. He has represented India at several international racing conferences.



**Sailing champions.** *Farokh Tarapore [left], often referred to as the Indian sailing wizard, and Zarir Karanjia, won the gold medal in the 'Fireball' class, at the IX Asian Games, 1982. Yachtsmen and sailors from 13 countries competed in events held in Bombay. This was India's first gold medal in the 'Fireball' class, which is the fastest boat in the Asiad fleet. [From "At the Helm" by Hutokshi Doctor, Parsiana January 1983].* ■





*Cyrus Poonawala, at Stud Farm*

Zavaray Poonawalla calls the stud farm his life. "Yes, we keep our horses out in the open all year round," he says as he drives past thoroughbreds out in the open in the searing summer heat of Pune. "We believe in making them tough and wiry right from the beginning, thus better able to withstand the rigors of the race," he explains.

A groom leads out onto the green two champions, Exhilaration, named horse of the year for 1988-89, and Astonish, whose surprising 1994 debut win at the Sha Tin Racecourse in Hong Kong astonished that city's punters. The bay colt had many wins in India before he became the first Indian-bred thoroughbred to be exported.

"That was my proudest moment," Zavaray said alluding to Astonish's historic win.

The Poonawallas have since exported horses to Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and the United States. Among their successes abroad have been Adler, a Vijay Mallya-owned and Rashid Byramji-trained thoroughbred who won in the United States; Placerville, who won at Royal Ascot; Diffident, who won at Abu Dhabi, and Smart Chieftain, who became the highest stakes earner in India, with a phenomenal Rs. 17 million, before he was exported to Singapore.

# a boy and his mountains

## How a passion for climbing was born on the plains of Kenya

**By Aaron Y. Rustom**  
Atlanta, Georgia

**O**n May 29, 1953, just 10 days from his 12th birthday, a Zarathushti boy on the plains of Kenya heard news of the conquest of Mount Everest. Two men stood atop the world at 29,028 feet above sea level – Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide Tenzing Norgay.

Young Yezdi Minocher Rustomji was inspired. Four years later, encouraged by his father, he would attend the Outward Bound Mountain School of Kenya. His first test was Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, in August of 1957.

Yezdi and his schoolmates would ascend Kilimanjaro and scale its highest point, then called Point Kaiser Wilhelm Spitz, but since independence, Uhuru (Freedom) Peak. At age 16, he stood tall, 19,340 feet

above the earth below. That feeling would resonate within him for years to come.

The year following the climb of Kilimanjaro was spent training for an attempt on Mount Kenya. At 17,058 feet, it is the second highest point in Africa, but it is a much more difficult climb.

But when the young men approached the Mountain Club of Kenya for help with equipment, maps and the use of the club's shelters on the mountain, they were turned away. Colonialism reigned in Kenya. "Young man, climbing is a white man's sport," one club member said.

Undaunted, the young men pooled what resources they had and with the weight of 75 pounds of equipment on each of their backs, set off to ascend Mount Kenya. On their first attempt, a team of two boys, including Yezdi, made it from the lip of the Lewis glacier to Point Lenanna, at 16,000 feet.

Upon returning to Nairobi, the local paper got hold of their story. Some called the boys irresponsible. Others rallied around them as heroes.

Yezdi and the others would attempt to scale Mount Kenya two more times. The second time they would reach Point Piggott at 16,295 feet.

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The Poonawallas trace the beginnings of their business and passion to the ancestral firm of Adurjee and Brothers, set up in 1896. It was their father, Soli, a dealer in real estate and furniture, who set up the stud farm in the mid-1940s because of his love of horses. At that time, bloodstock breeding was in its infancy in India.

*[Hilla P. Guzder is profiled on p. 54]*



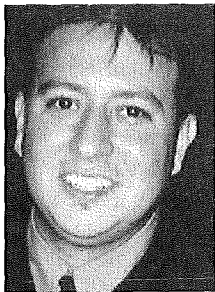
*Yezdi Rustomji with his teacher Tenzing Norgay in the Kangchenjunga Himal region, of the Himalaya mountain range.*

The third time, in 1959, they were turned back by illness.

Shortly after the third attempt on Mount Kenya, Yezdi left for Darjeeling, India, to attend the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute. Yezdi would spend some three months in the Kanchenjunga Himal range with one of the best and toughest climbers in the world, his teacher Tenzing Norgay. Beckoning Yezdi's attention was the Kabru Dome at 21,000 feet. The dome would be a stern final exam of his technical skills and endurance. After traversing crevasses, negotiating glaciers, and pitches that included ice climbing – all in subfreezing temperature – Yezdi conquered Kabru Dome, reaching higher than he ever had or would.

In 1990, he returned to Mount Kenya, this time with me, his son. We would not scale the mountain, as I succumbed to mountain sickness. But as we climbed toward Point Lenanna, my father's decades of struggle and triumph somehow transferred themselves to my memory. I saw the boy in my father and found the man in me. ■

**Aaron Rustom** is an associate producer at CNN-Headline News in Atlanta, Georgia. He is originally from Houston, Texas, where he was heavily involved with the Zoroastrian Youth Group.



# climb to the top

## The ultimate individual thrill in a team sport

**By Zerkis Boga**  
Collegeville, Pennsylvania

I took up mountaineering at the age of 17. What attracted me to the sport was the prospect of uncovering a challenging climb, planning the route and strategy, and then overcoming obstacles. My earliest recollection of a climb was with the Scouts. We had to overcome a rock wall to get to our objective. I graduated to climbing in the Himalayas.

One of my partners was Harish Kapadia, who is now a top-notch organizer of climbers in India and editor of the respected "Himalayan Journal." Mountaineering is a team sport, and our bonds were strengthened by the many occasions when we had to rely on each other, when our lives depended on each other.

One of our most memorable climbs was to Chering We in 1979. This was then a virgin peak of over 21,000 feet in the Kumaon Himalayas on India's border with Tibet. We were a team of eight to 10 climbers with an average of eight to nine years of experience. There were three Sherpas and 50 to



*When the One Great Scorer  
Comes to mark against your name,  
He writes, not that you won or lost,  
But how you played the game.*

- Grantland Rice, 1930



*A young Zerkis Boga at a wayside rest stop and camp during a climb.*

60 porters. Kapadia led the expedition; I was the lead climber.

As Kapadia puts it in his book, *High Himalaya, Unknown Valleys*, "Chiring We is a shy mountain." Rightly so, because it presents tough tests of crevasses, strong Tibetan winds, sharp ridges and giant cornices. It was 4 in the morning as my team set off for Chiring We's summit. I will let Kapadia describe the rest:

"Boga, Lakhpa, Nayan and Kami left ... heavily loaded with fixed ropes

and a variety of pitons. ... Later, Boga vividly described the pleasure of a full moon setting on Nanda Devi, saying it was so satisfying that he wouldn't have thought twice if they had to turn back at that moment. But hard work remained. Sunlight touched them on the ramp at the base of the north face of Chiring We.

... Going over umpteen crevasses, they hit the west ridge at about 8:30 a.m. On the other side was the southwest face with a drop of 4,500 feet to the glacier, and the ridge rose at an angle of 60 to 70 degrees and had four giant cornices hanging on the north. Thus all along they had to stick to a narrow path between the drop and the cornices.

"About 500 feet below the summit, Nayan and Kami sat down while Boga and Lakhpa, who were faster, pushed ahead. Cutting steps and with fixed ropes they were on top of the highest virgin peak of Kumaon

exactly at 12:10 p.m. The view was staggering – the icefall below and the great Tibetan plateau to the north. In the east, Api and Nampa and in the west Nanda Devi were the only peaks above them."

**Zerkis Boga** lives in Collegeville, Pa., with his wife Niloufer and young sons Sorab and Cyrus. He is an executive at a major pharmaceutical firm. Hiking is a family pastime.

# boxing champ

**In his day, Loveji Patel was nearly unbeatable**

**Jasmine Patel** is a licensed acupuncturist and currently doing her residency in acupuncture and oriental medicine in Seattle. She recently spent time in China, rotating

through various departments at a hospital in Shanghai. She calls that an amazing experience.

Here she relates the story of her father, noted boxer, Loveji Patel.

For much of the decade of the 1950s, Loveji Patel, my father, was one of the best-known boxers in India and a celebrity, especially among his fellow Zarathushtis in Mumbai. In 1956, he was chosen to represent India in the summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia. Unfortunately, because of budget cuts, the Indian boxing team never made it to Australia. He, however, continued to dominate the boxing scene in Mumbai for years.

Yet his first love was cricket, and he probably never would have taken up boxing but for his inability to join a local cricket club after graduating

*The next best thing to winning is losing!  
At least you've been in the race.*

- Fed Newsletter



from school. He was simply unable to afford the high fees charged by the clubs.

One day he was working out at the Zoroastrian Physical Culture Institute at Gowalia Tank, in Mumbai. There one of the trainers approached him and told him that they were looking for a sparring partner for Perviz Daruwalla, a famous boxer of that time. My father sparred so well that Philly Billimoria, a boxing coach, urged him to train.

So my father joined Petit's Institute at the invitation of Rusi Engineer, the boxing coach there, and a welter-weight boxing star was born. During an eight-year boxing career, from 1952 to 1960, my father was runner up in the Western India championships, Western India champion, All India runner up, All India Railways Champion, and winner of the highly coveted Joe Louis Trophy as well as the Joe Louis Belt.

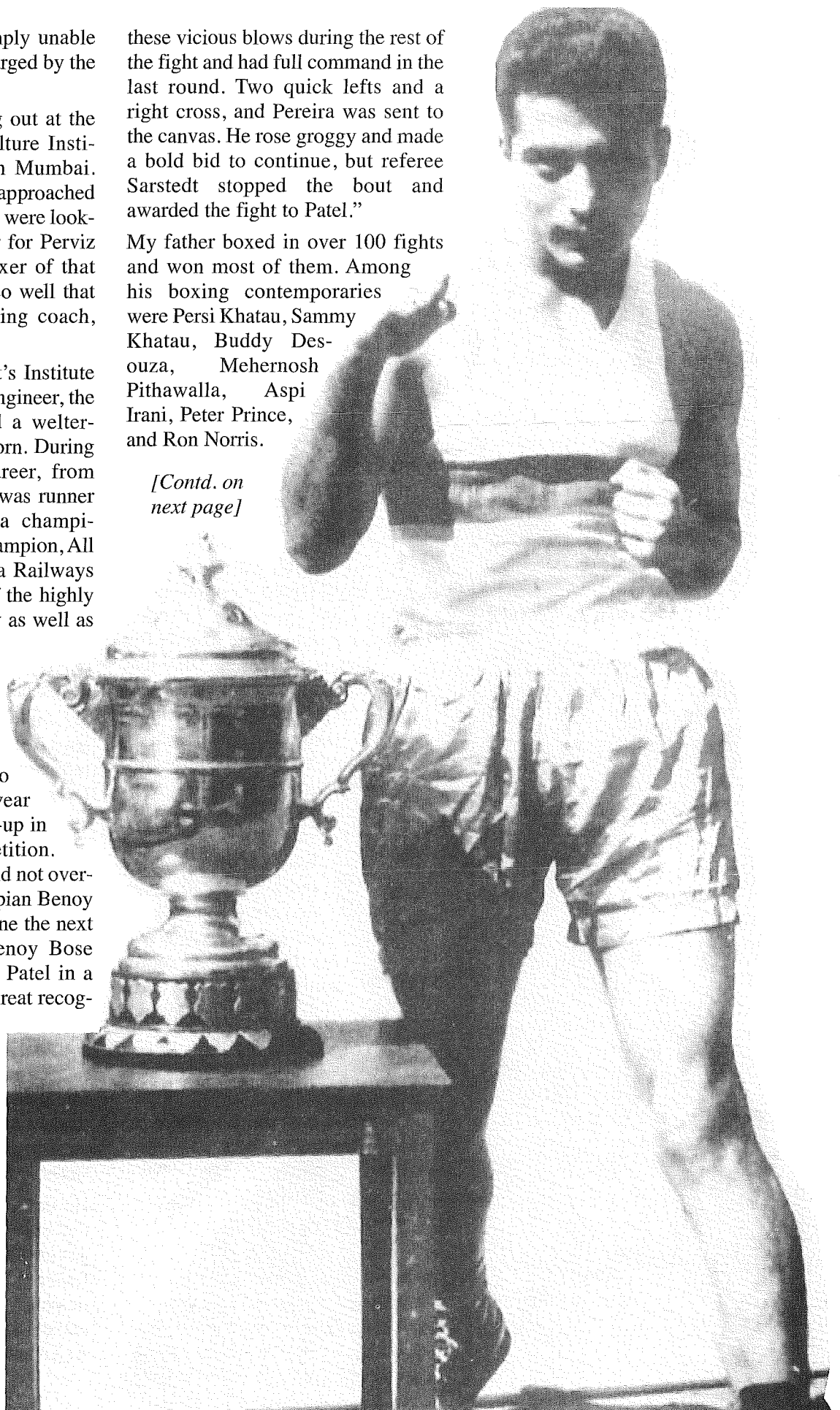
His best series of fights was when he became Western India Champion. He won three consecutive fights by knockout to become champion. The year before, he was the runner-up in the Western India competition. One of the fighters he could not overcome that year was Olympian Benoy Bose. A newspaper headline the next day read, "Olympian Benoy Bose fully extended by Loveji Patel in a thrilling bout." This was great recognition for a new, young fighter.

In winning the Joe Louis Trophy at the Iron Club's First Invitation Boxing Tournament at the Excelsior Cinema, my father had to come back from a first-round knock-down. He had walked into a right hook from his opponent, R. Pereira, in the first round. A newspaper account of his comeback read this way: "He (Patel), however, easily evaded

these vicious blows during the rest of the fight and had full command in the last round. Two quick lefts and a right cross, and Pereira was sent to the canvas. He rose groggy and made a bold bid to continue, but referee Sarstedt stopped the bout and awarded the fight to Patel."

My father boxed in over 100 fights and won most of them. Among his boxing contemporaries were Persi Khatau, Sammy Khatau, Buddy Desouza, Mehernosh Pithawalla, Aspi Irani, Peter Prince, and Ron Norris.

*[Contd. on next page]*



## Loveji Patel

[Continued from previous page]

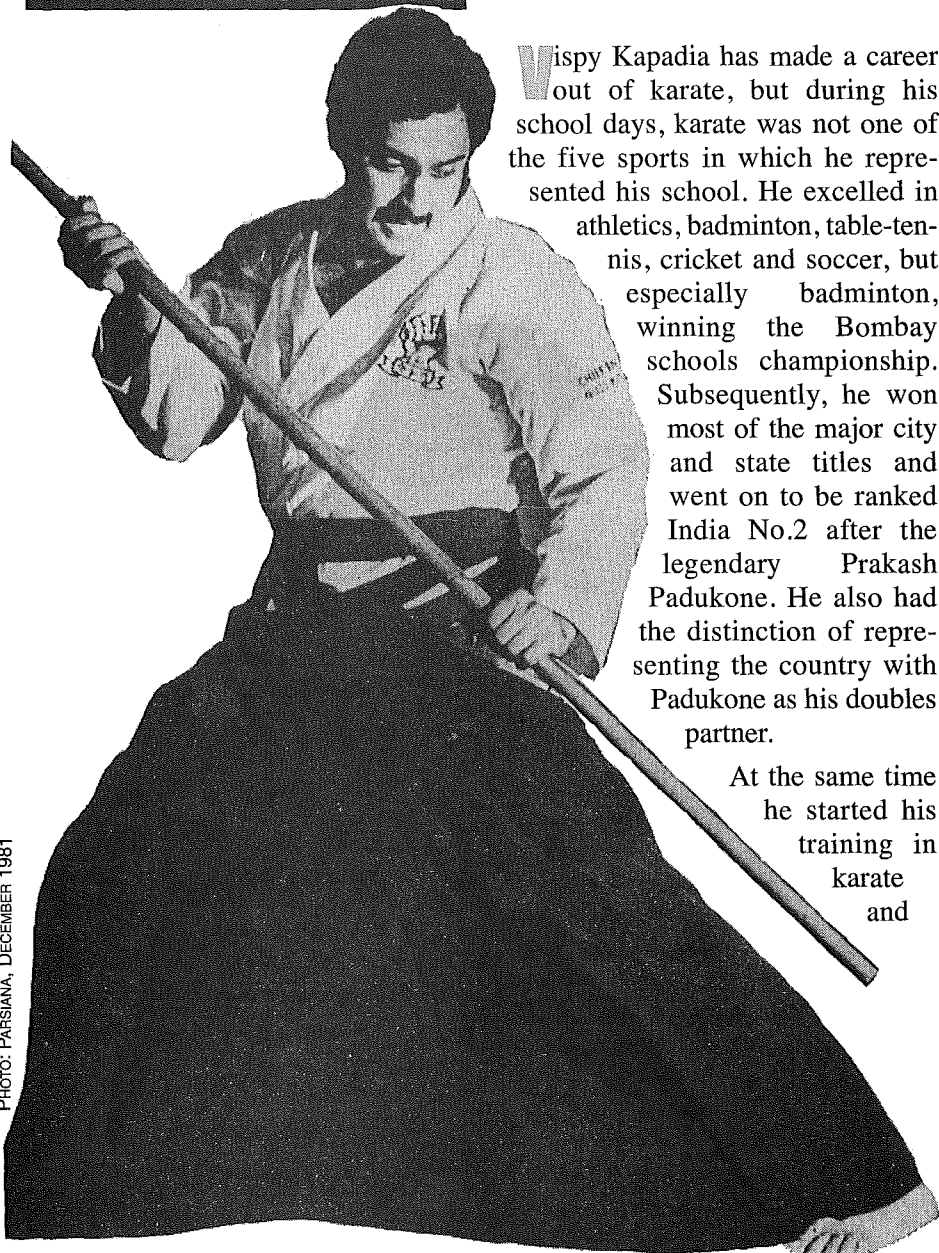
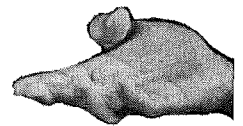
During a recent trip to Mumbai and nearby Pune, I was surprised to encounter people who still knew of my father. When I'd tell people I was Loveji Patel's daughter, I'd get asked, "Loveji Patel, the boxer?" Then I'd hear a story of one of his fights, what a powerful punch he threw, how most of his opponents were always knocked out, how the public was just crazy about him, and so on.

My father and my mother, Gulnar, now live in Baltimore, Maryland, as does my brother Neville. ■

# teacher of teachers

## Seventh-degree black belt Kyoshi Shihan Vispy Kapadia puts India on world karate map.

By Zarir Bhandara and Dolly Malva



Vispy Kapadia has made a career out of karate, but during his school days, karate was not one of the five sports in which he represented his school. He excelled in athletics, badminton, table-tennis, cricket and soccer, but especially badminton, winning the Bombay schools championship. Subsequently, he won most of the major city and state titles and went on to be ranked India No.2 after the legendary Prakash Padukone. He also had the distinction of representing the country with Padukone as his doubles partner.

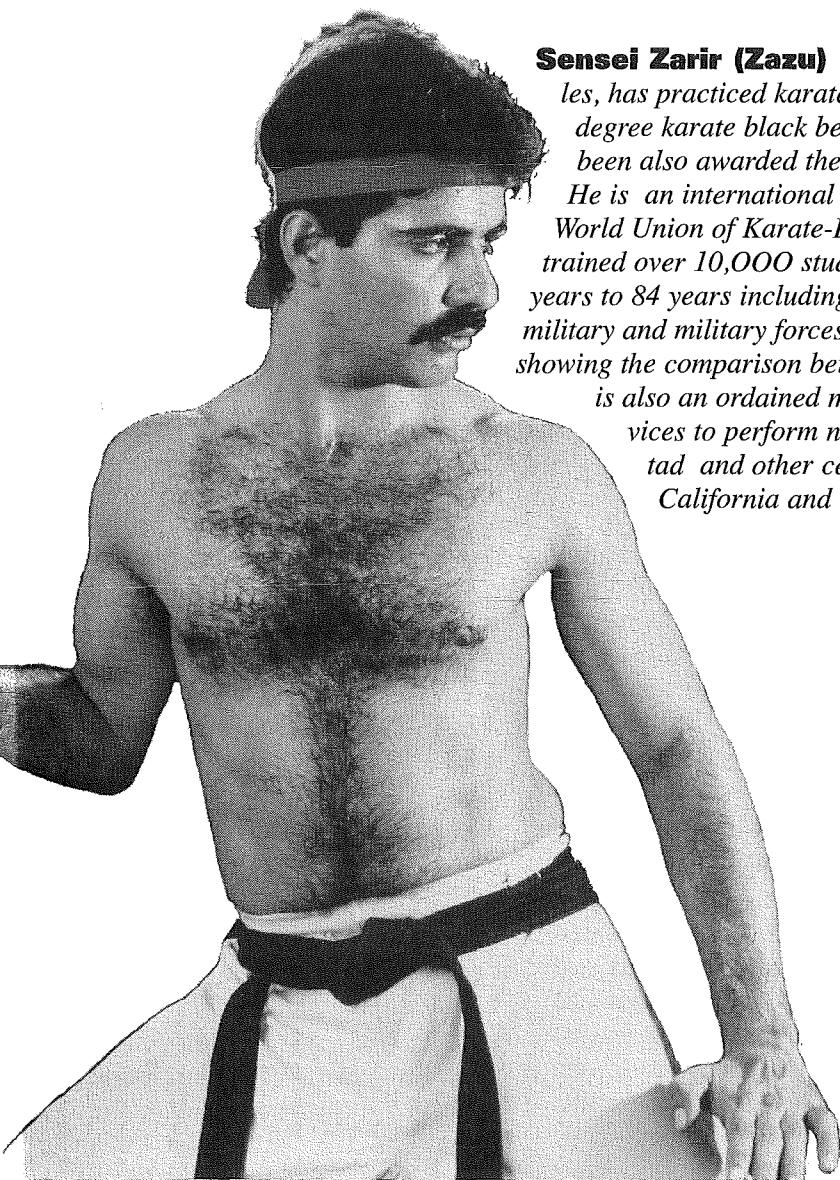
At the same time he started his training in karate and

after staying in Japan for two years and learning under the legendary Hanshi Gogen Yamaguchi, the highest ranking karate teacher in the world, Kapadia stood first in his black-belt examination and won a gold medal.

He then won many national and international events in karate both in India and Japan. He captained the Indian karate team on numerous occasions. At the age of 26 he received the title of "shihan," meaning teacher of teachers. He also accomplished his 3rd degree black-belt in weaponry and then was elevated to the post of branch chief for karate instruction in India.

Kapadia has been imparting knowledge of karate to the Mumbai city and Maharashtra State police forces, the Railway Police, and other police forces as well as to children at more than 50 schools in Mumbai. He operates karate schools now in eight states in India.

He is the first and only recipient of the Shiv Chhatrapati Award of the government of Maharashtra in the field of karate. His students have participated in many international tournaments and have won medals at the Asian and world levels.



**Sensei Zarir (Zazu) Bhandara** [left] of Los Angeles, has practiced karate for 25 years and holds a 4th degree karate black belt from Japan and India. He has been also awarded the coveted title of Sensei officially. He is an international karate referee and judge for the World Union of Karate-Do organization. Zarir has trained over 10,000 students right from the age of 4 years to 84 years including the All India Police force, para military and military forces. He has also held seminars showing the comparison between karate and religion. Zarir is also an ordained mobed and has provided his services to perform navjote, wedding, funeral, muk-tad and other ceremonies for the community in California and elsewhere.

**Dolly Malva** works in management for the City of Los Angeles. Dolly has served as president of the Zoroastrian Association of California, and is an editor of FEZANA Journal. She has been very active with the Zarathushti community in Southern California and also volunteers for the March of Dimes, the L.A. Homeless and other social services and interfaith agencies.



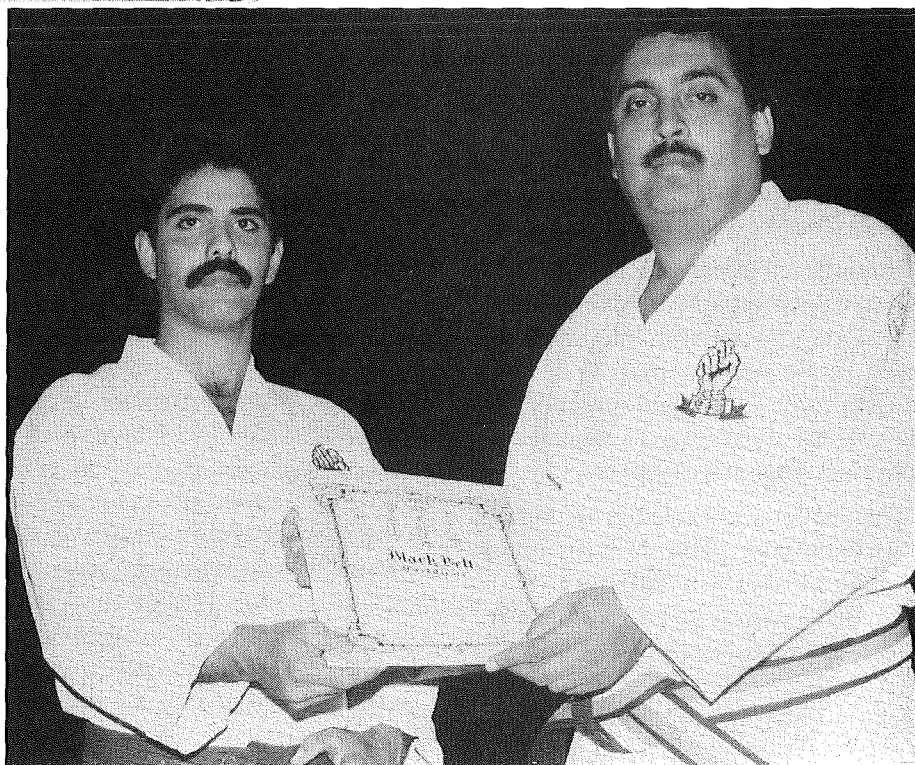
Below, Sensei Zarir Bhandara [left] receiving the award of Gojukan India from Kyoshi Shihan Vispy Kapadia.

He hosted the Second Asian Pacific Gojukai Karate-do championship in December 1996 that attracted 300 karatekas from 11 countries.

In April 2000, Kapadia was graded for the 7th dan black belt and the title of Kyoshi, becoming the highest ranking karateka in India.

In November 2001, he led a team of 76 to the third World Gojukai Karate Tournament in Perth, Australia. His students won six medals in the tournament and his team was ranked the second best junior team in the world.

In June 2002, he sent a 20-member team to the second World Open Junior Karate-do championship, in Mackenzie, British Columbia. There, his students won three silver and four bronze medals.





# way of life

## Cyrus Mewawalla brings the karate message to community in London

By Tehmina D. Bhote  
London, England

Cyrus Mewawalla has been practicing Shotokan Karate since he was 12. He was inspired to take up the martial art when he saw a demonstration of it at school. "It was then I knew I wanted to master the art," he remembers. Now he is a black belt in karate, which he gained at the age of 21.

Born in 1966 in Farnborough, England, Mewawalla is an investment banker-turned-novelist. He describes karate as "one of the most physically demanding sports I know. In order to cope with its severe physical demands you also need to be mentally strong. Karate, when studied to a high level, becomes a way of life."

As an investment banker he had meetings with the chief executives of some of the largest companies in the world, such as British Telecom, he said, "where the mental discipline I learnt in karate taught me to stay calm under tense business negotiations."

Although in recent times all professional sportspeople at the highest level require mental toughness as well as physical strength to be successful, the dedicated practice of karate has always woven mental and physical discipline together.

Mewawalla's experience of karate has made him value its principles, though he says it is difficult to convey them unless you experience it. There is "total respect for your master," he says. There is a "zero tolerance policy" he continues. "If you

disobey your master, you get a disproportionate level of punishment."

Karate can be a lesson in life. "In karate you learn to do things for the good of other people." And if the martial art seems violent to non-practitioners, the philosophy behind it is very much the opposite – avoiding violence at all costs. "Someone who understands karate will never ever get into a fight or use violence unless his life is threatened."



The wisdom in martial-arts philosophies seems to be in tune with many Zarathushti principles. Striving for perfection (Haurvatât) and living a balanced life in accordance with truth and righteousness (Asha) are both key fundamentals of the Zarathushti faith as well. Mewawalla feels that "nothing in either philosophy contradicts the other."

He has been sharing his experience of Shotokan Karate with fellow Zarathushtis in London by conducting classes at the Zoroastrian House. Classes typically end with a meditative wind-down. His approach to karate demonstrates that sport can be much more than physical exercise or competition. It can provide steadiness in our lives. ■

**Tehmina Bhote** grew up in London, England. She graduated in History and Museum Studies and now works on heritage projects to increase public access to historic collections. She was a frequent visitor to the Lord's cricket ground, especially when she was an aspiring cricket writer. She maintains a keen interest in many sports and continues to favor her bicycle over her car.

# field hockey judge

## Arnavaz Damania is field hockey official of international repute

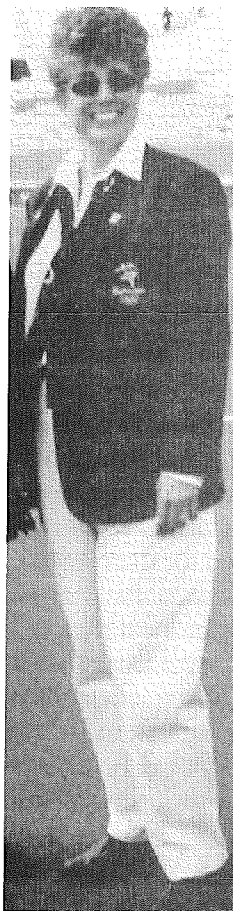
By Hilla P. Guzder

Field hockey judge at the Sydney and Barcelona Olympics, tournament director for women's hockey at the Hiroshima Asian Games, member of the competitions committee of the international hockey federation FIH, long-time president of the Indian Women's Hockey Federation, owner of the Gazelle Health Spas, Beauty Parlors and Academy in Pune, India. Arnavaz Damania's credentials are long and impressive.

In 2000, Damania spent 22 days in Sydney, Australia, as a technical official for women's hockey. Her duties included keeping time, watching over player substitutions, and keeping count of red and yellow cards issued to players during games. "The hockey umpires at Sydney were so good and held the match together in such a professional way, it was a real pleasure to watch," she recalled afterward.

The scene at home is not such a pleasure, says Damania, who has been an energetic administrator in Indian

women's hockey for decades. In the state of Maharashtra, where she is based, "there are no proper grounds, children find it very difficult to cope with academic pressures, parents do not want to send their children for competitions," she said.



Often witness to the machinations of government and sports officials, Damania said that the national body for women's hockey organizes too few tournaments every year for the players to attain any kind of international standard. She has the vantage point of having been involved in the sport at the international level.

Damania was a judge at the Champions Trophy in the Netherlands in June 2000, and

tournament director at Canberra and Perth, in Australia, in April and May 1999.

She recalled her tenure as tournament director at the Hiroshima Asiad as "a real challenge" because she had to discipline a fellow Indian official. "An Indian judge did not perform well in her first outing at the Games. As tournament director, I did not post her again for any other match," she said. A former state player and international umpire, Damania has also officiated as vice president of the Indian Olympic Association and of the Maharashtra Olympic Association. She was deputy head of the Indian contingent to the Beijing Asian Games in 1990 and manager of the Indian team for the Moscow Olympics in 1980.

[Hilla P. Guzder is profiled on p. 54]

# soccer legend

## Novy Kapadia talks and writes about a passion

By Gul-Fraaz Ezekiel



Navroze (Novy) Kapadia, 48, has many strings to his bow. He is a legend in Delhi soccer circles, having played club soccer in the Indian capital

since he was 13 years old. He runs the Ashoka Football Club, which he founded in 1975 and still turns out for the team in the Delhi league, apart from coaching the players and handling the administrative side of things.

During the last World Cup, he gave his expert comments in both English and Hindi on the STAR news channel twice a day. For the last 20 years, he has also been a part-time sports journalist, balancing that with his full-time job as professor in the English department at SGTB Khalsa College.

Kapadia's love of reading and soccer (a sport much of the world outside the United States prefers to call football) combined under fortuitous circumstances during the national championships in Jammu in 1978 where a journalist friend, Tarun Basu, encouraged him to try his hand at sports journalism. The experiment proved to be a success. Kapadia has been a sports 'stringer' for the Telegraph newspaper group of Calcutta since 1982 and was also a regular contributor to the group's magazine, Sportsworld, from its launching in 1978 until it folded in 1999.

Today he writes for dozens of Indian and foreign publications and is an acknowledged expert on Indian soccer. He has also covered four World Cups, three European championships and four Asian Games and has con-

tributed articles on Indian soccer for a number of books in India and abroad.

In 1986, he won the Wills Award for Excellence in Sports Journalism for his article, "The Other Side of the Medal", published in the Business Standard newspaper in 1984. He has been sports consultant and sports editor for the Limca Book of Records since 1993.

Kapadia also has done extensive commentary on radio and TV on soccer and other sports. Currently, he is busy writing a book on Indian soccer, having recently helped the Delhi Parsi Anjuman compile a list of eminent Zarathushti sports persons.

"My family was never too keen on my playing football. It was considered a rough sport, one unsuitable for young Parsi boys. But call it an omen, I was gifted a football for my navjote in 1963 and I could not stop playing with it," Kapadia reminisced.

Growing up in the Old Delhi area of Kashmiri Gate, he was surrounded by soccer. "The majority of the neighbors were Bengalis and Muslims, and football has always been a passion for them. If at all Indian football is alive today, it is due to their efforts alone," Kapadia said.

He started his playing career as a schoolboy forward in the second division for Union FC, moved onto the Young Bengal Club and also played for the President's Estate FC in the first division before establishing Ashoka FC. He represented the Delhi XI throughout the 1970s and played in the Durand and DCM tournaments, the main fixtures in Delhi's soccer calendar.

Courtesy of Parsiana

I'd rather face killer bees than try to stop an onrushing hard, red leather ball with a slim willow bat. I can't explain this genetic anomaly, considering that my family has been living and breathing cricket for generations.

Parsis were among the first in India to embrace the game, and in 1877, they were granted a match against the English at Bombay Gymkhana. Within a few years, Parsi cricketers had established themselves well enough to be invited to tour England and play against W.G. Grace's team at Lord's. The visitors lost, but they made history. The Presidency tournament between Parsis and Europeans began in 1892-93, and in 1907-08, after the Hindus fielded a team, the tournament became known as the Bombay Triangular.

My grandfather, *Nadirshah Maneckji Dinshaw*, was one of the cricketers who played on the Parsi team from 1907-08 to 1927-28. With the entry of a Muslim team in 1912-13, the tournament became the Quadrangular. Later when a team comprising The Rest joined the tournament, it became known as the Pentangular and the venue was shifted to the Brabourne Stadium in Bombay.

Nadirshah Dinshaw also captained the Karachi Parsi Institute (KPI)

# cricket legacy

## Nadir, Murzban and Rusi – the cricketers in my life

By Farishta Murzban Dinshaw  
Toronto, Ontario

team and represented the Karachi Cricket Association. The *History of Sind Cricket* says about him: "One of the best cricketers Sind ever produced. A steady and cool bat, with various strokes, he places the ball magnificently. Between May 1912 and November 1920, in 159 innings, he made nearly 8,000 runs with an average of 50, his highest score being 207 not out against G.J. Weigall's XI in 1917. A good change bowler with superb judgement. The only batsman who has scored over a thousand runs in Sind Cricket Tournament."

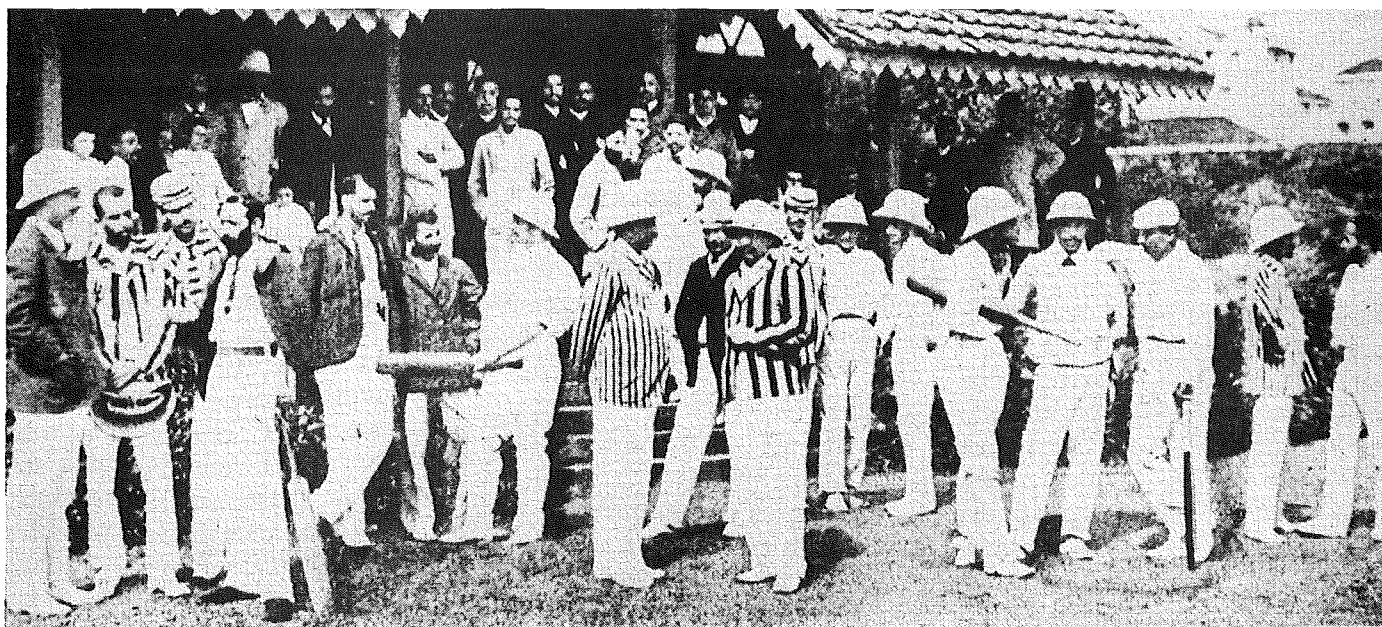
He died before I was born, so what I know about him is hearsay. He was respected for his integrity, fairness and mild manners at Chartered Bank where he worked as chief cashier. His nephews and nieces recall that he

was generous and often covered for their pranks with his stricter brothers.

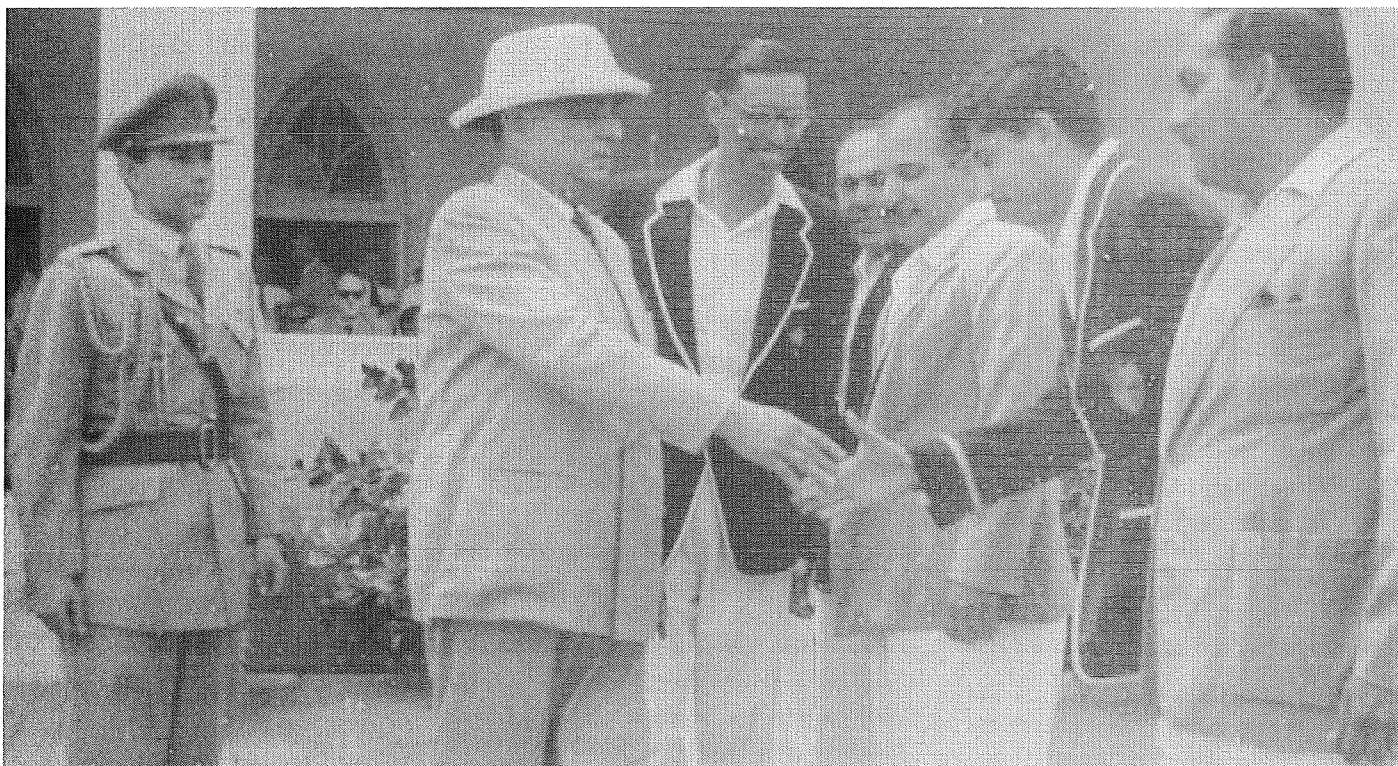
Nadirshah Dinshaw and his wife Dina had four sons – Dara, Adi, Murzban and Rusi. Dara's legendary appetite and immense girth kept him off the cricket field, but the other sons inherited their father's love for cricket. They played for their school, Bai Virbaiji Soparivala Parsi High School, as well as in local matches with many of their friends who went on to be stalwarts of Karachi cricket. Notable amongst them were Burjor D. Jagus (whose father D.J. Jagus is considered one of the founders of cricket in Sindh), Boman G. Irani and Soli R. Mavalvala.

*Murzban Dinshaw*, my dad, was the most stylish batsmen of the three

*Below, at the Parsee Gymkhana, Bombay 1886 [PHOTO: PARSEE GYMKHANA CENTENARY SOUVENIR, 1985]*







*At the Karachi Parsi Institute, in 1963, Burjor Jagus, captain, introduces Rusi Dinshaw to Pakistan's then-President, Major General Iskander Mirza. On Rusi's left is Khodabux Irani, and on his right is Noshir Kanga.*

brothers. He was described as “aggressive” and “brilliant” by more than one person. Once he scored 36 runs in the last over to take his team to victory. According to Roy Minwalla's recollection, my dad and B.G. Irani hold the Karachi inter-school record for the highest partnership. Until he died in 1994, cricket remained my father's passion. But to my dad, cricket was more than a game you played to win. It was about the way you lived. You played as a team member, you played fairly and sportingly, you acknowledged accomplishment no matter which team the player represented, and you enjoyed yourself.

However, it was my uncle, **Rusi Dinshaw** who achieved the greatest accolades. A steady and tenacious left-hand batsman, he also did slow left-arm bowling. His friend and teammate Homee Mobed recalls that Rusi once scored 201 runs in Ruby Shield Cricket in Calcutta to lead his team to victory. In 1946, Rusi led Karachi University over Bombay

University to win the Maharaja Kumar of Cooch-Bihar Trophy.

In the early years after the Partition of India into two countries, most of the players who represented Pakistan came from Lahore. Some of them had played in the Ranji Trophy, the premier domestic tournament of pre-Partition India. Of the young players, Rusi Dinshaw was soon recognised and he was sent by the Pakistan Cricket Control Board for training at Alf Gover's cricket school in England.

When Nigel Howard's MCC team toured the new country in 1951-52, Pakistan scored a noteworthy win at the Karachi Gymkhana under the captainship of Hafiz Kardar. Consequently, Pakistan was given full test status by the international cricket body, and Pakistan toured India in 1952-53. It was a fledgling team, with only Kardar and Amir Elahi having any test experience. Nadirshah Dinshaw's youngest son, Rusi, was part of the young team. To this day, he has the notable distinction of being the only Zarathushti to be a member of a Pakistan test team.

Everyone who knew Rusi in his heyday remembers him as easygoing and jovial with a love for, what Soli Mavalvala calls, ‘*nalli khochrai*’ (mischief). Once, while playing on the Sindh XI, Soli and Rusi were returning after a match in Bhawalpur and were sharing the train compartment with the son of the distinguished Sindhi cricketer Naomal Jaomal. The two of them kept eyeing the four baskets of Bhawalpur's famous almond and pistachio mithai that the young Jaomal was taking home. That night when Jaomal fell asleep, the two of them polished off the sweets and weighted down the baskets with stones picked up at a station to make sure their prank would not be quickly detected.

In the early 1960s, Rusi began to show signs of depression and was diagnosed with schizophrenia. The electric shock treatment prevalent in those days broke his spirit and he never recovered. He still goes to KPI every day, but now when you look at him shuffling through the grounds, you see an old, disheveled man in

# Coach of champions

The extraordinary legacy of an extraordinary coach,  
Keki Tarapore

By Hilla P. Guzder

Sometimes death reveals what life does not. That was the case with Keki Tarapore, whose life was spent coaching cricket at the highest levels. In cricket-crazy India, millions worship the star players he trained, but few knew of him. Imagine admiring the Mona Lisa but not knowing who painted it. Tarapore promoted his protégés, not himself.

Only his death, July 12, 2001, at the age of 78, revealed to the discerning cricket fan the extent of his influence

## Cricket Legacy

[Continued from previous page]

need of a shower. But writing this article gave me a chance to rediscover my Rusi kaka. To me, he is once more a dashing, high-spirited young man who was the object of affection for many a young woman and inspiration for many young men.

## Farishta Murzban Dinshaw,



who now lives in Toronto and is formerly of Karachi, made a career in Pakistan writing for children. She was the first editor of *Funline*, Pakistan's first English maga-

zine for children. In 1993, she won the Eve Bunting Scholarship awarded by the Highlights Foundation for its Writing for Children program at Chautauqua. She has also written on women's, educational and other topics and is the author of the novel with a Zarathushti theme, "Discovering Ashavan."

on the game. That's when the stars came out to worship him. Among those paying tribute were batsman Rahul Dravid, bowlers Anil Kumble, Javagal Srinath and Venkatesh Prasad, and others who were stars until recently – E.A.S. Prasanna, B.S. Chandrasekhar, G.R. Vishwanath, Brijesh Patel, Roger Binny and Syed Kirmani. Many others who are household names in India were groomed at national camps he organized in Mumbai and Bangalore from 1975 to 1991, including former national captains Kapil Dev, Ravi Shastri and Mohammed Azharuddin.

They recalled him as a shrewd and caring coach whom they turned to for help when things were not going well. Typically, Dravid turned to Tarapore for advice after missing his first Test Match century in 1996. What defects in his technique did the old coach see? The coach said, "it was not so much (Dravid's) game but his temperament that seemed to be at fault," recalled cricket writer K.N. Prabhu. Since then, opposing teams have found it nearly impossible to get Dravid out for a small score.

Born in Indore on Oct. 11, 1922, Tarapore's early years were spent in Lahore, now in Pakistan. The family later moved to Bangalore, where Tarapore's younger brother Dinyar played as a left-arm spin bowler in Mysore junior cricket and his sister Jer was a Mysore state table tennis champion in the 1950s.

Tarapore's own big-time cricketing career was brief and modest. He debuted in 1945 in the Ranji Trophy for Mysore state (now Karnataka) as

Twelfth Man. While 11 play, the Twelfth Man is the perpetual substitute who waits to perform mundane tasks such as taking out the drinks during breaks. It was a role Tarapore could not surpass in his five years on the team.



Tarapore opted then to become a coach. His first instruction came from the legendary Prince Duleepsinhji at a camp for coaches in Mumbai. "What I learned in those three weeks I don't think I have ever picked up in the whole of my life," Tarapore once recalled.

In 1960, Tarapore was appointed a national cricket coach and then for 30 years he helped train the Karnataka Ranji Trophy team. Three times that team won the national cricket championship, in 1974, 1976 and 1983.

Spin bowler Chandrasekhar, a member of that state team who performed brilliantly during his career with the national team, recalled Tarapore as instilling in Karnataka teams their reputation for disciplined play. "A remarkable thing was his focus on fielding ... He would not let you go until you took a catch in a particular style and in a particular position."

Formal honors came to Tarapore in recent years, including Karnataka state's Rajyotsava Award in 1991 and a benefit match organized by Dravid and other grateful players months before his death.

Tarapore's son Shahvir, is an international level cricket umpire and a former spin bowler for Karnataka's Ranji Trophy team.

[Hilla P. Guzder's profile is on p. 54]

# gentleman coach

For generations, Jal Pardivala symbolized everything good about athletics

known as the Castrol School Sports Centre, it is used by 100,000 students every year for 20 different sports.

The MSSA itself owes its existence to another Zarathushti, the industrial and philanthropic pioneer Sir Dorabji Tata, who helped create it in the late 1890s as the Bombay School Sports Association. It is the oldest school sports association in the world.

Pardivala's first book, *Athletics*, was published way back in 1947. It was aimed at active athletes, sports organizers and the general public. In 1955, his *Manual of Athletic Competitions* followed. Pardivala was by that time a member of the Rules and Records Committee, the Scoring Table Commission, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) and the Association of Track and Field Statisticians.

Four years later, the book *Indian Athletics (1920-1959)* flowed from his pen. It was chock full of facts and figures, carefully compiled from the detailed results of individual athletes, including the legendary runner Milkha Singh.

In 1952, Pardivala was elected to be the first Asian to serve on the Rules and Records Committee of the IAAF and remained on it for 16 years, the only Indian on the body.

**Olympic honors.** In 1958, Otto Mayer, the chancellor then of the International Olympic Committee presented Pardivala with a gold pin in recognition of his promotion of the Olympic movement. The government of Finland awarded him its

Sports Cross for the part he played in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. Other international recognition followed, including in 1984 the Olympic Order for his contributions to the Olympic movement.

Pardivala also assisted in setting up the first Indian sports council for the blind, presiding over it to the day he died. He evolved simple norms for the blind and other physically or mentally handicapped to enjoy healthy rivalry in sports.

"He was an outstanding personality and was honest, humane and a true gentleman," summed up a contemporary.

[Hilla P. Guzder's profile is on p. 54]



PARSI CRICKETEER, C. 1900S

PHOTO: PARSIANA, OCTOBER 1986.

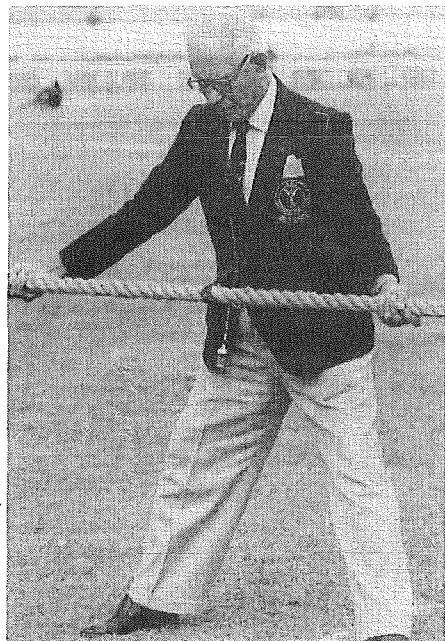


PHOTO: PARSIANA, MARCH 2001

By Hilla P. Guzder

As physical education instructor, athletics coach, sports chronicler, administrator and official, Jal Dinshaji Pardivala stayed the course for over 50 years. The Grand Old Man of Indian athletics died on Dec. 17, 2000, in Mumbai at the age of 89.

His death from pneumonia came during the 107th inter-school athletic championship in Mumbai. Hundreds of athletes, teachers, officials and spectators observed two minutes' silence in memory of the man who was mentor to generations of athletes and president for years of the Mumbai School Sports Association. Fittingly, noted the *Times of India*, Viraf Doomasia, whom Pardivala had trained in the decathlon 40 years before, was the coach of the winning girls' team, St. Agnes High School of Byculla, which included Karishma Birdy, who was the fastest girl athlete at the meet.

"It was during Pardivala's presidentship of the Mumbai School Sports Association (MSSA) that he and M.Y. Siddiqui obtained from the government of Maharashtra a 14,000-square-meter plot of land at Azad Maidan in 1968 on a 30-year lease," said Alex Vaz, MSSA president since 1993 who worked with Pardivala for many years. Now



# Half a century

## Polly Umrigar – A cricketing life of true grit, spanning half a century.

By Hilla P. Guzder

**B**ack in the 1960s, when it seemed no Indian cricketer was technically capable of standing

up to the newly ascendant Calypso beat of the West Indians, Indian fans would not lose hope until Polly (Palanji R.) Umrigar was out. In a 50-year career in the sport, he was a gloriously resolute player and went on to be a respected official and mentor.

“When I started, we were paid the glorious sum of Rs. 65 (about \$1.50 at current rates) per Test; at the end of my career, it rose to Rs. 350,” recalls Umrigar of his days as a Test cricketer in the 1950s and ’60s. There was no one-day cricket, no live TV coverage, no wearing of logos, no endorsement of luxury products to enhance income.

Three years ago, at the age of 73, he received Indian cricket’s ultimate award, the Col. C.K. Nayudu Award, named after the legendary first Indian captain. Wearing the India cap in 59 Tests between 1948 and 1962, Umrigar scored 3,631 runs at an impressive average of 42.22. An all-rounder, he took 35 Test wickets with his off-spin bowling, helping the Indian team to its historic first win against the Australians in Kanpur in 1959.

He captained the Indian team in eight Tests, abruptly resigning the captaincy on a point of principle after a

difference of opinion over the choice of a team member with the president of Indian cricket’s regulatory body.

Umrigar recalls one of his most memorable performances was in a 1962 Test match in Port of Spain, Trinidad, against a battery of West Indian pace bowlers. He made 56 runs in the first innings, then took five wickets and in the second innings

went on to score an epic 172 not out. It was a remarkable feat, especially because he played with a strained back. “The West Indies suited me; I also got a lot of runs against Pakistan,” he said.

He would score 12 centuries in Test cricket, scoring one against every Test-playing country except Australia. He was the first Indian cricket player to score a double century in Tests, making 223 runs versus New Zealand in the 1955-56 Test series in India.

Umrigar dispassionately critiques the evolution of the game. “Though the one-day format is interesting, I feel a Test match involves much more thinking and planning, one gets more time to attack and defend. Present-

*[Continued on page 76]*

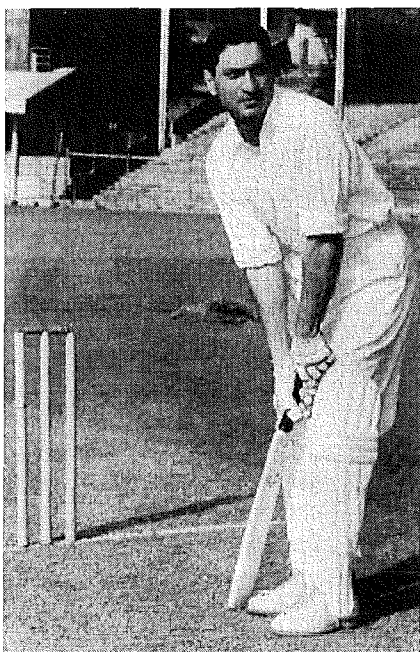


PHOTO: PARSIANA, OCTOBER 1999

# super-star of women’s cricket

## Diana Edulji – a career of firsts

By Hilla P. Guzder

**W**hen Diana Edulji’s sterling achievements in women’s cricket were honored in March 2002 with the Padma Shri award by the Indian president, it was the first time a woman cricketer had received the prestigious national award. In October 2002, she and another woman cricketer became the first women to receive the Castrol Award for Cricketing Excellence.

The awards validate a long career of firsts for Edulji. A member of the first women’s Indian Test match team, she took the first wicket and the first catch for India and was in the first Indian women’s team to tour abroad. She holds the women’s world record for taking 119 wickets in 34 Tests. She represented the country in cricket from 1975 to 1995.

Her foray into international cricket started with a flourish – a knock of 48 not out in the first ever Test India played, remaining unbeaten in the second inning as well, and capturing 8 wickets for 86 runs. The performance was just a forerunner of things in her cricketing career. She brought a fun-loving attitude and team members looked forward to being with her. But behind her jokes and pranks beat a relentlessly competitive heart. She once drew criticism for charging



*Edulji receiving Padma Shri Award from President of India, March 2002.*

down the wicket to slam a ball to the boundary that had accidentally fallen out of the West Indian bowler's hand.

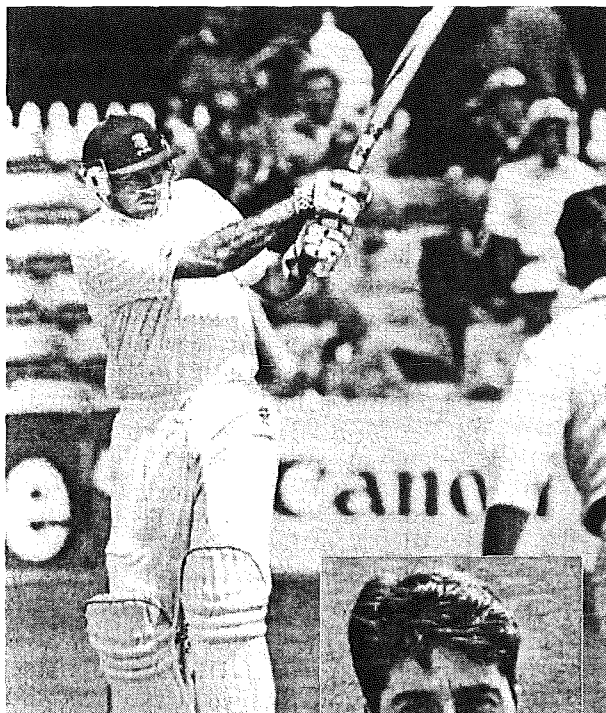
After her playing days ended, she made more history by becoming the first woman to become a member of the national cricket selection panel by virtue of being a member of the Railways selection committee for the men's Ranji Trophy team. For the first time ever, the Railways team went on to become Ranji Trophy champions in 2002. A Railways employee, Edulji led the Railways women's team for numerous years.

First appointed Indian captain in 1978, she led the national team in numerous international contests until 1993. She played in three World Cup tournaments, leading the team in two of them. Fittingly, she is the only woman cricketer in the world to have been the beneficiary of a benefit match. She was part of yet another first between 1976 and 1981, when she and her older sister Behroze played together on the Indian team.

Diana is the daughter of Fram and Dhun Edulji and was born on January 26, 1956. She is the youngest of three sisters, Farida being the middle sister. ■

*[Hilla P. Guzder's profile is on p. 54]*

# England's Ronnie



In 1996, the English cricket team acquired Ronnie Irani

By Hilla P. Guzder

All-rounder Ronnie Irani is the first player of Zarathushti origin to play Test cricket for England. Irani's Test debut was against India at Edgbaston in 1996. He made a quick-fire 34 runs and, as a bowler, took a wicket in his very first over while conceding no runs in that over.

In the second Test, at Lord's, Irani made 41 runs and helped save England from defeat, but was inexplicably dropped from the team for the third Test.

His one-day international debut also was against India at the Oval. He was then selected to tour New Zealand and Zimbabwe and

has gone on to represent England in other international series since.

The only son of league cricketer Jimmy Irani and Anne, Ronnie was 16 when he signed on to play for Lancashire, his home county. He moved to Essex in 1994 and represented that county in the Sunday league and one-day championships,

*[Continued on page 99]*

## Only "Aapro Irani" can save England

The English cricket team is down in the dumps, and only a Zoroastrian, Ronnie Irani, can rescue them. Ronnie shone out for them in the two matches in Sydney last week. In the first match, against NSW, he top scored with a hectic 81. In the second match, against Australia A, he took 3 wickets and scored 33 runs and was made man of the match.

Peter Roebuck, one of the best cricket writers, was full of praise for Ronnie's all round excellence. He wrote in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Irani comes from a long line of Zoroastrians, a religion that worships fire. He plays with fire and spirit."

- Kersi Meher-Homji

*[From Manashni, Australian Zoroastrian Association of NSW, Dec 2002]*

## Memories of Navsari

By Minocheher Damania  
Mumbai, India

Navsari was built before town planning was invented. Either there is no place between houses or they are so close together that if one has a bath and puts his towel to dry on the window sill, his neighbor can grab the towel and use it for his bath. We can hear our neighbor's conversations, we can see what he is eating and he can smell our flavors.

The *mohala* (street) where we lived is called 'Kanga Wad'. Next to our house lived Ervad Sohrabji Edulji Kanga, a very old and respected dasturji. Like many devout Parsis, Dasturji Kanga would wake up early every morning, well before *bamdad* (dawn) and recite the beautiful *Hoshbam* prayer. His melodious voice was enjoyed every morning by the entire *mohala*. Those who woke up with his prayers had a good start to their day.

My father once got the idea that he had only to hold a microphone outside the window to record dasturji's voice; then after dasturji graduated to a higher world, he could re-play the recording for the benefit of the *mohala*.

In those days, tape recorders were not very common. My brother was one of the few proud possessors of a Grundig tape recorder, which had 200 mm. spools and was as big and heavy as a small suitcase.

So father and son started from Mumbai for Navsari one day, with the tape recorder. During the train journey, they debated the effect on the *mohala* when they re-played the recording at dawn, after Dasturji was no more.

They alighted at Navsari railway station and after the usual haggling about fares, got into a waiting Victoria (large horse-drawn carriage).

As the Victoria stopped at Kanga Wad, a grim faced man approached.

"Dasturji has just passed away. Please come and pay your respects."



## Lest We Forget

By Dinaz Kutar Rogers

### Do you remember any stories or sayings?

"Lest We Forget" is hosted by Dinaz Kutar Rogers, a high-school biology teacher and published writer. Readers are invited to contribute their stories, lores, legends and memories related to our faith, community, Iran, India, that we grew up with as young children. Jot down those sayings your mother used to say, and send them in, with your version of the meanings, to Dinaz at 1240 Takena SW, Albany, Oregon 97321, tel: (541) 967-1911, email: drogersor@msn.com.

## The Legend of Bahrot

"It is history that teaches us to hope."

- Robert E. Lee, c. 1866

By Zend M. Zend  
Mumbai, India

The year was 1297 CE. Gujarat was then ruled by a Hindu king, Karan Vaghela, a descendant of King Jadiv Rana. In that year, the King of Delhi, Allaudin Khilji sent his army under the command of Alaf Khan to conquer Gujarat.

**Fall of Sanjan.** King Karan, in his hour of need, asked for help from the Parsis. A brave Parsi commander named Ardeshir Babekan responded to the call. He created his own battalion of 1,400 soldiers and defeated the forces of Alaf Khan. The war did not end there. Alaf Khan mustered an army of 50,000 soldiers and renewed his attack on the commander. Sheer numbers were against Ardeshir.

Ardeshir went to the fire temple and invoked Ahura Mazda's guidance and blessings. According to legend, while praying, he fell into a trance and an angel told him that in the

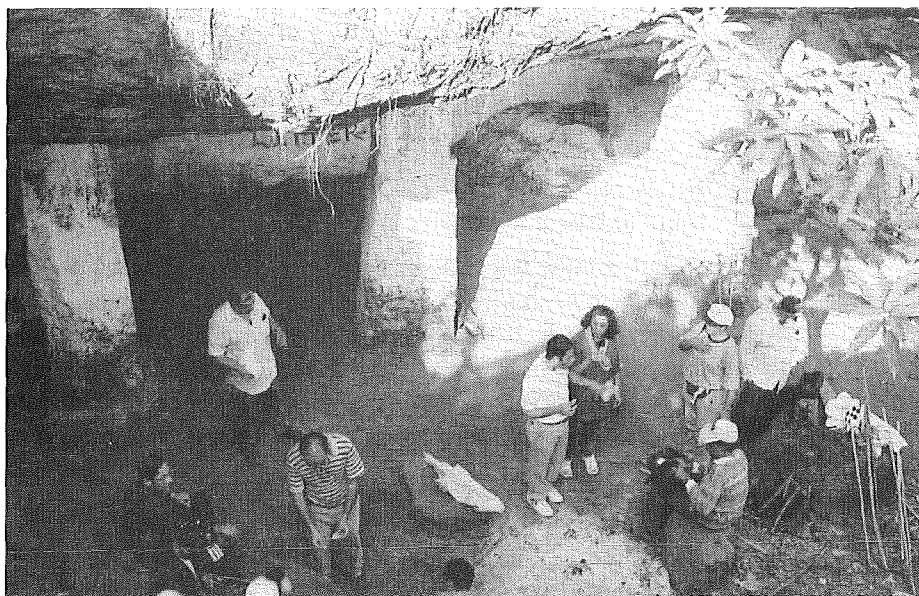
event of danger, the Holy Fire must be moved to the nearby caves in the Bahrot Hills. The angel showed Ardeshir the way to the Bahrot caves.

Ardeshir reported this incident to the High Priest Dastur Dinyar and to his own brave son Shapur. He instructed Shapur that in the event of his defeat, all Zarathushtis at Sanjan, along with the Holy Fire, be moved to Bahrot.

As destiny would have it, Ardeshir was defeated and killed. Shapur faithfully carried out his late father's wishes. The Holy Fire, along with a large group of Zarathushtis, was moved to Bahrot. The Holy Fire was then properly ensconced in one of the three caves and carefully guarded. The invaders pursued the group all the way to Bahrot, but were foiled by the valiant soldiers guarding the Holy Fire.

**Twelve years at Bahrot.** For twelve long years, the Holy Fire was kept in the caves, piously guarded by the devout band of Zarathushtis, who





*Hike and jashan at the Bahrot Caves.*

resided in tents and makeshift arrangements around the caves.

**Bahrot to Bansda.** When peace settled on Gujarat, the Holy Fire was transferred from Bahrot to Vansda (or Bansda) near Valsad. Later, in 1419 it was relocated and installed at Navsari, where it remained for almost three hundred years, except for a short period of time when it was shifted to Surat. Finally, in 1742 CE, it was installed at Udvada, where it burns to this day, as the highest grade of consecrated fire in the world.

In this new millennium, The World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation, with the support of the present-day Zarathushtis, intends not only to preserve the Bahrot caves as a Heritage Site, but also to erect a befitting monument that pays homage to the glorious band of those brave Parsis. For it is they who strived against all hardships and stayed in the Bahrot Hills for twelve, long years, reaffirming their faith in the religion of their ancestors as propounded by Prophet Zarathushtra based on the trinity of:

***Humata, Hukhta, Huvareshta.***

*[The historical accuracy of the above account has not been verified by FEZANA Journal and may be inconsistent with other sources. Information gleaned from the Kisseh-i-Sanjan, the only written record of early Parsi history, is not clear about names or dates.]*

## ***To Bahrot and back - a page from Mr. Zend's logbook***

*In January 2000, a group of 23 Zarathushtis, including the author, Mr. Zend (who at 64, was the oldest) made the 8 km climb to the Bahrot Caves. According to Mr. Zend, "It took us about 3 hours to climb the distance of 8 km to the top of the hill (420 km), and about one and a half hours to come down – sorry, to slide down!"*

**January 22:** We stayed overnight at Adil Irani's house in Dahanu. Of the whole group, only three were veterans of Bahrot.

**January 23, 5:00 am:** Morning tea! By 6:00 am, we reached the farmhouse of Hoshang Gowadia, at Karag Gam.

**7:10 am:** Drove to the foothills of Bahrot and after a short prayer started the tough 30 degree incline climb. It was cold and pleasant but the going was tough. We stopped during our climb for short breathers. Reached a flat spot on a ridge after a two-hour climb. On one side of the ridge, a view of Gujarat and on the other side, Aswali Dam and view of Maharashtra.

**10:30 am:** Reached the top of Bahrot Hills. Found a natural spring, there – a miracle indeed! This spring water

must have sustained the Zarathushtis during their long 12-year stay! Dasturs Dinyar Vazifdar and Bomi Bhada (from Lalbaug and Dahanu), performed an hour long *jashan* ceremony in the caves; after which we partook of the prayed-over fruits and *malido*. We took lots of pictures.

**12:00 noon:** Started the climb down.

**1:30 pm:** Reached base camp, after 1 1/2 hours of sliding down the hill. Reached Hoshang Gowadia's house by 2:00 pm and had a delicious lunch of dry mutton, *estoo*, *chapatti*, *papad* and lovely, fresh 'sen sen karti toddy' (drink collected from the palm tree).

We caught the evening train to Bombay feeling hilariously happy, with a great sense of achievement.

***Do it when you can!*** ■

**Zend M. Zend** is owner of the **Yazdani Bakery and Restaurant**, at Cawasji Patel Street, in the Fort area of Mumbai [tel: 2287 0739]. He invites visitors to come over for his "mawa cakes, khari biscuit, and broon-maskha dipped in freshly-brewed Irani samovar tea" and his "titori zindabad with Boi machi." He has a 20-acre farm at Vangam, near Dahanu where he relaxes every weekend: "I make my own bread by solar energy, and wine from Mauvri flowers."

## ***THANK YOU!***

Thank You for the kind words our readers send in about "Lest We Forget"; it is my love for and devotion to my Zarathushti faith that keeps me going.

However, it is all the contributors that should get the kudos. **Parvin Damania** and **Sam Kerr**, in particular, deserve praise and recognition for their invaluable and ongoing contributions to "My Mother Used to Say". - Dinaz Kutar Rogers

## The Fall of Sanjan

**S**even hundred years rolled by after the landing in Sanjan. Islam had reached Champanir and at that time Sultan Mahmud sat on the throne ... he commanded, Alaf Khan: "Take an army and conquer Sanjan; we must add it to our kingdom."

Alaf Khan gathered his army and advanced like a black cloud. When the rajah heard that thirty thousand horsemen, all brave and noted warriors, were bearing down on him he appealed to the mobeds and laymen ... fourteen hundred Parsi men saddled their horses and put on their armor, and with drums beating they marched out with the rajah's army as dawn broke and the light of the stars went out.

Alaf Khan's army came on the field. His horsemen put on their armor and placed embroidered saddles on their chargers; they raised their banners on the backs of elephants; the plain was distressed by the weight of the elephants. The field was crowded as the commanders deployed their armies; the bugles played, the drums beat and the forces of the Muslim sultan and the Hindu rajah faced each other.

Day and night the battle raged and even the horses were tired ... The two leaders were as dragons, struggling with each other with the fury of tigers. The sky was covered with a dark cloud from which rained swords, arrows and spears ... The first to charge was Ardeshir ... The rain of arrows was so thick that the armor of the soldiers was pierced like a sieve. The cloud of dust covered the face of the sun so that one could not say whether it was day or night ... For three days the warriors fought and at last Alaf Khan admitted defeat and drew back ...

The next day, the two armies met again ... Ardeshir rushed on the field like a lion and roared out a challenge. A Muslim knight charged at Ardeshir with his lance ... the two warriors were locked in combat; Ardeshir threw his lasso around the knight, unhorsed him, and cut off his head ...

This filled Alaf Khan's heart with rage. "Kill all the Parsis," he cried ... The din of clashing swords rose above the land, waves of blood flowed over the field like a river ... Ardeshir fought like a hero, but an arrow pierced his side, blood poured from his wound. Weakened, he fell from his horse and died ... The Hindus fought bravely, but in the end, the rajah was killed. A loud wailing went up from his men, and his lands lay open to the victor ...

The fall of Sanjan rendered the Parsis homeless. They took their Fire and fled to Bahrot ...

[Excerpted from "Kisseh-i Sanjan" by H. E. Eduljee, K. R. Cama Oriental Institute, Mumbai, 1991]

## My mother used to say

"The old forget. The young don't know." - Japanese proverb

**"Gayo avsar pachho na aavay"**

*A lost opportunity will not return.* An exhortation to the timid to take a reasonable risk.

**"Chalya chhe tya chaaro nahi, nay charo chhe tya chalya nahi."** *Where there are sparrows there is no grain, and where there is grain there are no sparrows.* This is used to comment on the perversity of Fate; e.g. families with children are too poor to keep their children in comfort, while childless couples have money to burn but no children to live up their lives.

**"Ghanay haatay rasoi na sudhray"**

*Many hands will not improve the dish.* Too many cooks spoil the broth. A project suffers if there are too many directors.

**"Khuda ni lakri no avaj nuthi"**

*There is no sound to God's stick.* Said when someone reaps, without warning, the result of his ill deeds.

**"Khaali vasun khukhday gunnu"**

*An empty vessel makes the most sound.* Said of a boaster with little ability.

**"Keedi sunchray, titter khaay"**

*The ant gathers (or stores), the partridge eats it up.* Said when a thrifty person's savings are spent by his heirs or flattering companions.

**"Ma mai bhula kay mera bhai? Ek dhayr or doosra kasai."** *Mother, who is better, I or my brother? Answer: one is a cleaner of outhouses while the other slaughters animals.* When one tries to appear better by contrast with another, people say there is not much to choose between them; they both are undesirable.

**"Haathi na daant, dekhadvana ek, nay khavana juda"**

*Elephants teeth - different for show and different for chewing.* (In Gujarati the word for tusk and tooth is the same.) Said of hypocrites (often politicians), who say one thing and do another.

**"Jay ma baap nay numay, tay pate bhuri nay jumay"**

*One who bows down to his parents, will always eat well.* One who respects his parents will have success in life.

**"Hatheli ma chand dekhadyo"**

*The moon shown in the palm of one's hand.* Said of a swindler who shows an incredible benefit from a highly suspect venture.

Submitted by **Jamshed Udvadia** and his sister **Mehru**. Jamshed retired from the Michigan Civil Service, and is now an editor for FEZANA Journal and contributor of its Laugh and be Merry column. He is a Storyteller (Shah Nameh and others) and acts in local theater productions. Mehru retired as head of the Zoology Dept. of Wilson College, Bombay University. She is involved in social and community work.



# Welcome to Youthfully Speaking



*'the mouthpiece for the next generation'*

## Challenging Traditions

Ushtavaity Davar

Many of our grandparents and parents grew up in a society that expected children to learn what was taught to them without questioning the reasoning or logic. Conversely, most of us youth today have been fortunate enough to grow up in a time when asking "why?" is an acceptable, and often expected question to ask. Asking "why?" enables us to explore more about what religion means on an individual level as well as a cultural and societal level. However, at the expense of lucid comprehension, should we challenge current customs and practices to better encompass our understanding, or will these questions and challenges ultimately lead to the alteration of sacred tradition?

One of the most prominent ceremonies of the Zoroastrian faith is the Navjote ceremony. This is the ceremony where we declare our faith and understanding of the Zoroastrian religion in front of God, family, and friends. However, like me, I am sure that many of you at the time regarded your Navjote day as the day where you recited months worth of memorization in front of a huge crowd, a video camera, and priests, all decked in your new Sudreh, pajama like bottoms, and a pair of shiny velvet slippers. Despite my lack of understanding and occasional shyness, there was a great sense of pride and honor knowing that this was the day that I was initiated into the religion that abides by "good thoughts, good words, and good deeds". Unfortunately it wasn't until a few years later that I realized the beauty and gravity of the words that I was reciting my Navjote day.

When we recited the Jaso-Me Avanghe Mazda prayer on our Navjote day, we said expressed our choice to be a Zoroastrian, not because we have to, but rather because it is something that we have a strong conviction about doing. Although I have never heard of any child protesting their Navjote, I don't know many who knew the intensity of the words that they were reciting. I know that many of us looked forward to our Navjotes, but ultimately the choice to have it was not made by us, but rather by our parents. If our parents had never wanted us to have a Navjote, we as children would probably not initiate one on our own. Thus, there seems to be a disparity between the significance of the Navjote and the level of understanding for a child undergoing the ceremony.

It is encouraging to know that now more than ever we are questioning why certain ceremonies are performed and what their significance is. This form of questioning to enhance understanding is something that Zarathustra himself encouraged. In the Gathas, Zarathustra mentions to a crowd of people gathered before him, that they should think over his words carefully and with clear thought, and then come to their own decisions.

Thus, we too should learn customs and traditions, but ultimately come up with our own understanding of what these traditions mean to us today. There are certain traditions about the Navjote ceremony that aren't feasible to change, such as the age of the child during the ceremony.







However there are certain aspects that can be altered to facilitate a greater understanding. The prayers recited in their original text bear grave significance. Chances are in Zarathustra's time, people understood the meaning of the words that were spoken at the Navjote. However, today most of us don't understand the Avestan text, so perhaps we should make it a practice to learn and recite our Navjote prayers in a language that we can understand. This way a child entering his or her Navjote will be more informed about the choices he or she is making.

Recently there have been many strides towards increasing awareness about the Navjote ceremony through pamphlets describing the ceremony to attending guests. However, I think it would be even more beneficial if the child could also recite a translation of the benediction in a language all can understand. By modifying our level of education and understanding of the Navjote, we are not sacrificing tradition and religious symbolism. We are merely following Zarathustra's example of using our good mind to make informed decisions of our own.

There are certain practices that need to be challenged through questioning. Do we as a youth really understand all the rituals and customs of the Zoroastrian faith? What can we do to learn more? As times change, we should look at what in our religion also needs to change. Zarathustra in his day, understood that ideas shouldn't remain stagnant and that we should change things to be applicable to our current lives. We are not altering tradition by questioning, but rather preserving it. By questioning and understanding the origin of certain traditions and how they impact our lives, we can make greater strides to preserve some of the most revered aspects of our religion.

## CALLING ALL PARSIS ...

My name is Diana Engineer, and I am in the process of writing my honors thesis, *The Parsi Experience: Bridging the Past and the Present*. The thesis will explore how the remarkable history of the Parsis has molded the current Parsi condition. I hope that its conclusions will increase our self-awareness--a factor essential to our survival.

The research for this thesis involves a short, anonymous survey that can be taken by *all* Parsis but is limited to *only* Parsis. The more participants, the more accurate the results will be, so please take the ten minutes needed to complete this survey. *It will be greatly appreciated!* Also, please forward this email to all your Parsi family and friends!

Please proceed to:

[www.DianaE.com](http://www.DianaE.com)

[If you encounter any problems with the site, please try cutting and pasting the URL into your browser rather than clicking on the link above.]

Thank you in advance!

Sincerely,  
Diana Engineer

[DianaE@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:DianaE@mail.utexas.edu)



## **Massive decline in the Number of Zarathushti's in Iran since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.**

**Nikan Khatibi**

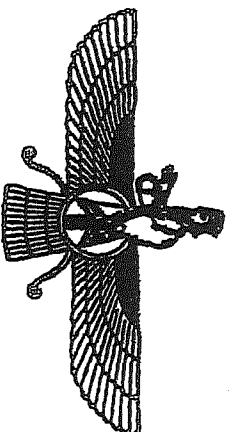
During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, records show that the number of Zarathushtis living in Iran reached over one million. As we came to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we reached a low of ten thousand and gradually increased to about thirty-four thousand by the end of the 1980's. What led to this major decline in numbers in Iran since the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

- The migration of many Zarathushti youth to India in search of economic opportunities. Many might compare the situation in Iran to the acts of discrimination that took place post-emancipation of African Americans here in the United States. Under the Islamic law and customs, anyone who was not Muslim was discriminated from job opportunities. This led to a massive increase in unemployment for many Zarathushti youth who were qualified to work. As a result, many Zarathushti youth sought the opportunity for economic well being by migrating to India.
- Voluntary Conversion. During the last century, many Zarathushtis have found themselves embracing such religions as Islam or Bahaiism. This decline in maintaining the religion is especially true for women, who after the immigration of many Zarathushti men to India have welcomed the idea to marry a Muslim and embrace Islam. Some fed up with the hardships brought on by being a member of the faith, welcomed the idea of equality and dignity as promised by the Bahai Faith.
- Conversion at any cost. The Arab Muslims were determined to create a united Muslim nation through all conquered lands and replace all other languages with the Arabic tongue. It has used religious wars, improper taxes, and religious discrimination to make its point since its existence.

Its very unfortunate to see such a decline in numbers for such a great religion. But we must take this as an example that we must continue to work hard to keep our religion alive and instead stop dividing. We are a united religion and should continue to pass on this message to future generations.

**Share your thoughts by emailing me at [Nikan2@aol.com](mailto:Nikan2@aol.com). Please state if you do not wish to have your thought considered for the next journal issue.**

**\*Special Thanks to Dr. Farhang Meher. He is indeed a great role model and leader for all youth to look up to.**



# "زرتشت" مرد عمل

برخی گفتارهای نیکی بر زبان می آورند و خوب شعار می دهند، اما شنونده از کجا می تواند بداند که گوینده تا چه حد در گفتار خود جدی است؟ میزان سنجش استواری در گفتار و شعار چیست؟ از کجا می توانیم بدانیم که گوینده پای بند گفتار خویش است؟

بی شک کردار گوینده و پای بندی او در عمل به آن گفتارها و شعارها بهترین وسیله سنجش صداقت گوینده است. آیا هیچ ملاک سنجشی بهتر از کردار نیک، برای تشخیص صداقت گوینده می توان یافت؟

تنها نیک گفتاران پای بند به کردار نیک هستند که از صافی سنج راستی می توانند عبور کنند و جوان «مردان عمل» را دریافت دارند. عرصه سخن فراخ است و جولان دادن در آن هزینه ای ندارد. شعار دادن از انترتین وسیله حضور در یک گروه است، تنها انسانهای پای بند اصول هستند که در دادن شعار، چاره احتیاط را رعایت می کنند، زیرا در سرشت این گروه، پای بندی به گفتار و شعار، و همینطور وفا به عهد و پیمان نهفته است.

اینجا این پرسش پیش می آید که آیا آنهایی که برای بهبود کشورشان و جهان آرزوهایی نیک دارند و آنرا بر زبان می آورند، باید دروغ گو محسوب گردند؟ شور بختانه باید بگوییم هر کس که از تندرستی برخوردار باشد و برای تحقق آرمان و آرزوهایش گامی بردارد، دستکم با خودش صادق نیست. یعنی اگر آرزوی و نیت نیکی در دلش باشد و لی نخواهد در راه به کردار در آوردن آن حرکتی به خود بدهد، باید گفت درجایی از کارش ایراد وجود دارد. یا آن آرمان و آرزو آنقدر برای او کم رنگ و بی اهمیت است که دلیلی برای هزینه کردن نیرو در آن احساس نمی کند و یا آدمی است سست و بی حال و بی انگیزه که توان پی گیری خواسته خود را ندارد.

تا آن آرمان و آرزو در درون شخص آرزومند، محبوس است، تنها صدمه اش به خود او می خورد. ولی هنگامیکه جنبه گفتار گرفت و گوینده آنرا شعارگونه بر زبان آورد، آنوقت در دیگران توقع پی گیری آن ایجاد می شود و اگر آن شعار به عمل در نیاید، در مخاطب سرخورگی و ناامیدی ایجاد می شود و او احساس می کند که فریبش داده اند و گول شعاردهندگان را خورده است.





## زرتشت "مرد عمل"

در حقیقت گفتار نیک و شعارهای زیبا اگر کردار را بدنبال نداشته باشد، نوعی دروغ گویی است.

گفتار بی عمل در حقیقت خواسته و یا ناخواسته، کوششی است برای فریب دیگران. پذیرش يك تعهد و وفا نکردن به آن از نمونه های آشکار پیمان شکنی است. و هر نوع پیمان شکنی تن دادن به دروغ است.

- دین زرتشت از فلسفه ای عالی و بی نظیر برخوردار است در این شك نیست! زرتشت پیام آور راستی، نه تنها فیلسوف، شاعر، ریاضیدان و ستاره شناس بود بلکه این ها را برای مردم و در خدمت مردم می خواست. زرتشت «مرد عمل» بود. روشنفکر و فیلسوفی نبود که فلسفه بیافد و در انتظار آن بماند که دیگران تئوری های او را اجرا کنند. او در عمل به آنچه می گفت پایبند بود و برای به اجرا درآوردنش با مشکلات بزرگی دست و پنجه نرم کرد!

اگر زرتشت تنها فیلسوف بود اندیشه اش بزودی از میان می رفت و در حوادث گوناگون و در دناکی که بر کشور شد و برای ما هیچ نشانی از آن نمی ماند. اگر پیروان زرتشت پیامبر، به راه او ایمان نداشتند و آموزشهای او را سینه به سینه و نسل به نسل در زیر تیغ جفای نمی کردند، امروز گروهی نمی توانستند با آن فلسفه، فخر بفروشنند و نگهدارندگان این دین را به چشم مخلوقات عقب مانده ای که هنوز به دین باور دارند نگاه کنند.

زرتشت پیامبر راستی است. او به آنچه می گفت در عمل سخت پای بند بود. او می دانست کسی که شعار می دهد ولی به آن عمل نمی کند، ریاکار است!

ما نیز به پیروی از پیامبران از «گفتار نیک» استقبال می کنیم ولی پیش از آن

انتظار داریم که گوینده پیامون گفتارش، «نیک اندیشیده» باشد و پس از بیان نیز چشم براه «کردار نیک» هستیم! زیرا آن گفتار نیکی که گوینده اراده و میل اجرای آنرا نداشته باشد، جنبه عوام فریبی پیدا می کند.

پس بکوشیم پیش از بیان شعار، پیامون آن نیک بیاندیشیم. و آنگاه که در درون خود به آن باور آوردیم، آنرا بر زبان برانیم و پس از بیان نیز خودمان نخستین کسی باشیم که برای اجرای آن استین همت را بالا بزنیم.



## زرتشت (( مرد عمل ))

اگر هر يك از ما چنین کنیم و در درون خود با خودمان صادق باشیم و در بیرون خود را موظف به اجرای گفتارهایمان بدانیم، حتماً در رسیدن به آرزوها و آرمانهای خود موفق خواهیم بود.

زرتشت «مرد عمل» بود و کسانی که می خواهند از او پیروی کنند باید «مرد عمل» باشند. میزان سنجش صداقت هر گوینده، عمل اوست.

اندیشه نیک، گفتار نیک و کردار نیک، پی در پی هم، آمال زرتشت و زرتشتیان است.

ما کسانی که کردار نیک را نادیده می گیرند زرتشتی نمی دانیم. کردار نیک را فراموش نکنیم!



در اینجا جا دارد، ببینیم چه عواملی، می تواند سبب شود که کوشندگان جدی به اجبار و یا به اختیار صحنه را ترک گویند.

اگر کسی یا کسانی بهترین برداشت ها را از آموزشهای زرتشت در دل داشته باشند، باز خود را با انبوه عوامل باز دارنده روبرو خواهند دید که منشاء

یکسانی ندارد. این دشمنان «جنبش احیاء» بر چند گروه اند:

گروه نخست که رسماً دشمنی می ورزند. گروه دوم که قصد دشمنی ندارند و نیتشان خیر است ولی کردارشان برای جنبش احیا کشنده است.

گروه دشمنان آشکار جنبش احیاء، خود بر دو دسته اند:

۱- دسته «زهر دهندگان»

۲- دسته «خون به جگر کنندگان»

دسته «زهر دهندگان» عملاً کمر به قتل کوشندگان می بندند.



افسانه؟

واقعیت؟

در مورد دوم، نیازی به معرفی «مانکجی» نیست خوشبختانه همه از خدمات او آگاهند و شادروان «رشید شهردان» در کتاب «تاریخ زرتشتیان، فرزندان زرتشتی» او را بخوبی معرفی کرده است. در مورد او و خدماتش فقط به چند جمله بسنده می کنیم:

مانکجی صاحب، کاری را بر عهده گرفت که خارج از توانایی انسانی است و در واقع کار رستگاری زرتشتیان هیچ کمتر از معجزه نیست.

۲- دسته «خون به جگر کنندگان»

این گروه سوهان روح و روانند. متخصص جنگ روانی و کارشناس مادرزاد خرد گردن اعصابند، فیلسوفان کتاب نخوانده اند، واعظان غیر متعظ اند، اندیشمندان بی اندیشه اند!

اینان نخست کارشان را با پچ، پچ آغاز می کنند و سپس هدایشان را بلند می کنند. چشمهایشان را می بندند و دهانهایشان را می گشایند. اینان همان کسانی هستند که فردوسی از آنها پرسیده است:

شما را به چشم اندرون شرم نیست؟ ز راه خرد مهر و آزرم نیست؟

دریغ از آلودن کاغذ به نام ننگین اینان! هم در موج نخست و هم در موج دوم و هم در این موج، در هر شهر و کشوری، می توان نمونه این ها را دید. در اینجا بی آنکه بخواهیم نام شخص ویژه ای را ذکر کنیم به یک جمله زیبا از شادروان رشید شهردان، اکتفا می کنیم:

داستان مساعی فرزانه مانکجی در اعتلای موقعیت زرتشتیان و ایجاد موانع و اشکال بوسیله حسودانی که او برای آنها زحمت می کشید، بسیار خونین است.





اگر دسته زهر دهندگان با زهر دادن به یکباره بدن را از کار می اندازند، اینان با خرد کردن اعصاب و راه انداختن جنگ روانی، توش و توان اندیشیدن و کار کردن را از کوشندگان می گیرند. اگر پاسخ آنها را ندهید، چنین می تواند برداشت شود که پاسخی ندارید، و اگر پاسخ گوئید، وقت گرانبها را برای هیچ، به هدر داده اید و از کار اصلی باز مانده اید! وجه تشابه هر دو دسته ی «زهر دهندگان» و «خون به جگر کنندگان» اسارتشان در «مربع خیانت» یا «چهار گوش پلید» است. اینان درون یک چهار ضلعی اسیراند! این چهار ضلع عبارتند از: خود خواهی، حماقت، وقاحت و حسادت!

تنها راه مقابله با این مربع خیانت، سازماندهی «مربع طلایی» و یا «چهار گوش زرین» است. اضلاع این مربع عبارتند از: آرمانگرایی، خردگرایی، شهامت و «از خود گذشتگی».

هر یک از اضلاع این چهار گوش زرین، ضد خود را در چهار گوش پلید، نخست خنثی کرده و سپس بر آن، چیره خواهد شد!



باشندگان در چهار گوش زرین، باید بر حق خود چنان استوار بایستند که ساکنین چهار گوش پلید، ناگزیر به ترك صحنه شوند! زیرا اینان بر حق اند و آنان بر ناحق! وجه مشترك باشندگان مربع شوم این است که این ها چنان بر ناحق پای می فشارند که کوشندگان زرین تردید می کنند که مبدا این ها درست می گویند زیرا اگر حق نداشتند این چنین اصرار نمی کردند. کوشندگان زرین عمق وقاحت اینان را نمی دانند زیرا خود از وقاحت بی بهره اند.



*The tyrant Zohak with two venomous snakes growing from his shoulders.*

[PICTURE COURTESY "THE LION AND THE THRONE", PROSE BY EHSAN YARSHATER, TRANSLATION BY DICK DAVIS, MAGE PUBLISHERS]

# SUNDAY STORIES

## 3. Persia falls prey to the tyranny of Zohak

By Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

Here is the next installment in our series of stories from the Shah Nameh. I continue to instill these stories with the spirited dialogue with which our neighbor, old Mr. Dhunjishah related them to my friends and me, when we were growing up. We hope you enjoy sharing these stories with your children, for they have been written with them in mind.

The evil Ahriman wants Zohak to be his instrument for the destruction of mankind. Zohak marches on Iran, deposes Jamshid after 700 years of rule, and Persia falls prey to the tyranny of a cruel king.

As Jamshid's pride grew, his divine *farr* faded. All his plans failed. His courtiers deserted him and his kingdom began to fall from grace. In the meantime, in a nearby kingdom, a young man named Zohak, had caught Ahriman's attention.

### Ahriman deceives Zohak

Zohak was a confused soul, and Ahriman easily deceived him into thinking that his father, the good-natured nobleman, Merdas, was against him. Before long, Ahriman convinced Zohak to kill his father, and take over his kingdom. Ahriman was not satisfied with this. He wanted Zohak to be his instrument for the destruction of all mankind. So, after Zohak ascended to the throne Ahriman appeared to him in the guise of a great chef.

"Zohak! King of the World!" he said, "I hail you! My gift to you are these fine foods ... there are none finer in all the world!"

He made a grand gesture with his hands, and the doors of Zohak's royal dining hall opened. Zohak's eyes opened wide in astonishment at the glorious array of delicious goodies before him. The gluttonous king ate them all ravenously and proclaimed, "This, my friend, has been a tremendous meal! Ask me for whatever you desire and it shall be yours!"

"My lord Zohak, I only wish for one thing," said the devious Ahriman, "I wish with all my heart to kiss your two shoulders."

It seemed to be an odd request, but Zohak was a vain man and he was flattered. "Come!" he said and Ahriman kissed his shoulders.

Then, in a twinkling of an eye, Ahriman disappeared. A murmur of disbelief went up in the dining hall as people looked around to see where the talented chef was. As they looked back towards the throne, however, they shrank back in horror. Zohak turned to see his reflection in the big

mirror of the hall: there he saw two venomous snakes growing out of his shoulders!

## The tyrant is cursed

Zohak searched throughout his kingdom for a man who could get rid of the snakes. Many men tried to simply chop them off but the snakes would grow back again.

Then a young man came to him and said, "Sire, there is only one cure for these snakes. Each day you must feed them the brains of two young men. The snakes will eventually die."

The young man was really Ahriman in disguise. He thought this scheme would cause Zohak to ultimately kill all the men in his kingdom and lead to the end of mankind.

Zohak would have tried anything to get rid of the snakes. So he ordered that two men be put to death each day and their brains be fed to the snakes.

While some escaped, many fell prey to Zohak's snakes. His kingdom grew to be an unhappy and desolate place, and Zohak began to look around for greener pastures to conquer. He heard of Iran, and Jamshid's decline as the king. He marched on Iran, imprisoned Jamshid and became King.

Thus, Jamshid was deposed after 700 years of rule, and Persia fell prey to the tyranny of Zohak.

*Next time:* Find out how Persia frees itself from the tyranny of Zohak. ■

**The kurds.** The men who escaped the snakes, with the help of some good courtiers in Zohak's kingdom, fled and never returned to their homes. It is believed that they are the ancestors of the people we know today as the Kurds.

### Shazneen Rabadi Gandhi

*lives in New York City. She writes as a hobby and welcomes your questions, suggestions, concerns, comments and constructive criticisms at [sunday\\_stories@hotmail.com](mailto:sunday_stories@hotmail.com).*

## READERS FORUM

*This column is a forum to present information and opinions. Letters (under 250 words) may be submitted to the editor. FEZANA Journal reserves the right to edit all materials for clarity and space.*

### On the Fall Journal

Thank you for publishing my fire temple design [Fall 2002] – it is satisfying to have one's creative endeavors appreciated. I was particularly interested in Rohinton Rivetna's suggestion of encouraging laity participation in the jashan ceremony. My design, expressed in the seating arrangement, makes provision for regular congregational prayers, where the community participates in worship and priests explain the meaning and purpose of prayers.

I would like you to know how much the Zarathushti diaspora of North America is admired for its progressive and dynamic work in so many fields of human endeavor – spiritual, communal, arts, sciences, business and sports – to enhance and encourage the cause of Zarathushtis. We salute you for all your sterling work.

*Kersey D. Moddie  
Essex, England*

### On the Winter Journal

I read Dolly Dastoor's wonderful article ["The Many Faces of Zarathushtis"] and the other excellent articles guest-edited by Mehrborzin Soroushian and Natalie Vania [FEZANA Journal, Winter 2002] and would like you to know how much I admire the articles, their writers, and the editors (guest and permanent). It was absolutely great!

Dolly has done a courageous and wonderful thing. To take the initiative to contact all those folks, to travel all over the world to meet them, and then write about it! Fantastic! My hat's off to her. I am so touched and thrilled that so many folks are attracted to the message of Zarathushtra and want to live their lives in accord with it ...

If I were in India, I would send all of you *torans* of fragrant tuberoses and

red roses and silver trays full of the most exquisite *mithai*. And if I were an Empress in ancient Iran, I would give you a beautiful province to govern, full of gardens and libraries. But since I am only a rapidly aging Yank in Chesapeake VA, let me at least give you all my admiration and thanks (and perhaps a smile for your hearts).

*Dina McIntyre  
Chesapeake, VA*

It has been said: "an unexamined faith is not a faith, it's a superstition." No lucid individual can make that statement after reading the Winter 2002 Journal. Rather, 100 years from now, NA Zarathushtis might look to that issue as being the impetus for our revival and resurgence. For that issue featured three remarkable articles.

Dr. Dastoor's article ["Many Faces of Zarathushtis"] might be the first of its kind and more importantly is the first call to action from a NA Zarathushti leader for the community to examine how we can and should include the numerous individuals across the globe who are now proclaiming the Zarathushti deen as their faith.

Drs. Soroushian and Vania's compilation of articles on Zarathushtrian education should be the blueprint for educating ourselves and the world at large on Zarathushtra's message. Our community must continue to make education a priority. Either FEZANA or each local community should implement these proposals into a curriculum that can be distributed to every Zarathushti organization.

Finally, Susan Karani's article ["Humanitarianism and Gathic Education"] amplifies and exemplifies the real and true ethic of Zarathushtra's message and should continually be emphasized.

The time has come to quit speaking of 'survival'; rather, now is the time



to speak of 'revival'. We must not let these articles simply remain for our reading pleasure; we must implement the action steps and thus, progress as a community!

Mazda K. Antia  
San Diego, California

I commend Nerina Rustomji for her succinct and distinct definition of 'hell' [*"The Liberal Arts and a Zarathushtrian Vision of Ethics"*]. It is enriching messages like these that savor the flavor of the human spirit. It is my hope that other readers will enjoy your article with the same enthusiasm and spirit in which you have expressed yourself so eloquently. I thank you for sharing this wisdom with us.

Meher D. Amalsad  
Westminster, California

## ***The religion, purged of myth and magic***

This interesting issue of FEZANA Journal was taken over by the 'Reconstructionist Movement' in the Zarathushti religion. All the key players of this movement were present, and the list of authors read like a Who's Who of this movement. Of particular interest was Prof. K. D. Irani's article [*"What Should Zarathushtrian Education Be?"*] where he declares: "Zarathushtra's is not a mythological religion and certainly not magical".

For a religion that might have actually coined the word 'magic' for the world, this is a very bold summation in my opinionated opinion!

How Dr. Irani prefers his religion bears little resemblance to the way

the living and breathing Zarathushti religion actually *is* or *has been* in its long and honorable history.

One of the richest in myth and magic, why should we purge our religious traditions of these treasures and gifts? By eliminating myths and magic from our religious teachings, would we not be at risk of indoctrinating our young to a very sterile version of a very fertile living religion.

Was Zarathushtra not partaking in deep magical consciousness when he was talking to Ahura Mazda and receiving answers? How could he listen to Gaush Urvan and hear its plea without his partaking of mythical consciousness? Empty of any myth or magic, can pure scientific or logical consciousness account for the idea of the soul surviving beyond death and receiving rewards or pun-



# ***Laugh and be Merry***

***By Jamshed Udvadia***



*[The apparent popularity of Saddam Hussein in his own country seems to be driven by the understandable desire of the common Iraqi to save his own neck. This reminds me of a couple of stories about Hitler and Josef Stalin.]*

Hitler used to have a weekly poll taken to determine who was the greatest leader in the world: F.D.Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin or Hitler. Predictably the German people hailed Hitler as the greatest, week after week. Hitler was puzzled one week, when the poll swung in favor of Churchill; so he sent his trusted spy to find out the cause. The spy found it was the women's vote that had turned the tide.

"Find out why the women are in favor of that fat cigar-smoking Englishman," raged Hitler.

Within a week the spy returned with this report: "Last week Churchill made a public speech exhorting the British to prepare to fight a long hard war. The tail end of the speech was accidentally broadcast over German radio. The women seemed to like his last sentence:

"It shall be long, it shall be hard and there shall be no withdrawal."

Stalin, the WWII dictator of Russia, was famous for re-writing history to suit his purposes and making his opponents confess to mistakes, real or imaginary, so as to boost his own power. No written material criticising government was allowed; freedom writers were rigorously punished.

When India's first president, the venerable Sri Radhakrishnan, visited Moscow, Stalin showed him around the communes with pride. He suggested that to be a good leader, one had to be ruthless and fearsome. He called up a young boy, about 14 years old and asked him how he felt about the new order in Russia. The boy reeled off a memorized list of the benefits of living in the commune, thanks to the graciousness of his beloved leader Comrade Stalin.

In order to test his interest in literature, Radhakrishnan, an admirer of philosopher Leo Tolstoy, asked the boy: "Who wrote the book War and Peace?" The obviously scared boy said he did not know. Observing the scowl on Stalin's face, Radhakrishnan kindly suggested that the boy could find out and let him know the next day.

However within the hour Stalin phoned Radhakrishnan to say: "You don't have to worry. The boy has confessed; he wrote it. He will be suitably dealt with."

ishments? Indeed, how can we examine and declare anything as 'sacred' scientifically or with pure rationality? Entrusted with our rich inheritance, do we dare truncate it carelessly into a new version because of the advice of a few scholars who may turn it into one void of its joyous elements and similar to what Vahabism is to Islam or Jehovah Witness is to Christianity?

Parviz Varjavand  
San Carlos, California

## Queen Esther

After reading Jehangir Poncha's review of Jon Berquist's *Judaism in Persia's Shadow* [Winter 2002], I would like to bring to your attention, the story of Queen Esther, mentioned in the bible. In *Behold Your Queen*, the author Mary Malvern, mentions that King Ahasuerus, a believer in Ahura Mazda, took to wife, the Jewish girl Hassadah; and goes on to expound upon his kindness to the Jewish people. There are many other references as well, to this little-known piece of history.

H. Daruvala  
Mumbai, India

[A search for "Queen Esther Ahura Mazda" on [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) yielded an astounding 69 matches; and some very interesting reading. - Ed]

## Chai Hame Zarathushti

Many of us sing our Zarathushti "national anthem" "Chaiye Hame Zarathushti" with great pride, which is very good. However, the melody belongs to the "Blue Bells of Scotland" – note for note. It is alright when we sing it in India, where it is not noticed by the Scots. But now that we are spreading out around the globe, this borrowing will be noticed, and we will look rather foolish.

Isn't it time we came up with our own melody? And it will have to be in English this time, as we are now speaking more English than Gujarati.

Jehangir Medora  
Toronto, Ontario



**Mehli Mehta**, on board the *USS Marine Falcon*, on his way to the USA, September 20, 1947 [photo courtesy of Sorab K. Ghandhi].

## Remembering Mehli

I would like to share some fond memories of my brief encounter with Mehli Mehta [see Obituary, FEZANA Journal, Winter 2002] in 1947. Both he and I, among others, were selected as Tata Foundation Scholars, and set out for the USA on August 17, two days after Indian Independence. We sailed on the S.S. Strathmore to England and then on the USS Marine Falcon to the USA, where we arrived on September 26th. Mehli was a Senior Tata Scholar, and had already been to the USA on an earlier fellowship for music studies. He took us under his wing for the duration of the trip, and provided moral support to us youngsters who were headed for an uncertain future in a foreign land ... Mehli was our constant companion until he saw me off on the train for Chicago, headed for the University of Illinois.

Our first introduction to the US consisted of being thrown off the boat late at night at the New York docks, after a gruelling hour passing through customs. Mehli's help in getting us hotel rooms that night was much appreciated after this intimidating experience. Over the next few days, he took us around the city. We

went with him to the top of the Empire State building and the Statue of Liberty, and eventually for an Indian dinner at the Kashmir restaurant. The establishment was one of the very few Indian restaurants in New York in those days, and was run by a Parsi gentleman who had studied engineering at Cornell university. Imagine my surprise on finding out that I was related to him! Actually, no real surprise, since all Parsis can eventually work out a relationship, if we go back far enough.

Well, I have been in this country for 55 years now. I regret however, that I was unable to make contact with Mehli during his lifetime in this country. But now it is too late.

In sadness,

Sorab K. Ghandhi, professor  
Escondido, California  
[gandhi@ieee.org](mailto:gandhi@ieee.org)

## A tribute to the Maestro

Any tribute to the late Mehli Mehta would not be complete without pointing out how proud he was to be a Zarathushti; and how eager and pleased he (along with his family) was to meet and be with Zarathushtis, however humble, wherever and whenever he could – a trait also graciously evinced by his illustrious son, Zubin.

Although both were bestowed international awards, any recognition by a Zarathushti organization meant a lot to them, as revealed by Mehli's gracious and talented wife, Tehmina. They were also appreciative of their lifelong association with the late Dasturji Bode – a fact I gathered from them as well as from Mrs. Homai Bode herself. Mehli was gracious enough to be the first to come and appreciate my views after my lecture at a Houston congress which honored him and Zubin.

I hope his great example inspires our youth to be proud to be Zarathushti.

Kersey H. Antia  
Orland Park, Illinois



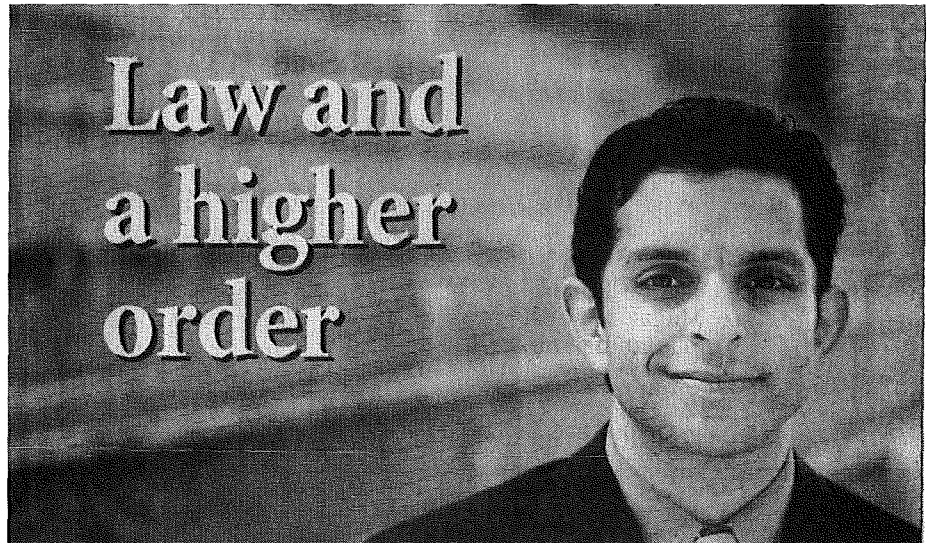
Excerpted from an article that appeared in *THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, July 19, 2002.

## Holiday greetings now a click away for many religions

By Ofelia Casillas  
Tribune staff reporter

When the Zoroastrian new year comes around, Roxana Mehta can't just buy a Navroz card at the corner drugstore. But since mainstream web sites have begun offering electronic greeting cards to members of minority faiths, the 28-year-old Naperville consultant has a way to share the holiday with family members scattered worldwide ... Every year, 17,000 Zoroastrian cards are sent out on Bluemountain.com, although these numbers pale in comparison with the 943,000 everyday Christian cards (not counting Christmas) ...

There are specialty sites such as *Zubin.com*, where cards have images of the Fravashi, a guardian spirit, and Zarathushtra, the faith's founder. Zubin Medora, 35, a network engineer, started creating Zoroastrian cards ... Now, every new year up to 3,000 cards are sent from his site...



PHOTO/GINNY DIXON

## Federal court clerk is also a priest in the Zoroastrian religion.

By JAMES D. DAVIS  
RELIGION EDITOR

Mazda Antia doesn't really have an identity problem. But he does get bemused when he tells people he's Zoroastrian, and they say, "Oh, so you're from Jamaica?"

The young federal court clerk then patiently explains that Zoroastrians are not Rastafarians. The lat-

ter religion is a pan-African faith formed in the 20th century. Antia holds to a Middle Eastern faith some three millennia old.

Most of the time Antia, 28, wears a blue suit, doing legal research for Chief District Judge in Fort Lauderdale. But for a string of special occasions, he dons the white robe and headpiece of a priest ... He says Zoroastrians fit well among Jews and Christians because their beliefs are so similar ... We have free will to make good or bad choices ...

[Excerpted from an article in the *FORT LAUDERDALE SUN-SENTINEL*, July 20, 2002]

## In Death, the Unlovely Vulture Is Sorely Missed



PHOTO: SANTOSH VERMA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A few vultures remain, but their drooping necks foretell their death.

By CELIA W. DUGGER

Bombay – up on Malabar Hill, in the midst of this teeming, polyglot metropolis, breezes off the Arabian Sea caress the bungalows of the rich and rustle into a 50-acre forest that has for centuries been the place where Parsis, followers of the ancient prophet Zoroaster, brought their dead to be devoured by vultures ...

But something has gone terribly wrong at Doongerwadi, the tranquil park dedicated to Zoroastrian death rituals. Barely a dozen vultures remain, not enough to quickly and

fully consume the 1,000 bodies placed in the Towers of Silence each year.

Scientists have formed a partnership with the Parsis of Bombay – one of India's tiniest but most successful religious minorities – to save the vultures, and, with that, the Parsis traditional method of disposing of their dead...

And so Parsis are faced with a wrenching quandary that has stirred an emotional, polarizing debate ...

[From *THE NEW YORK TIMES INTERNATIONAL*, March 1, 2001]



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**WZCC Business Digest**

**WZCC Recognitions** Committee (chaired by Ness Lakdawala) has announced the recipients of the first annual recognitions of outstanding Zarathushti entrepreneurs and professionals [see p. 97].

The **Middle East** chapter chaired by Meher Bhesania (bhesania@emirates.net.ae) was inaugurated in Dubai and Muscat, in November, and already boasts an enthusiastic membership of over 60 [see page 95].

The **India** chapter inaugural conferences held in Delhi (on January 12) and in Mumbai (January 18-19) were successful beyond expectations [see page 16]. Over a hundred new members signed up. Core groups have been formed to carry the work forward, headed by **Dadi Mistry** in Delhi (mistry@del2.vsnl.net.in) and **Kersi J. Limathwalla** in Mumbai (kersi@bom3.vsnl.net.in).

The **WZCC economic/cultural delegation to Iran**, will be June 14-24, 2003. All who wish to experience Iran, visit ancestral heritage sites, attend a business conference in Tehran, and explore possibilities for business ventures are encouraged to join this tour [see page 95].

The Chicago chapter, (chair Hoshang Karani) is spearheading an effort to form a **Business Advisory Board (BAB)** of “experts” in various fields, to serve as a resource to advise, mentor and help incubate fledgling businesses. Other chapters may contact

Hoshang at ***hkarani@msn.com*** for a sample plan.

The Chicago chapter will hold a conference – **“Encourage Zarathushti Business!”** on July 12 in Chicago [see left]. All business persons, professionals and especially the youth, are encouraged to participate.

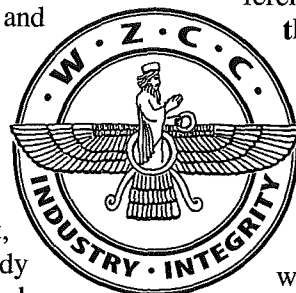
Discussions were held with **Zoroastrian Cooperative Bank** management in Mumbai, and a draft charter written for a Zarathushti Limited Partnership (LP), that could eventually move towards a WZCC cooperative bank.

The **WZCC website** at ***www.wzcc.net*** (not .org) managed by Homi Davier, continues to add new functionality and enhancements, through services provided by **Avesta Computing**, for which WZCC is deeply grateful.

The **e-group**, ***zchamber@yahoo.com*** coordinated by Zareen Karani Araoz provides an excellent opportunity for posting business-related news, announcements, job opportunities and networking. To subscribe, send email to: ***zchamber-subscribe@yahoogroups.com***.

For WZCC information, visit ***www.wzcc.net***, or contact WZCC secretary Edul Daver at 17 Geiger Lane, Warren, NJ 07059, tel: (732) 469-1866, ***daver@acupowder.com***. ■

**Rohinton Rivetna**, President, WZCC  
***Rivetna@aol.com***, (630) 325-5383.



**WORLD ZARATHUSHTI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

All business persons and professionals are invited to join. Visit:

***www.wzcc.net***

(Website designed, maintained and hosted by Avesta Computing Service of New Jersey)

To join the Zarathushti business email group, send an email to:

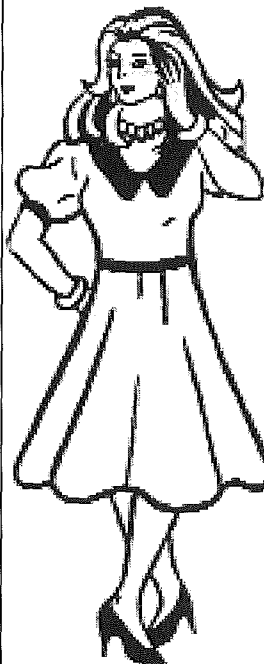
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*The Dubai team, from left, Kersy Bhesania, Oofrith Contractor, Meher Bhesania (chapter chair), Baji Bajan and Cyrus Magol.*

## **WZCC Middle East chapter started in Dubai and Muscat**

In the last few months, while the world battled it out on the fields of cricket, golf and tennis, a small group of Zarathushtis devised their own brand of excitement and started focusing on the formation of the **Middle East group of WZCC**. After many meetings and endless hours of work, on November 17th, 26 prominent Zarathushtis made history by raising the banner of WZCC in Dubai, the 'City of Gold'. About 35 Zarathushtis gathered for the inaugural function on November 20, in Muscat.

**Opportunities in the Middle East.** Zarathushti professionals hold key positions in large business houses and semi-government organizations. In the construction industry *Shapoorji Pallonji & Co.* have built palaces and monuments of architecture, which have earned respect and goodwill for our community. There are about 2000 Zarathushtis presently living in the Middle East region.

The Middle East is growing. There is enormous potential. Growth is there throughout, but as of today the places offering the most potential are Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Muscat and Doha. Job positions we have presently identified are in areas of accountancy, audit and senior management positions in Muscat. Several members have expressed their willingness to assist Zarathushtis interested in these positions. *For information contact Meher Bhesania, Chapter Chair, WZCC Middle East Group, bhesania@emirates.net.ae, tel: 009714-334 84 33*

## **Parsis in India - Looking to the future**

The launch of the WZCC India chapter provides us with an opportunity ... More than 50 years after independence, India still remains a 'developing' country. What will it take to reach the goal of prosperity, where food, shelter, clothing, health care, are no longer major preoccupations for the vast majority of the country's teeming millions? Do Parsis have a place in bringing Indian standards of living up to those of the 'developed' world?

Can the world-wide Zarathushti diaspora contribute to such a mission? Let us not despair at our small numbers. As a fellow interfaith worker in Washington DC reminded me, it took Jesus Christ only twelve disciples to change the face of the world. Our objectives are significantly more modest and our goals realistic. There is a vast array of developmental opportunities ... Tools such as the internet are new assets available to us. The task for the WZCC is to identify areas where we can invest our resources ... so we can go from strength to strength, in creating prosperity for ourselves, our community, our country and our world.

— Behram Pastakia, Washington DC, (bpastakia@aol.com)

## **WZCC Economic Cultural Delegation to Iran**

June 14 - 25, 2003

Those who wish to experience the cultural heritage of Iran, attend a business conference in Tehran, and explore possibilities for business ventures are invited to join this tour.

**Hosts in Iran:** WZCC (Iran Chapter) headed by Khodayar Attaie.

**Cost:** \$800-\$1000, including boarding, lodging and travel in Iran.

### **Program:**

Jun 13: Tehran

Jun 14 and 15:

Business Conference

Jun 16: Shiraz anjuman, Naqshe-Rustom, Pasargadae

Jun 17: Persepolis

Jun 18: Kerman anjuman

Jun 19: Kerman and Bam

Jun 20: Yazd anjuman

Jun 21: Pir-e Sabz

Jun 22: Pir-e Banou, Pir Herisht

Jun 23: Isfahan

Jun 24: Tehran

**Information/Reservations:** Contact Rohinton Rivetna, Tel: (Chicago) (630) 325-5383, Rivetna@aol.com,

## **WZCC seminars**

**The New York Chapter** (chair Rusi Gandhi), IZA and ZAGNY, co-sponsored a seminar, February 9th, at the Darbe Mehr. Albert Shikiar, Access-Care, Inc. spoke on Long Term Care Insurance. Lunch was hosted by Arnaz Maneckshana, of AXA Advisors, LLC financial consultant.

**The Houston Chapter** (chair Kaemerz Dotiwalla) invited Abzeer Tye-bji, CEO of Shipcom Wireless, to speak on "Entrepreneurship from Concept to Market", on June 19 at the Houston center.

On March 9th, Sarosh Collector, Kershaw Khumbatta and Zarir Sethna presented a financial seminar at the Houston center. Topics covered included tax law updates, retirement plans, IRS and qualified plans, college savings 529 plans and more. ■



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## NEW BUSINESS

**Parsiana Lodge**, in Auckland, New Zealand, offers very economical, lodge/hotel facilities to new migrants, students and visitors. They also help settle new migrants, of which there have been many lately – from India, UAE and Canada. Contact Parsiana Lodge owners, Aspi and Dolly at shahlori@xtra.co.nz, www.parsianaodge.com. ■

## POSITIONS WANTED

● **Telecommunication engineer**, experience in cellular and wireline telecommunications, and his wife, who has a background in **customer relations**, have recently emigrated to Toronto from Mumbai. With the economic slowdown in Canada, they are willing to consider even entry level jobs. Contact Shazneen Gandhi, at rabadis@hotmail.com.

● **Mobed**, from Mumbai, who has served as mobed in Mumbai, Deolali, Secunderabad and as head priest for 10 years in Iran, is interested in moving to North America. If there is a suitable opportunity at any darbe mehr, please contact Hosi Mehta at hosimehta@aol.com.

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE

● Positions available at an IT services company, for **websphere/Java developer**, **Middleware Engineer**, **MAC desktop support** and **QA Systems Analyst**. Contact Dr. Kersey Antia at antia@juno.com.

● For positions in the Middle East see page 95.

### Shortage of nurses in USA

Nightingale Recruiters, Inc. is seeking nurses from countries like India, Pakistan and Philippines, to work in the US. Given the shortage of nurses (RN and LPN) in the USA, the need for labor certificate/'employer sponsored visa' has been waived. Visas are available in the category of 'immigrant (green card)' and 'temporary work permit (H1-C)'. Visit www.usnursestaff.com, or contact nightingaleny@usnursestaff.com. ■

## WZCC RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING ZARATHUSHTI ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS

It is with pleasure and pride in our Zarathushti community, that we announce the recipients of the first annual recognition of outstanding Zarathushti entrepreneurs and professionals. It was a difficult task for our distinguished panel of three judges to select from the nominations received, in three categories: (A) Outstanding Zarathushti Entrepreneur, (B) Outstanding Zarathushti Professional and (C) Outstanding Young (35 and under) Zarathushti Entrepreneur/Professional. We are confident that these recognitions will spotlight the enormous latent talent in our Zarathushti community.

Our goal is two-fold: primarily to recognize our outstanding brethren who have achieved success in their chosen field of endeavor; and no less importantly, to encourage our youth with role models of these success stories to strive for excellence in their careers.

Please watch for the Call for Nominations for next year's WZCC Recognitions and be forthcoming in nominating worthy Zarathushti business persons and professionals. Thanks to Yasmin Pavri for setting up the structure and process for the WZCC Recognitions.

*Ness Lakdawala, Chair, WZCC Recognitions Committee*  
nesslakdawala@dectron.com



**Cyrus R. Mehta**  
*Outstanding  
Zarathushti  
Entrepreneur*

**Cyrus R. Mehta** (PhD, Operations Research, MIT) co-founded **Cytel Software Corporation** (annual sales \$2.8 million) in Cambridge, MA in 1987 and in Pune, India in 1998. Cytel's software is used at universities (Harvard, Yale ...), pharmaceutical corporations (Abbot, Bristol Myers, Wyeth ...) and medical centers (Sloan-Kettering). Cyrus is adjunct professor of biostatistics at Harvard University, and founded the Harvard Zoroastrian Association.

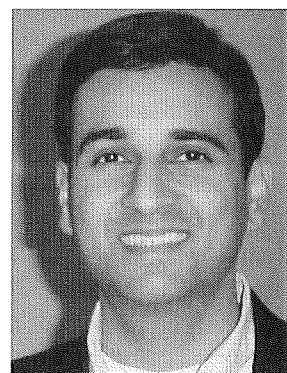
**Arda-e-viraf Minocherhomjee** (PhD, MBA, University of British Columbia) is a principal and managing director of William Blair Capital



**Arda-e-viraf  
Minocherhomjee**  
*Outstanding Zarathushti  
Professional*

Partners, a premier venture capital firm. Arda, recognized by peers as "lead investor" heads the firm's healthcare investments, managing over \$100 million. He is on the board of 7 companies, and was Wall Street Journal's All Star Analyst.

**Hanoz Gandhi** (MS, Electrical Engineering, MIT), director of **Bose Corporation**, near Boston, developed the E-business strategy for Bose, leveraging the internet as a key part of the company's revenue generating and operational infrastructure. He led the implementation of off-shore development at Bose, and is presently expanding these more globally. ■



**Hanoz Gandhi**  
*Outstanding Young  
Entrepreneur/  
Professional*



# BEER HERE

As founder and CEO of one of Britain's fastest growing companies, COBRA Beer Limited, 41 year old Karan Bilimoria wins "Asian of the Year 2002" award in London

*By Roxanne Patel*

**K**aran Bilimoria spent his college years dreaming about beer – though not necessarily in the same way as his pub-crawling Cambridge classmates. The Hyderabad native had moved to England to study accounting and law, but in his adopted country of curryholics, he soon discovered his true calling: as a brewer of a less gassy lager perfectly matched for Indian cuisine.

"The market was dominated by harsh, gassy Eurofizz beers, all poor partners to spicy food," Bilimoria, now 41, recalls, "I wanted to produce a lager which would compliment rather than fight against Indian food."

Using a \$20,000 student loan, Bilimoria brewed his first batch of Cobra beer in 1989, with the help of a European-trained Mysore brewmaster. At 27, the handsome Cambridge polo star was already a chartered accountant, but he knew little about the competitive British beer market, or his potential customers.

While personally delivering the first bottles of Cobra, Bilimoria spent

hours convincing non-drinking restaurant owners to serve his brew. His persistence paid off. Cobra quickly became one of the fastest-growing small companies and the biggest-selling Indian bottled beer in the UK, where it is sold in 5,000 Indian restaurants, and exported to some 30 countries, for annual sales of almost £50 million.

Fourteen years after that first batch, the young entrepreneur is a well-known business leader and mentor, with a wife and three small children, aged one to six. Besides Cobra, he also puts out General Bilimoria Wine – named for his father, a Lt. General in the Indian Army – again matching the flavor to Indian cuisine. He also operates *Tandoori Magazine*, a trade publication for the British restaurant industry, and this year plans to launch *curryzone.com*, which will allow Indian food lovers to make reservations, order food online and trade recipes.

With all that, it's little surprise that in December, 2002, Bilimoria became the first Zarathushti to be named

Britain's "Asian of the Year", a 15-year-old honor recognizing notable contributions of Asians in the United Kingdom. (Previous recipients have included cricketer Imran Khan, industrialist Sir G.K. Noon and Baroness Shreela Flather.)

"I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to those past winners who have truly inspired me," Bilimoria said after receiving the award in London. "Our vision at Cobra is to *aspire and achieve against all odds*, and I sincerely hope that my winning this award will be an inspiration." ■

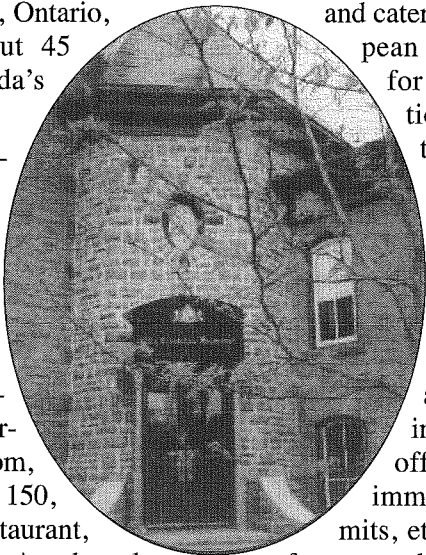


**Roxanne Patel** is a senior staff writer for *Philadelphia Magazine*. Her articles have appeared in national publications such as *Good Housekeeping* and *Cosmopolitan*.

## Looking for business-minded persons

We are in the process of purchasing an upscale Heritage Inn, located on the main downtown street in historic Carleton Place, Ontario, a small town about 45 minutes from Canada's capital, Ottawa.

This charming, 3-storey stone building has 18 lovely hotel rooms, including a bridal suite, a well-equipped kitchen for handling small or large catering functions, conference and meeting room, banquet facilities for 150, a well-furnished restaurant, dining area and bar. A pub and licensed patio are at one end of the hotel. There is a quaint 2-bedroom apartment as part of the building complex. There is ample parking at the hotel and in the surrounding area.



We are looking for business minded persons or couples to operate a part or all of the following: (1) Restaurant and catering (Canadian, European and ethnic cuisine) for banquets and functions, in and outside the hotel, (2) Pub/bar/patio, (3) Conference and meeting rooms, and (4) Hotel rooms and bridal suite.

Individuals must be able to live and work in Canada (we cannot offer assistance with immigration, work permits, etc.) Serious inquiries from qualified people only please. Investment requirement is minimal, as operation is practically turnkey. Please contact Rukshana and Jehaangir Bulsara in Ottawa, at [jb@roofmaster.net](mailto:jb@roofmaster.net).

## Two Parsis among world's 500 richest people

Two Parsis are among the 500 richest people in the world, as published in the 17th annual Forbes Magazine list for 2003 (at [www.forbes.com/home/2003/02/26/billionaireland.html](http://www.forbes.com/home/2003/02/26/billionaireland.html)). The list is topped by Bill Gates (worth \$40.7 billion).

**Pallonji Mistry**, 73, head of the Mumbai-based construction giant, **Shapoorji Pallonji & Co.**, ranked No. 199, with a worth of \$2 billion. The company, founded by Mistry's visionary father, Shapoorji Pallonji Mistry in the 1930s, is a hallmark in the industry.

With modern management and state of the art technology, the younger Mistry has taken the company to even greater heights, building factories, refineries, atomic energy plants, stadiums, auditoriums, hotels (Oberoi and Taj), Indira Gandhi Airport ... and their latest ventures – the Palace of the Sultan of Oman, and

other palaces, highways and monuments in the Middle East.

**Adi Godrej** [below] 60, ranked No.



386, with a worth of \$1.1 billion. Adi Godrej is chair and managing director of Godrej Soaps, and chair of Godrej Foods, Godrej Sara Lee, Godrej Pillsbury, Godrej Properties and other companies. The **Godrej conglomerate**, built by four generations of a close-knit business family, is a household name in India today.

In the past 10 years, the only other Zarathushtis on Forbes' list have been Adi Godrej (1999, \$1 billion), Adi Godrej (1997, \$1.2 billion) and Ratan Tata (1997, \$250 million). [Based on posting by R. Kevala on creating [awareness@yahoo.com](mailto:awareness@yahoo.com)]

## Polly Umrigar ...

[Continued from page 74]

day fielding is, however, much sharper," he said.

After matriculating from Mumbai's Bharda New High School, Umrigar completed his B.Sc. in chemistry and botany from St. Xavier's College.

In his long career in first-class cricket, including five summers of playing in the British Lancashire League, he scored 14,629 runs and took 259 wickets. For six seasons he captained the Bombay (now Mumbai) team in the Ranji Trophy, and five times the team won the championship. In the 1970s, he was the Indian national team's manager on tours of West Indies, New Zealand and Australia. From 1978-82, he was chairman of the all-India selection committee.

Many national and international honors have come his way, but one especially will keep his name alive in the hearts of cricket fans: One of the gates of the city's premier Wankhede Stadium is called the Polly Umrigar Gate. [Hilla P. Guzder's profile is on p. 54].

## England's Ronnie

[Continued from page 75]

winning the NatWest Cup final and the Benson and Hedges Cup.

In 1998, the 6-foot-4 right-handed batsman and medium-pace bowler scored 1,001 runs in first class matches, at an average of 32 runs an inning and took 41 wickets, his best performance as a bowler being 5 wickets for 47 runs.

Irani has been to Nouruz functions at London's Zoroastrian House and showed interest in his Zarathushti roots, particularly how, when and why the first Zarathushtis landed in India.

[Hilla P. Guzder's profile is on p. 54]

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Worry is interest paid  
on trouble before it  
falls due.**  
- Fed Newsletter

## Financial Progress Report

### Giving Something Back



**Dr. Jerry M. Kheradi** *chair of FEZANA Funds and Finance*

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With **Charitable Trusts** you can maximize your tax advantage. This is a win-win situation because FEZANA benefits from your generosity and you benefit by writing some of your donation off on your tax return. There are two types of charitable trusts: Charitable Remainder Trusts and Charitable Lead Trusts. They both work to benefit your charity – FEZANA – but in opposite ways.

A **Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT)** is an irrevocable trust, which enables you to donate assets to one or more charities at the time of your death, but provides you an income during your lifetime or the lifetime of your beneficiary. The assets you contribute provide you with a tax deduction for the year you make the contribution. There is a tax table your accountant will use to calculate the actual deductible amount. The charity receives the donation in the future, at the time of your demise.

*Example:* You own investment real estate, which has appreciated greatly over the years. If you sold that property outright you would have to pay capital gains taxes. However, if you decide that you do not need the income from that property, you can create a CRT using this property. The CRT sells the property avoiding the capital gains tax that you would pay. You receive a tax deduction for the value of the donated property for that year; and you also receive a yearly income from the interest generated by the trust for the rest of your life. At the end of your lifetime or the lifetime of your beneficiary, the charity (FEZANA) receives the remaining amount in the trust.

**Charitable Lead Trust (CLT)**, an irrevocable trust, works the opposite way by providing an income to the charity during your lifetime but all assets will transfer back to you or your family at a time you specify – 10 to 20 years.

*Example:* In a CLT, the donated property is sold within the trust thus avoiding the capital gains tax like the CRT. The tax deduction you receive differs because the trust will revert back to you or your heirs so your accountant will have to tell you that amount. Your charity (FEZANA) receives an annual income for the specified number of years. At the end of those years, the amount in the trust transfers back to you.

**Make giving a habit, not an occasion!** By supporting the **Thousand Points of Light Campaign**, you can make a much greater difference with your yearly contributions toward a specific FEZANA Fund (General, Scholarship, Welfare, Critical Assistance, Religious Education and Journal Fund). I encourage you to give something, no matter how small. Start giving by deciding on an amount that you can give every year and develop a plan for your giving. You are making a difference in your community and you will be able to witness firsthand the improvements brought about by sustained, planned giving. This is the true reward of charitable giving.

Kindly mail your donations to: Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, CA 92069. Thank you for your continued support, in the name of Ahura Mazda,

**Jerry Kheradi, MD**, Chairperson, Funds and Finance Committee

**Rashid Mehin**, Treasurer

*Committee: Rustom Kevala, PhD, Mitra Nadjmi-Rashidi, Esq., Rita Engineer, Celeste Kheradi.*

**“Thousand Points of Light”** donors are shown on the next page. Each \$100 counts as 1 Point of Light. Help us reach our goal of 1000 points. Donations received October 1 - January 30, are shown in bold.



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A Wellwisher, MI	1		1	<b>Dr Rustom &amp; Yasmin Kevala, MD</b>	<b>+++ 2</b>	<b>2</b>
Dr Babak Abadi, PA	1		1	Delara Kheradi, NY	1	1
Parviz & Simin Ardeshipour, NC	1		1	Celeste Kheradi, RI	15	15
<b>Dr. Cyrus F Austin, AZ</b>	<b>Wel 13</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>Dr Jerry Kheradi, RI</b>	<b>Sch +++ 65</b>	<b>65</b>
Porus Austin, CA	2		2	Kershaw & Nazneen Khumbatta, TX	1	1
<b>Zubin &amp; Silvia Balsara, AR</b>		<b>Gen 1</b>	<b>1</b>	Jasmin & Maneck Kotwal, NJ	2	2
Thritee, Soozan & Trista Baxter, NY	++ 1		1	Zenobia & Shahrookh Lala, MI	1	1
<b>Beach Cigar Group, FL</b>	<b>Gen/Wel/Cr 20</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>Mathew Lungen, NY</b>	<b>Sch +++ 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Zazu & Tinaaz Bhandara, CA	1		1	<b>Jinobya Machhi, WI</b>	<b>Cr 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Firdaus & Jasmin Bhathena, MA	1		1	Borzoo Kushesh & Mahindokht	** 1	1
Rustom & Sheroo Bhathena, OH	1		1	Dolly Malva, CA	1	1
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Dr. Lovji D. Cama, NJ	7		7	Noshir & Yasmin Medhora, TX	2	2
Dr. Nadir Camay, CA	1		1	Farahnaz Mehdiabadi, TX	1	1
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Cyra & Lyla Contractor, PA	1		1	Merwan and Rukshana Mehta, MO	1	1
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Katy & Farrokh Cooper, CA	2		2	Hoshi & Nawaz Merchant, NJ	2	2
Tommy and Nairika Cornett, GA	1		1	Pesi Mistry, NY	1	1
Tammy & Behram Dalal, NC	1		1	Tehmtan & Aloo Mistry, MO	1	1
Dr Ardeshir & Parvin Damania, CA	2		2	Jehangir and Olive Mobed, IL	1	1
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Meher N. Dastur, CA	2		2	Jamshed & Farzana Palsetia, MA	1	1
Nari & Dinoo Dastur, CT	1		1	Farhad & Firoza Panthaki, MA	11	11
Erv Soli & JoAnn Dastur, FL	2		2	Drs. Khushru & Roda Patel, IL	1	1
Edul & Niloufer Daver, NJ	1		1	Mr & Mrs Randolph Paulling, GA	+ 1	1
Homi & Nargish Davier, TX	1		1	Yasmin & Shapur Pavri, TX	1	1
Jimmy & Freny Deboo family, MI	1		1	Dr Parvez Pohowalla, OR	1	1
Yezdi N Dordi, CA	5		5	<b>Godrej &amp; Piloo Randeria, TX</b>	<b>Gen 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Jimmy Dubash, VA	1		1	Dr. Minocher Reporter, OR	1	1
Manek R. Dustoor, MI	2		2	Jamshed & Tamara Rivetna, TX	1	1
A.D. & G.A. Dutia, AL	3		3	Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL	2	2
Tony & Swati Elavia, MA	1		1	Dinaz & Dan Rogers, OR	2	2
Freddy Engineer, CA	1		1	Villoo & Solee Rudina, TX	1	1
<b>Rumi Engineer, CO</b>	<b>Sch/Wel/Cr 3</b>		<b>3</b>	Purvez & Aban Rustomji, TX	+ 2	2
Adil Feroz, GA	1		1	Neville Sarkari, WY	1	1
Rusi D Gandhi, NJ	1		1	Nargesh & Aspi Sethna, TX	1	1
Sorab Gandhi, CA	5		5	Prochy Sethna, CA	10	10
Eugene Gauger, MI	1		1	<b>Behram Shroff, VA</b>	<b>Cr 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Jamshed & Yasmin Ghadiali, NJ	2		2	Dr Burjis & Hovi Shroff, FL	5	5
Rashna Ghadialy, IL	1		1	Dr Nariman & Parrin Shroff, FL	2	2
Mr. & Mrs. Sorab K. Ghadiali	3		3	Zubeen Shroff, NY	1	1
Soonu & Jal Godiwalla, TX	1		1	<b>Feroze &amp; Anahita Sidhwa, TX</b>	<b>(Sch/Wel/Cr) 10</b>	<b>10</b>
Noshir L Hansotia, MO	1		1	<b>Yezdi N. Soonavala, MI</b>	<b>Gen 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Behram K & Farieda Irani, TX	4		4	Nazneen & Ehler Spliedt, CA	1	1
Hormuz & Shahdookht Irani, GA	6		6	Bella Tata, BC	1	1
Mervan and Katayoun Irani, MD	1		1	<b>Khurshed M Tengra, ID</b>	<b>Gen 1</b>	<b>2</b>
Rustam H. Irani, MA	1		1	Jamshed Udvadia, MI	5	5
Jim & Homai Jagus, PA	5		5	Perry Unwalla, FL	1	1
Iraj Jahanian, MD, MO	1		1	Rayomand J Unwalla, PA	1	1
Khurshid & J.J. Jamadar, TX	2		2	Dick & Sheroo Vazir, FL	2	2
Rumi & Kashmira Jamsetjee, IL	1		1	Jer Vijan, AZ	1	1
<b>Dinshaw &amp; Goolcher Joshi, MD</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Cr 1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Dr. M. Darius Vohman, GA</b>	<b>Gen 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Khorshed & Dr Firoze Jungalwala, MA	+ 1		1	Parviz & Parvin Yeganegi, BC	4	4
Jamshed & Rita Kapadia, MA	1		1	ZAPANJ, DE, PA & NJ	2	2
Homi & Shireen Kapadia, PA	5		5			
<b>Dr Natasha Karanjia, PA</b>	<b>Cr 2</b>		<b>2</b>			

[Continued on next page]

PLEASE GIVE FROM YOUR HEART

## FEZANA DONATIONS AND APPEALS

**Donations.** Unless specified otherwise, all donations should be sent to: **Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, 583 Beverly Place, San Marcos, California 92069, tel: (760) 891-0699, Email: rmehin@yahoo.com.**

Please make donation checks payable to "FEZANA", specifying the fund name (General, Welfare, Critical Assistance, Religious Education, Scholarship and Fezana Journal). For specific earmarked donations, please also include the recipient's name, in the memo section on the check. All charitable donations to FEZANA are tax deductible in USA. Donors of \$250 or more will receive a confirmation letter for their tax records. For donations under \$250, please use your canceled check as a receipt.

**Appeals.** All appeals for community welfare, medical, social and critical assistance should be sent to the FEZANA Welfare Committee: chair – **Houtoxi F. Contractor, 2301 Colony Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237, tel: (412) 367-2948; HFMC31@aol.com.**

**For more information, visit the FEZANA website: [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org)**

## Acknowledgements

FEZANA gratefully acknowledges donations received from October 1 - January 30. Only donations over \$50 are acknowledged here. Donations to "Thousand Points of Light" are listed on the previous page.

### General Fund.

Farokh & Maneck Contrator, LA (\$50); Adi Davar, VA for Scholarship and General (\$100); Kersi B. Shroff, VA (\$100 Cdn).

### Journal Fund.

Farokh & Maneck Contrator, LA (\$50); Rohinton & Roshan Rivetna, IL (\$175); Hoshedar & Anahita Tamboli, FL (\$175).

**Religious Education.** Farokh & Maneck Contractor, LA (\$50).

### Welfare/Critical Assistance/Medical Assistance Fund.

Beach Cigar Group, Inc. FL (\$3006); Farhad & Houtoxi Contractor, PA (\$100); Farokh & Maneck Contractor, LA, (\$100); Alayar Dabestani, BC (\$1000); Khurshed J. Dastur, PA (\$50); Farrokh Mistree, GA (\$200); Manou Mobedshahi, CA (\$600); Prochy P. Sethna, CA (\$500); Mehrborzin Soroushian, CA (\$130); ZANC, Zoroastrian Anjuman of Northern California (\$1827); ZAPA, Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania (\$171).

Mr. & Mrs. Kermani in memory of **Dr. K. Harvesf** (\$500).

Dinaz Keki Irani, PA, in memory of **Keki Khodadad Irani** (\$100).

In memory of **Mithoo S. Morris** (\$100).

### Scholarship Fund.

In memory of **Behram Sohrab Rostomji** of Karachi (\$108).

## "Foot in the Door"

Most of us fortunate enough to read this journal have our "foot in the door". We all do have our own problems but we have the freedom to think good thoughts, speak good words and do good deeds. Most of us also have the opportunity to be happy and share happiness for the sake of happiness.

Some in our community need help to get their foot in the door to attain these basic needs. We have requests from refugees who have risked their lives to get away from a hostile environment so they can live a basic Zarathushti life. There are people who need help with personal, marital and family needs. We have young people in our community who need our support and help. Some are so extremely talented that they could be the best in the world but are not eligible for scholarships.

After individuals get famous we like to associate with them, rub shoulders with them and brag to our neighbors that they belong to our community. If we can support them when they are growing and in need, maybe they would like to associate more with us after they are famous?

Welfare means to fare better, to uplift, enhance. We can all help by supporting our FEZANA Welfare Committee to do as much good as we can. Let us all contribute to bring our Zarathushti community to new heights.

*Houtoxi Contractor (chair) and Hosi Mehta (co-chair),  
FEZANA Welfare Committee*

## Thousand Points of Light

[Continued from previous page]

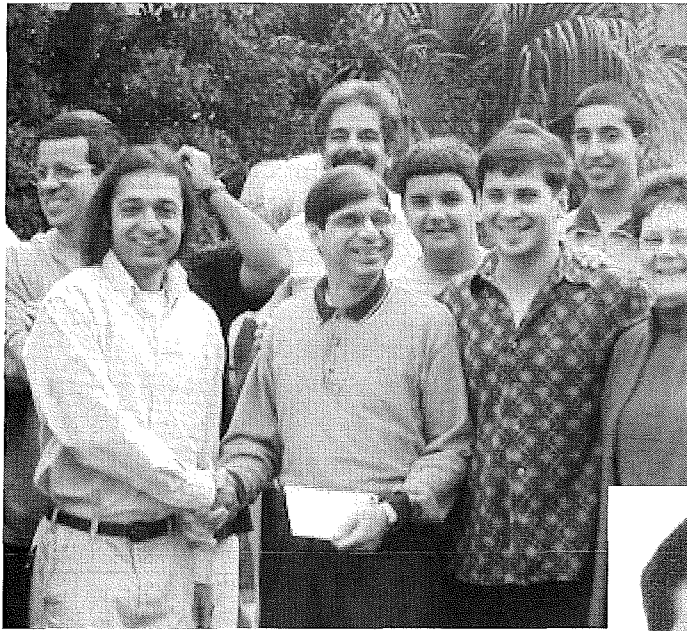
Farangis Zardoshty & family, AZ	***	260	260
Mehraban Zartoshty, B.C		25	25
Z Assoc of Alberta, Canada		3	3
Atlanta Z Anjuman, GA		1	1
Z Assoc of N Calif, CA		2	2
Z Assoc of N Texas		2	2

**Total Points** **616** **16** **632**

\* in memory of Dr. Keikhosrow and Morvarid Harvesf

\*\* in memory of Irandokht Ezzati  
\*\*\* in memory of Mobed Faridoon Zartoshty  
+ in memory of Nargesh Mistree  
++ in honor of the 70th birthday of Dr Jehangir Kotwal  
+++ For Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Scholarships

**Funds:** Cr=Critical Assistance, Gen=General, Jr=Journal, Rel=Religious Education; Sch=Scholarship, Wel=Welfare. ■



## Five students awarded FEZANA's Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Academic Scholarships for 2002-2003

Five students were awarded the **Mehraban Dorab Kheradi Academic Scholarships** of \$1,000 each, for the 2002-2003 academic year. The scholarships are administered by the FEZANA Academic Scholarship Committee chaired by Dr. Dolly Dastoor. [To apply for next year's scholarships, see Call for Applications on the next page]. Winners are shown above [clockwise from left]:

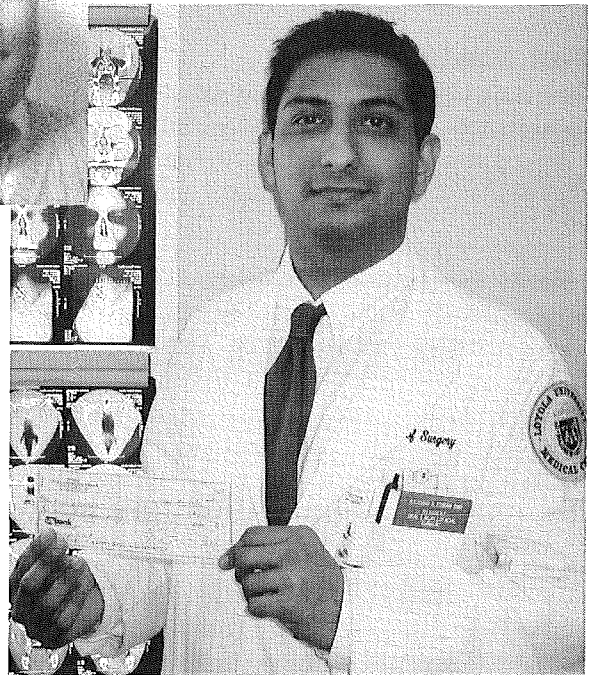
**Jehangir Bhada**, who is studying for his Master's degree in geological and environmental sciences at the University of Florida, Gainesville, was presented the award by Mezdi Birdie, at a Thanksgiving get-together in Ormond Beach, Florida, attended by about 20 families from the Florida community.

**Zarin Behramsha** is studying business and computer sciences at the University of Texas, Austin, and is a past president of the Zoroastrian Youth Group of Houston. The Zoroastrian Association of Houston matched the amount of the scholarship. ZAH executive Hoshang Sethna is shown above, presenting the award.

**Vispy Bharucha** [inset] is studying for his Masters degree in petroleum engineering at the University of Oklahoma.

**Naushad Edibam** [shown above in his laboratory holding the check] is studying dentistry and oral surgery at Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago. The scholarship was awarded by ZAC president Arnava Elavia at the ZAC Pateti function.

**Ervad Zal Karkaria**, who is studying for a Master of Arts in history (human rights issues) at Concordia University, Montreal, was presented the award by scholarship committee chair Dr. Dolly Dastoor and ZAQ president Ness Lakdawala.



### **ZAC Student Loans/Scholarships**

The Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago is proud to announce that they will be awarding scholarships to deserving Zarathushti students for the 2003 - 2004 school year. All full-time, Zarathushti students who are currently studying or planning to study at institutions of higher learning in North America are encouraged to apply. Applicants will be evaluated on merit, community involvement and financial need. For information and application forms, please visit the ZAC website at [www.zac-chicago.org](http://www.zac-chicago.org) or contact ZACscholarships@yahoo.com.

### **Fali Chothia Trust**

The Fali Chothia Charitable Trust, established under the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc. provides scholarships and

interest-free loans to needy Zarathushti students, based on financial need, educational achievement and community service. This year, WZO (US chapter) will add up to 50% to every scholarship. Contact trust president Soli Choksi, 10300 Farnham Drive, Bethesda MD 20814, tel: (301)564-3276.

### **Fellowships for 'New' Americans**

Founded in 1998, the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans, supports graduate education for outstanding immigrants and children of immigrants. They pay half the graduate school tuition and \$20,000 in support. Applicants must have a distinguished undergraduate record. Visit [www.pdsoros.org](http://www.pdsoros.org).

### **Harvard Summer grants**

Students in the comparative study of religion, history, anthropology, gov-

ernment and related academic fields are invited to apply for summer scholarships under the Pluralism Project of Harvard University. The summer grants range from \$1000 to \$2000. Visit [www.pluralism.org/research/student\\_grant.php](http://www.pluralism.org/research/student_grant.php). [Posted by B. Pastakia on creating awareness @yahoogroups.com].

### **Appeals for welfare and medical assistance**

Among welfare and medical assistance appeals received by FEZANA in the last few months are the following. Please send your donations to FEZANA [see page 102] marked "medical assistance":

● **Shapoor Hataria**, 55, is suffering from complications following a ruptured appendix, heart problems and brain damage. After a 3-month stay in the ICU at Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai, he is now bedridden. Mrs. Hataria appeals for help to cope with his medical and nursing expenses of Rs. 8000 per month.

## **FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS (2003-2004)**

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

**Applications are invited for the FEZANA SCHOLARSHIPS and the MEHRABAN DORAB KHERADI ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIPS.**

The scholarships are open to Zarathushti applicants who have obtained admission for attendance at institutions of higher learning (accredited degree-granting colleges or universities) in USA or Canada.

**Scholarships:** Scholarships for the academic year 2003-2004 will be awarded in September 2003.

**Eligibility:** To be eligible the applicant must complete the application form and provide documentation for: (1) proof of status in USA or Canada (a minimum of one year residency in USA or Canada is required); (2) past academic records and accomplishments; (3) program of study; (4) annual financial need including assistance already pledged by other funds, charitable institutions or the institution of choice; (5) other financial assistance available from family and friends; (6) community service including contributions to Zarathushti functions and organizations; (7) three reference letters.

**Award Criteria:** Applicants will be rated on Merit of Scholastic Achievement (40%), Financial Need (40%), Extra-curricular Activities (10%) and Community Service (10%).

**Application:** Application forms are available from the FEZANA website at [www.fezana.org](http://www.fezana.org) or from Dr Dolly Dastoor at [dastoor@total.net](mailto:dastoor@total.net). Signed and completed application forms should be post-marked August 1, 2003 to:

**DOLLY DASTOOR Ph.D, Chair FEZANA Scholarship Committee**  
3765 Malo, Brossard, Quebec Canada J4Y 1B4



● 2-year-old boy from Ahmedabad needs a **corneal transplant**. Born with corneal problems, the child is now almost blind. The family has tried treatments and surgery in India, but to no avail. They are seeking financial help to enable treatment in the US. For information contact their cousin Bakhtavar Desai in Ohio (bfdesai@aol.com, tel: 513-829-7818)

● 14-year-old **Mitra Irani** of Pune, is suffering from HIV she acquired through blood transfusion. She is on anti-viral medicines costing Rs. 20,000 per month. The WZO Trust for Women and Children has been extending support since 2000, but more funds are now needed. "These high costs are not possible for me and my husband, who are jobless now, to afford," writes Mrs. Irani, "It will be very kind and generous of you to do a good deed to help us. God Bless You."

### **"Food Scheme" for the unfortunate in Dadar Parsi Colony, Mumbai**

Mrs. Mithoo Jesia (Mumbai tel. 2414 9571) has started a "food scheme" for poor, old and infirm Parsis living in the Dadar Parsi Colony area in Mumbai. The scheme, under the

Mancherji Joshi Memorial Trust, provides food tiffins for 21 people, some so ill, weak and bedridden, that they have to depend on neighbors to survive. The meals, prepared by a young Parsi, are delivered daily by a 'dabbawalla' who also helps the bedridden to receive, eat and clean the tiffin box.

At Rs. 20 (40 cents) per meal, it costs Rs. 840 (\$17) to feed 21 people 2 meals for one day; or Rs. 25,200 (\$500) to feed them for a month. Can you sponsor a meal for these unfortunate members of our community, maybe on your birthday or anniversary? Send your donation to FEZANA [see page 102] marked "Food Scheme".

### **Family welfare agency takes orders for sudrehs**

The "Liaison Committee for Organization of Parsi Charities and Social Services" is a family and welfare agency. They have a work center for sewing sudrehs, pyjamas, etc. *Please contact them with your sudreh*

*order*. They also organize children's holiday camps, counseling services and help with books and stationery. Contact the Committee in Mumbai at 2388 2748, or Mrs. Kanga in New Jersey at 201-227-1890. Please send donations to FEZANA [see page 102] marked "Liaison Committee".

### **Update on Nazneen**

The Kolah family is back in Helsinki after baby Nazneen's surgery at Sloan Kettering, New York, last November. "It has been very difficult since we got back. Nazneen was in the hospital first to fight off infection, and then for high dose chemotherapy with the bone marrow transplant. Then she will get radiotherapy treatment through March. After that hopefully things will get better and we pray there is no relapse." Their thank you card reads:

Dated Forever,  
Your help and consideration for Nazneen is highly appreciated and unforgettable.  
- Nazneen, Aspi and Jasmine

### **Looking for a bone marrow match**

My husband Shahzad was diagnosed with MDS (a type of leukemia) in March 2002, and his only hope and cure is a bone marrow transplant. We have held several drives (including one at Congress 2002), but have not found a match for him. FEZANA is the only way I can reach out to all Zarathushtis in North America, and appeal to them to *get tested to register in the national bone marrow registry*. The test is free, and all the nurse would do is take 5 drops of blood from the fingertip. To register, visit [www.marrows.org](http://www.marrows.org).

*Gratefully yours,  
Pouroo Dorabshaw (pouroo@hotmail.com, tel: 614-855-3089)*

### **Athornan Mandal – WZO Full Time Mobed Welfare Scheme**

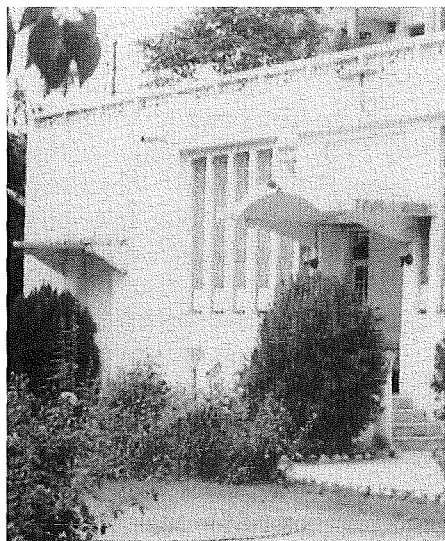
In 1996 we realized the importance of an educated, intelligent, knowledgeable and articulate class of mobeds who would form the nucleus of a strong and effective base through which the spiritual needs of the community could be addressed. We conceived the idea to encourage and develop such a class of young mobeds who would profess mobedi as a full time profession. To achieve these objectives it would be necessary to ensure that mobedi was transformed into an economically viable profession, and young mobeds should have inculcated into them the requisites essential to cater to the spiritual needs of the community, not only in India, but worldwide.

In partnership with the Athornan Mandal, WZO launched the "**Athornan Mandal – WZO Full Time Mobed Welfare**" project to transform thought into reality. In 1997, with a corpus of Rs. 9 million from two donors, we were able to launch this project. Under the guidance of a group of respected persons, headed by Dasturji JamaspAsa, 38 young Athornanzadas presently avail of the scheme. Each is extended support ranging from Rs. 1250 to Rs. 4000 per month.

With interest rates on the decline, income from our corpus has been adversely affected, with a resultant annual shortfall of about Rs. 175,000 (\$3500). We are approaching you with a humble but sincere request to kindly consider assisting us in this project which will have a positive significance on the continuation of our faith and fulfillment of the spiritual needs of the community. We look forward to the generous support of FEZANA, member associations and individuals in USA and Canada.

*Dinshaw K. Tamboly, Chair*

*[Donations may be sent to FEZANA, marked "Mobed Welfare Scheme"]*



## Vadodara's Umrigar agiary renovation

With the passage of time and increase in population, to over 1200 in Vadodara (Baroda), the Umrigar agiary [above] is in need of renovation, including a new facade with verandah, washing facilities, a larger jashan hall and prayer space. The estimated cost is Rs. 35 lakhs (\$70,000). Fund raising chair, Shavak Patel appeals to generous Zarathushtis in North America to support this project generously. Donors over Rs. 15,000 will be commemorated on a marble plaque. Please send donations to FEZANA, marked "Vadodara agiary".

## Godiwalla (Langrana) agiary needs repairs

The 154-year-old P. N. Godiwalla (Langrana) agiary, in Mumbai, is in urgent need of funds for repair (estimated at Rs. 5 lakhs or \$10,000) maintenance and *kathi*. "It is becoming more and more difficult to manage the agiary with a limited and reducing income," writes trustee Rustomji Garda, "and ever increasing costs." Send donations to FEZANA, marked "Godiwalla Agiary".

## Delhi dar-e-mehr and dharamshala renovation

Contributions for renovations to the beautiful Delhi dar-e-mehr, and dharamshala, run with dedication by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman [see article on page 17] may be sent to FEZANA, marked "Delhi anjuman".



This column on living a healthy and balanced Zarathushti life, is brought to you by **Mehroo M. Patel, MD, FRCS(Ed.), FFAFP**. Questions and suggestions for future topics will be welcome. Dr. Patel has a family practice in Chicago since 1978 and practiced as a cardiothoracic surgeon in Mumbai and UK. A fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, she was nominated twice as Illinois Family Physician of the Year.

## Lifestyle: We are how we live

We live in the land of milk and honey. We have, and enjoy, all that our hearts desire, at the click of a switch or the touch of a button. High-tech labor saving devices, all those gadgets for brushing our teeth, preparing all our meals and everything in between are at our command. Utopia! Alas, the same technological revolution we have created for ourselves, endangers our health. Our body's building blocks – the DNA were programmed to fend for adversities – icy cold winds and desert heat, starvation and hard work, hunting and gathering food and nurturing the young ones. They have not kept pace, evolving to adapt to our changing lifestyle, our nutritional indiscretions, energy conserving devices and sedentary living.

We have successfully tamed the scourges of parasites and infections but fallen prey to diseases caused by metabolic disharmony – obesity, hyperlipidemia, atherosclerosis and diabetes – to mention a few. Besides hypertension, diabetes, heart diseases, stroke, kidney diseases and others, the metabolic disharmony is also responsible for cancers and endocrine diseases, and disorders of the immune system whose natural function is to fight the invaders and protect the person. We have become weaker and less equipped to withstand stresses of living.

We are endowed with inherent resilience and adaptability. We can

harness those to our advantage, by first educating ourselves and then making choices conducive to our well-being and longevity.

## Adjusting our lifestyle for healthier living

If we know what ails us, how and why, we should and can use our resourcefulness, industry and technology to reverse our march towards our own suffering and downturn towards weaker health. This is what we call *adjustment of our lifestyle* for healthier living.

We can make our muscles and joints stronger and healthier by indulging in *graduated exercise* as part of our everyday living and/or adding these to our daily-life activities as working-out at the health club. A walk to the grocery store, parking the car further away to walk the distance, using public transportation, bicycling, gardening, and house cleaning are some of the activities which are gentle energy burners that step up metabolism and tone the body tissues. Investing in health club memberships and home exercise equipment are alternatives that make us feel good, and our pocketbooks lighter!

Waking up 15 minutes earlier for a simple *nutritious breakfast*, and taking time out of the hectic workday for a *nutritious lunch* will make work time more rewarding – achieving more in lesser time. This will also protect us against gorging on a huge

steak and dessert at dinnertime followed by a large dose of television or computer in the stress-laden evening. A smaller **well-balanced nutritious dinner** followed by an hour of yard work, walk to the store or other activity involving the whole family will work wonders to reduce stress, secure good night's sleep and rise refreshed the next morning!

“ a small dose of self-discipline and a will to reform are the essential attributes to improved life-style. ”

What we eat and drink and how, has direct effect upon our health. We are surrounded by plentiful nutritious foods available easily and affordably. Bureaucratic controls and labeling on food items have the added advantage of allowing us to make appropriate choices. Of course, we need to educate ourselves and learn what is appropriate. Remember, we eat to live and not vice versa. "Eat as much as I can today lest I die tomorrow" is a recipe for unpleasant consequences. Retraining ourselves by attention to detail, a small dose of self-discipline and a will to reform are the essential attributes to improved life-style.

Armed with knowledge we can choose to live a healthier happier life.

Next issue: Nutrition ■

## ■ ■ ■ MATRIMONIALS ■ ■ ■

*FEZANA will coordinate initial contacts between interested parties; we do not assume any responsibility for verifying credentials. Contact Roshan Rivetna [see cover].*

**Attractive and slim  
Parsi female, 22,  
B.S. Business,  
currently  
pursuing MBA.**

Seeks well-educated gentleman with a caring nature, good personality and sense of humor.

**Please contact:  
MyFairLdy@aol.com**

[F02-28]

**Gentleman, 34**, marketing trade promoter, journalist, e-commerce; in Iran. Looking for suitable marriage with Zarathushti girl overseas. Call (Iran) 098 913 276 36 82, email k\_westa@hotmail.com. [M02-15]

**Male, 27, 5' 9"**, project manager working for telecom company, born in USA, loves travel, music and sports. Seeks professional, good

natured, woman 23-29. Email: notafraid11@yahoo.com. [M03-3]

**Young Male**, caring, in charge of accounts department in New York, awaiting green card. Seeking honest, outgoing woman with good sense of humor to share his enthusiasm for outdoor activities, classical music and reading. Email: ffd@rocketmail.com. [M03-4]

**Male, 22**, supervisor in telemarketing agency in Calcutta. Willing to relocate to USA or Canada. Call Freny at (541) 482-2349. [M03-5]

**Pleasant-looking female, 34**, CPA, working in leading accounting firm in USA. Seeking tall, professional, highly qualified gentleman. Contact Mrs. T at 281-564-8004. [F03-6]

**Female, 38**, B.Sc., professional, working for financial institution in Mumbai, currently visiting brother in US; fun-loving, caring, enjoys music and traveling. Contact apalkhi@yahoo.com. [F03-7]

**Female, 28**, petite, 5 ft, health field graduate; enjoys cooking, soft rock music, reading, traveling and tennis. Seeks ambitious man who respects women, loves children and believes in good values and strong family ties. parsi\_101@yahoo.com. [F03-8]

**Male, 31**, good-natured, cultured, software engineer, residing in UK, seeks correspondence with slim, well-educated Parsi girl with good family values. Email: tareng2003@yahoo.com. [M03-9]

Seeking suitable Parsi match (living and working outside India) for **young and pretty Parsi girl**, wholly educated and brought up in UK; BA (Hons), MBA, well-versed in culinary art, outgoing, friendly and sociable. Contact darakapadia@hotmail.com. [F03-10] ■

### **Parsi Singles of North America**

PSNA is a free club for all single Parsi and Iranian Zarathushtis 21 and over, throughout the world, who are interested in traveling to various scenic and fun destinations, and having an opportunity to make new acquaintances and friendships in a relaxed atmosphere.

Simin, a participant of PSNA's first trip, to Las Vegas in December, writes: "During this short and enjoyable stay we made friends and did some sight-seeing. The main purpose is to meet like-minded people looking for a Zarathushti life partner. In spite of our differing backgrounds, we all shared one thing in common – our genuine desire to perpetuate the principles of our great religion and marry within the fold. Singles over 21 are encouraged to contact PSNA for upcoming trips/events."

If you would like to be informed about future trips, or can help coordinate them, please contact the club administrator at: **ParsiSinglesNA@msn.com**. ■

## MILESTONES

*Please send all submissions for "Milestones" to Mahrukh Motafram, 2390 Chanticleer Drive, Brookfield, WI 53045, tel: 262-821-5296, email: mmotafram@msn.com.*

## BIRTHS

**Chloe Choudhury**, a girl, to Tenaz and Chesley Choudhury, in Houston, on October 29.

**Jasper Cooper**, a boy, to Zarir and Tazeen Cooper, in Mississauga, Ontario, on December 7.

**Karizma Crawford**, a girl to Yasmin Crawford and Antish Alleck, a sister to Darnesh, of Chicago, on December 8.

**Sarosh Daver**, a boy, to Diana and Porus Daver, brother to Urvaksh, in Mississauga, Ontario, on November 12.

**Rayaan Irani**, a boy, to Jehangir and Sharmeen Irani, in Houston, on August 9.

**Farida Marciano**, a girl, to Adil and Dilnavaz Marciano, in Vancouver, Washington, on January 16.

**Xerxes Tehmus Mobed Mistry**, a boy, to Jafarshan and Tehmus Mistry, brother to Yazdy, grandson to Yazdi and Thrity Mistry (all of Auckland, New Zealand) and Jamshed and Roshni Mobed (of Houston), in Auckland, on September 22.

**Darayus Zal Parakh**, a boy, to Carole and Zal Parakh, brother to Zarine, grandson to Khurshed and Silloo Parakh, in Dallas, on January 2.

**Alea Yasmeen Rivetna**, a girl, to Tamara and Jamshed Rivetna, sister to Olivia Zarine and Natasha Diane, granddaughter to Rohinton and Roshan Rivetna; and Peggy Akin and Ray Davis, in Dallas, on Feb 14.

**Nikki Lilly Soroushi**, a girl, to Mitra Partow and Babak Soroushi, sister to

Rustin, granddaughter to Pouran Contractor and Aziz Partow, on November, 19 [ZANT].

**Mithra Sarkari**, a boy, to Hutoxi and Marazban Sarkari, in Denver, on November 24.

**Rohan Srinivasan**, a boy, to Tushna and Naresh Srinivasan, brother to Malika, on October 23 [ZANT].

## NAVJOTES, SEDREH-PUSHI

**Darius Choksy**, son of Jamsheed and Carol Choksy, grandson of Mr. and Mrs. K. N. Choksy of Colombo, Sri Lanka, at the Galadari Hotel, in Colombo, on January 3.

**Yanni Desai**, son of Adi and Lillian Desai of Houston, on December 28.

**Sam Polad**, grandson of Sam and Goolu Polad of Houston, in Winston Salem, NC, on December 27.

**Cyrus Pooniwala**, son of Adil and Rashna Pooniwala of Chicago, in Mumbai.





**Carl and Cyrus Printer**, children of Benaifer and Sarosh Printer, in Corona, CA, on December 28.

**Anosh Sethna**, son of Phiroze and Manjari Sethna of Durham, NC, on November 29. Dastur Kersey Antia and Ervad Mazda Antia officiated.

**Rayomand Tata**, son of Spitaman and Shiraz Tata of Chicago, in Jamshedpur, India.

#### NAVAR INITIATION

**Rayomand Ravji**, 13, son of Ervad Jamshed and Dinaz Ravji of Chicago, was initiated as a Navar on December 24, roj Khordad, mah Amardad YZ 1372, at the Cama Baug agiary in Mumbai. Er. Keikhushroo Ravji and Er. Kersi Bhada officiated. The ceremony was preceded by 24 days of ritual purification ceremonies.

#### WEDDINGS

**Cyrus Cama**, son of Rohinton and Mahrukh Cama, to **Farzana Davar**, daughter of Edul and Niloufer Davar,

all of New Jersey, at the Bridgewater Manor, New Jersey, on November 29.

**Hanoz Gandhi**, son of (late) Villy and Homi Gandhi of New Jersey and **Shazneen Rabadi**, daughter of Roshan and Nadir Rabadi of Toronto, at the Banaji Atash Behram in Mumbai, on December 29. A reception followed at Gallops, Mahalaxmi Racecourse in Mumbai, and again on March 15, at the Park Ridge Marriott in New Jersey.

**Jehangir Katrak** to **Sameera Sohrab** Mazkooori, in Toronto, on November 21.

**Zubin Mistry**, son of Rati and Noshir Mistry, to **Patrizia di Battisti**, daughter of Silvana and Peter di Battisti, in Toronto, on October 27.

**Thrity Suderwalla**, daughter of Rattan and Daisy Suderwalla, to **Timothy Shane Campagna**, in Oakville, Ontario, on August 25.

**Mehelie Warden**, of Vancouver, BC, to **Nazneen Challa**, in Houston, on November 29.

#### DEATHS

**Perin Khurshid Anklesaria**, 88, mother of Farrokh (Rufina) Anklesaria, in St. Louis, MO, on January 28.

**Rohinton K. Bulsara**, 67, of Lafayette Hills, PA, husband of Gulnar, father of Anahita, Keki and Zarine, son of Goolbai, brother of Sherene, of heart failure, on December 29 [see obituary].

**Minoo Behramsha Daroo-wala**, 78, father of Naozer and Percy Behramsha of Houston, in Secunderabad, India, on October 15.

**Mahindokht Foroughi**, 63, wife of Jamshid Khorasheh, mother of Shahriar and Shideh, in North Vancouver, BC, on October 4.

**Bahram Kianianfard**, 76, husband of Pary, father of

Mehran, Delaram, and Mandana, in North Vancouver, BC, on September 1.

**Coomi Rustam Mehta**, 89, mother of Nazeen Hamid, in Richmond, BC, on October 21.

**Keki Mody**, husband of Jolly, father of Marazban (Nawaz) Mody and Benaifer, in California, on December 4.

**Roshan Mistry**, 87, wife of late Erachshaw, mother of late Povru Bomi Writer, Dadi (Nergish) Mistry (Delhi), Sharukh (Renu) Mistry (Bangalore), Dinsoo Dara Rivetna (Chicago), Kety Bomi Bhaka and Kety Behram Khambatta (Mumbai), in Bangalore, on March 10.

**Thrity Nanavaty**, 81, wife of Fram, mother of Feroze and Kershaw Nanavaty and Shirin Sethna, in North Vancouver, BC, on October 6.

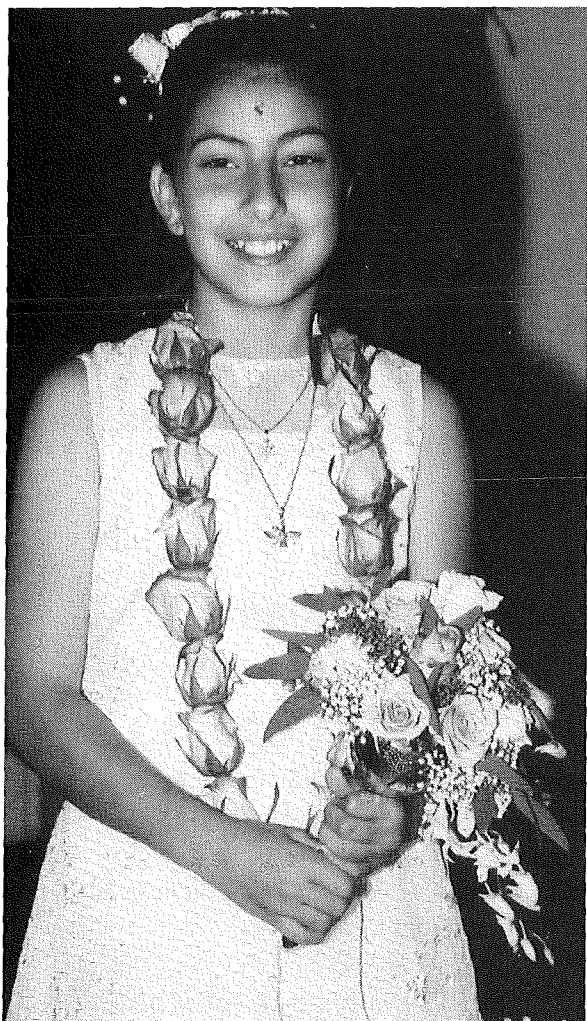
**Noshir Jamshedji Rivetna**, husband of Hilla, father of Mahryar (Zubeen) Rivetna of Houston, and late Farokh Rivetna of Mumbai, in Mumbai, on March 18.

**Dadiba Minocher Sanjana**, 66, brother of Ervard Bomansha Sanjana of Houston, in Mumbai, on October 15.

**Dosoo Erach Songadwala**, husband of Zenobia, father of Cyrus, brother of Pervez and Noshir (of Kolkata) and of Sarosh and Gool (of Mumbai), brother-in-law of Cawas and Chirag Driver of Toronto, and of Aban Hakim of Calgary, in Toronto, on December 6.

**Mehrangiz Goshtasp (Firoozgar) Vafadari**, mother of Kateh Vafadari and Kasra Vafadari, in Maryland, on October 29.

**Povru Writer**, 62, wife of Bomi Writer (Mumbai), mother of Roxan (Aspi) Driver (Mumbai), daughter of Roshan and late Erachshaw Mistry, sister of Dadi (Nergish) Mistry (Delhi), Sharukh (Renu) Mistry (Bangalore), Dinsoo Dara Rivetna (Chicago), Kety Bomi Bhaka and Kety Behram Khambatta (Mumbai), in Mumbai, on January 27. ■



*l. to r., Mobed Zarir Bhandara of Los Angeles, performing the navjote ceremony of his son Zerkxis, at Anjuman Atash Behram, in Mumbai, on December 29. Rayomand Ravji at his Navar ceremony [see above]. Jasmine DiLucci, daughter of Neenaz and John DiLucci of Dallas, at her navjote ceremony, in Dallas, on October 20; Ervads Ratansha Vakili and Poras Balsara officiated.*

## **Rohinton K. Bulsara, M.D.**

HIGHLY RESPECTED PEDIATRIC CARDIAC SURGEON  
AND A PILLAR OF STRENGTH FOR THE ZAPANJ COMMUNITY

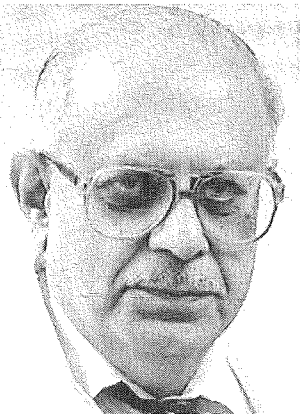
A pillar of strength for our (ZAPANJ – Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey) community, Dr. Rohinton K. Bulsara's life and work truly epitomized the Zarathushti concept of "Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds."

Dr. Bulsara was a founding member of ZAPANJ and served many terms on the board since its inception in 1979. His cheerful and constant presence at our gatherings and meetings, will be sorely missed.

After receiving his medical degree from India, Dr. Bulsara came to the US in 1963 and completed his residency in general surgery and cardio-thoracic surgery. Until his sudden and untimely passing, he practiced pediatric cardiac surgery at St. Christopher's Hospital, Temple University, Children's Hospital and Shriner's Hospital.

The high esteem in which Dr. Bulsara was held by his peers, is expressed in this letter from a colleague, Dr. Karin Bierbrauer:

"... To me, as to so many others at St Christopher's, Temple and Shriner's, he was truly a role model of what we can only aspire to become.



He was, first and foremost, a truly great physician. I always marvelled at how he seemed to know just about

everything about every disease process, surgical procedure, anatomical minutiae and critical care that I could ever think to ask him about. And ask him we all did, whenever we were troubled with a difficult case or decision. Not only did he always seem to know just the right answer, but he delivered

it with grace and never made us feel we were bothering him.

"When I first joined the faculty at St. Christopher's 12 years ago, I felt at times overwhelmed, but never when I was with "Dr. B". One truly felt he could, and did, handle everything and every difficult case and complication that he was challenged with.

"Not only was he the most technically skilled surgeon I know, but he had a wonderful way of imparting his knowledge to residents and medical students. I have to agree with my co-workers that if we only become half the surgeon he was, we will feel ourselves extraordinarily blessed.

"What I also remember ever so fondly was his wonderful sense of

humor, which so brightened every interaction with him. The fact that he never said "No" when fellow surgeons asked for help, no matter the day or the hour, makes it even more of a tribute to how truly great he was. He will be missed but his spirit will live on."

*Arnavaz Sukhia*  
President, ZAPANJ

## **Nani Ardeshir Palkhivala**

EMINENT JURIST, LEGAL LUMINARY  
INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US

Eminent Jurist, India's finest Constitutional expert and ambassador to the USA (1977-1979), Nani Ardeshir Palkhivala left us for his heavenly abode on December 12.

Mother India has lost one her most precious sons, who wanted to make India a superpower based on just three conditions: *discipline, education and organization*. Unfortunately, he couldn't do so in his life span. The reason being, he himself candidly disclosed, was that while Indians had ample intelligence and acumen, they lacked one critical factor – they were too timid to face their elected leaders. He believed that humility was a virtue but timidity was a disease.

His life in the business arena with the Tata family and his illustrious legal career speaks volumes of an upright person of strong convictions who

## **FEZANA mourns the loss of seven noble souls**

*(Columbia space shuttle disaster, February 2003)*

When I must leave you for a little while  
Please do not grieve and shed wild tears  
And hug your sorrow to you through the years  
But start out bravely with a gallant smile;

Reach out your hand in comfort and in cheer  
And I in turn will comfort you and hold you near;  
And never, never be afraid to die,  
For I am waiting for you in the sky!

*[Poem submitted by Jamshed Udvadia]*

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always followed his small inner voice to say it like it is. If given a top finance portfolio in India's government cabinet, he had the capability to change India's free enterprise and ailing economy.

Being one of his ardent admirers from my youth, I never missed any of his legendary post-budget speeches. His powerful oratory and total grasp of the subject had both substance and style to duly delight even the dead to stand up and listen in pin drop silence. On one such occasion in Pune, when top tax and financial pundits, who occupied all the front seats had heard his speech and had cornered him for advice, leaving no way for me to approach him, I went straight to his parked car in the hope of meeting the august personality when he came there. I met his driver and struck up a conversation with him. He told me it was his singular honor to drive and work for such a noble and honest soul like Mr. Palkhivala. He literally worshiped the statesman and his ideals. Before the conversation ended the driver



was directed by security to move along and pick up the distinguished guest of honor at a secured location.

Such was the greatness of this man, that when asked by his friends to

write his autobiography, Nani replied that he was not *so important*. However, we all well know his due importance, the very important stands he took his entire life, and the important message he conveyed to us – that if we stood by our inner convictions we would never fail and that the human spirit can never be conquered.

Is it not befitting for FEZANA to start a scholarship/fund drive in his name or erect a bust/statue of the departed soul to perpetuate his glorious life and achievements for time immemorial? Because with the passing of Nani, a legend is over and we have a moral duty to keep it alive.

God bless his noble soul and grant its rightful place in Heaven, which he who so richly deserves.

*Sohrab Irani*  
Anaheim, California

## Temton Nowrosji Hodiwala

DEVOTED FAMILY MAN  
WITH A DEEP FAITH IN GOD

The digital clock in my room that kept Pakistan time stopped working at 2:45 am on January 4. At that exact time, the pale horse and his rider claimed my beloved father Temton Nowrosji Hodiwala.

Our caring Quetta neighbors lovingly performed his last rites, as I, his only child, was oceans away. I have my memories. He was mentally sharper than I am, fiercely independent and unwilling to burden anyone. Devoted to his family, he lived his life believing no ill could harm him and no adversities alarm him since his faith in God was supreme. He treated everyday as a precious gift and considered himself fortunate he had everything in life.

I weep not for his loss, because he is not lost. No, I weep because my faith is not as strong as his. And because in this new world, I feel far away from the comforting world of Parsi Colony in Quetta.

*Aban Rustomji*  
Houston, Texas

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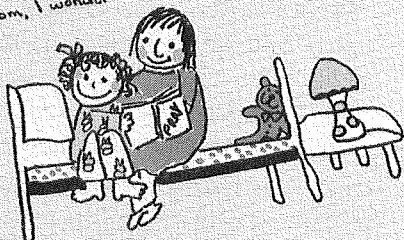
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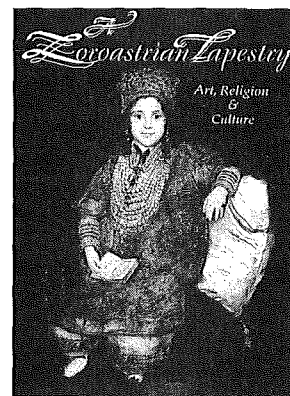


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