NEW YEAR COMES EARLY FOR
THE RESIDENTS OF BPP BAUGS
XERXES DASTUR FULFILLS HIS ELECTION PROMISE

At the Board Meeting of July 29th, 2020 chaired by Mrs. Armaity Tirandaz, the Trustees of the BPP resolved to revoke the Rs. 750/pm service charge that was levied on its residents since Feb 2017.

It has been a long drawn battle inter se the Trustees which finally met its logical and benevolent end last week.

To refresh your memory in Aug 2017, Armaity Tirandaz, Noshir Dadrawala and Viraf Mehta had proposed to reduce the 750/ service charge to 400/. Unfortunately the majority Trustees at the time, using the Chairman’s casting vote had rejected this proposal (as Muncherji Cama was not allowed to attend by the majority Trustees).

Again in November 2018, Armaity Tirandaz, Noshir Dadrawala, Xerxes Dastur and Viraf Mehta sent across another signed letter to be taken on Agenda proposing the service charge be reduced to 350/ rupees. Once again Kersi Randeria was able to convince Noshir Dadrawala to delay this and the matter was put to sleep.

But finally the BPP has come to its senses and last Wednesday, the 750/ pm rupees service charge increase was fully revoked for both Tenants and Licensees.

The Zoom Board meeting held on 29th July 2020 at 5.30 pm was attended by Armaity Tirandaz, Viraf Mehta and Xerxes Dastur. Despite submitting items for the agenda, Kersi Randeria refused to attend the meeting along with Noshir Dadrawala.

At the said meeting of 29th July 2020 at 5.30pm, Armaity Tirandaz was unanimously elected/appointed as the Chairman for the said board meeting by Zoom on line.

When the item of service charges was tabled, Viraf Mehta requested the Board to completely remove the 750 rupees increase as not only was it a financial burden on most beneficiaries, but especially now since during this lockdown period, majority of our Parsi brethren are finding it very difficult to survive with a drop in salary or even loss of jobs. This proposal was welcomed and whole-heartedly accepted and supported by Xerxes Dastur and Mrs. Tirandaz.

We sincerely thank and support the Trustees of the BPP in this gesture. New Year has most definitely come early for the Parsi/Iranis of Mumbai. A big Thank you to Trustee Xerxes Dastur who has come through on his election promise to remove/reduce this service charge and a Thank you to Phiroze Amroliwalla for the relentless crusade conducted by him from February 2017 onwards till date.
After a lot of bickering, controversy, drama and ego issues, at last a first official board meeting after the March 2020 lockdown of the BPP Trustees was held online on Wednesday 29th July 2020 at 5.30 pm under the unanimously elected Chairman Armaity Tirandaz, along with the inclusion of senior officers of BPP on ZOOM which was duly recorded and Minuted as laid down in the Consent Terms signed by all seven Trustees.

The community will recall that in the Bombay High Court Writ Petition filed in 2017-18 by three Minority Trustees—Armaity Tirandaz, Muncherji Cama and Viraf Mehta against the Majority Trustees—Yazdi Desai, Noshir Dadrawala, Kersi Randera and late Zarir Bhathena for being treated as Trustees with right to Agendas, Minutes, all papers, documents and files., Trustee Kersi Randeria convinced his majority to spend Rs. 80 lakhs of BPP charity funds towards legal expenses to oppose the writ, but ultimately Consent Terms were filed accepting all terms, and signed by all seven Trustees which was accepted by the High Court.

At the Board meeting of July 29th 2020, Mrs. Armaity Tirandaz being the second senior most Trustee was unanimously elected to chair the online 29th July board meeting, and one of the item was

‘Discussion of waiver/reduction of Additional Service Charges as suggested by Phiroze Amroliwalla’

The Zoom board meeting was attended by three out of five Trustees- Armaity Tirandaz, Viraf Mehta and Xerxes Dastur. Unfortunately, despite submitting items for the agenda of the said meeting, Kersi Randera declined to attend the meeting and so did Noshir Dadrawalla. We are informed that Kersi Randeria was not happy with the fact that Mrs. Armaity Tirandaz was going to Chair the meeting, even though he himself has asked her to in April 2020. On the previous day, Noshir Dadrawala had proposed Mrs. Armaity Tirandaz as Chairman of the meeting which was seconded by Viraf Mehta. Kersi Randeria was upset about this and made all sorts of allegations on his colleagues. Fed up with all this constant acrimony being vented, Noshir refused to attend the meeting as well. Kersi Randeria then followed Noshir and declared he would also not attend the meeting. But since the Trustees fulfilled the quorum of 3 and had a long list of pending issues to be resolved, the meeting continued as scheduled.

When the Item of Service Charges was reached, all the Trustees unanimously Resolved and Approved to Revoke/Waive with immediate effect the extra Service Charges of Rs. 750/ that was earlier being charged/collection.

It was further decided that the Implementation of the waiver would be done after the next Board Meeting when the Minutes of this meeting will be approved/ratified and hopefully all are present.

Thus going forward, all occupants of BPP Baugs, both Tenants and Licensees, will no longer have to pay this illegal levy of extra Rs. 750/pm and hence their New Year gift of its waiver has come at the right time.

With a touch of humility and gratitude, another item that the Board discussed was to finalize a token amount to be paid in gratitude to all those BPP staff who worked during the Covid crisis. These individuals are our heroes for braving the virus and helping our residents receive all essential utilities without any hindrance.

A very noble gesture of gratitude indeed. We are informed that a concise list is being prepared after which gratuitous amount will be finalized.

Another Agenda item of concern was moving the High Court to postpone the elections which are supposed to be held within three months of demise of Zarir Bhathena on 24th June 2020.

Though the Courts are only hearing urgent matters at the moment, the Trustees are going to initiate dialogue with the lawyers to attempt to take this forward.

Except for a very few items that were deferred, most of the 25 items were decided including a few extra items too.

Perhaps the absence of Kersi Randeria was a blessing in disguise as the meeting was carried out in great bon homie without any ego problems vitiating the atmosphere.
NO BURIAL AT DOONGERWADI

'Scholarship' Vs 'Mythology – The difference between chalk & cheese

Recently the President of a well-known Parsi Zoroastrian Anjuman in India wrote to our scholarly High Priest Dasturji (Dr.) Firoze M Kotwal with the question regarding burial on Doongerwadi land during these unfortunate times.

Dasturji’s response is concise and clear as to why burial is not recommended. But, unlike Zoroastrian occultists who talk about suffering to the soul of the dead, Dasturji has stayed faithful to what the scriptures say and even offered practical guidance.

Read his response:
I am in receipt of your email with regard to the appeal made by some community members, for the use of the Doongerwadi grounds for the burial of those who have unfortunately died of the COVID-19 virus.

These are extremely difficult and terrible times for our community and I am deeply saddened and distressed to hear of the number of community members who have died owing to this disease and my sympathies and prayers are with the families who have suffered this shocking and unexpected loss.

However, as a High Priest, I would like to reiterate, that the Doongerwadi grounds are for one purpose only i.e. for the disposal of the corpses of our Parsi Irani Zoroastrians, through the process of dokhmenishini.

The COVID pandemic is a temporary phase and we must follow the safety and health regulations of the Government of India for our own well-being and that of others in the community. In Mumbai, the Parsi Puncthaye has tried very hard, but despite all their efforts, they could not work out the logistics to ensure that COVID victims could use the Doongerwadi facility.

Both methods agnidah and ground burial are anti-Zoroastrian. We as Parsis cannot as a matter of personal choice, opt for any of the above methods.

Doongerwadi is meant solely for Dokhmenishini and not for any other method of disposal. Dokhmenishini is one of the most important pillars of the Zoroastrian faith. It is unfortunate that a few members of the Parsi community through ignorance want to undermine the crucial beliefs of the faith by opting for anti-Zoroastrian methods such as burial, even temporarily, on the Doongerwadi grounds. By burying dead bodies (nasu) on its grounds, they commit the sin of concealing/burying dead matter, called nasaa-nigaanii as mentioned in our Pahlavi scriptures by our learned Dasturs of Iran. Our Doongerwadi should remain untouched by any other method, except dokhmenishini.

According to Zoroastrianism, ground-burial is as sinful as agnidah since it pollutes the earth by producing millions of noxious insects and bacteria in the bowels of the earth, rendering the earth unusable for fifty years, owing to the pollution caused by it.

Under the constraints imposed by the COVID pandemic, and owing to Government regulations, no sachkar or sadgid can be performed in such cases and as such, because the individuals have no choice, the Gah-Sarna of these victims can be facilitated, by sending two mobed sahebs to the surroundings of the dakhma, to recite the Gah-Sarna/Ahunavaiti Gatha. It is appropriate for the Gah Sarna to be recited near the dakhma as has been suggested in the past by Dastur Edalji Darabji Sanjana, the first High Priest of the H.B. Wadia Atash Bahram in Mumbai. The Gah-Sarna will bring merit to the soul of the deceased in the hereafter and solace and satisfaction to the devout relatives of the departed Zoroastrian.

These are the scholarly statements made by one of our senior-most High Priests, a living authority on rituals and traditions and above all else a scholar par excellence of Avesta & Pahlavi.

Who would you like to believe is right, a learned scholarly High Priest or lay pretenders who scare the credulous about suffering for the soul?

You have a choice between eating chalk or cheese. Choose wisely!

The occultists play on fear. Our High Priest while firm on tradition speaks with wisdom. Scholarship and solution in these times of crises.

Our grateful thanks to Dastur (Dr.) Firoze. M. Kotwal for his religious leadership and showing our community the right path without compromising truth or tradition.

Noshir H. Dadrawala
We have been forwarded the BMC reply on relocation of Parsi Gate by Rayomand Zaiwala for publication in Parsi Junction.

Now that the BMC has made it clear of the necessity of the shifting of Parsi Gate and its relocation to a better spot where Parsis can immediately reach the sea waters rather than the reconstruction at the same site where the sea waters would be more than 1000 feet away, we hope that the controversy of the relocation comes to an end and the community will co-operate with BMC for the development of the Coastal road approved by the Supreme Court of India. A needless confrontation with statutory authorities when they have expressed their support for the religious sentiments of the community has to be appreciated and in deference to that have agreed to reconstruct a brand new Parsi Gate with removal of tetrapods and provide steps leading down to the sea waters at their entire cost, though there was no compulsion on them, should be thankfully accepted by the community without any further controversy. Of course there will be some opposition by some ultras but they have to be ignored in the larger game plan of the development of our city.

The Kharegat Parsi Colony

KHAREGHAT COLONY - Hughes Road
Khan Bahadur Muncherj Kharegat (1839 – 1917)

He was a very skilled Parsi civil engineer and architect who worked with the Bombay Public Works Department (PWD) from 1857 to 1893. His skills were greatly appreciated and he became the President of the PWD and the Executive Engineer of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay. He was responsible for supervising construction in association with the English architects who gave the city all the ornate Victorian heritage structures. He supervised the construction of both the General Post Office and the Elphinstone College buildings in Bombay.

He had travelled through Europe and dreamt of giving good quality housing to members of his community. He approached Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, who was initially not inclined to fund a housing project meant only for Parsees, but offered to help Kharegat construct such housing exclusively for Parsis, on the condition that the Parsi Punchayat would grant suitable land. After much deliberation and legal negotiations this was made possible. Today the colony stands on lands donated by Khurshedji Cowasji Banaji to the Punchayat Dharamshalas and some adjacent land which was part of the Doongerwadi property.

Thus was born the first ‘Parsi Baug’ housing colony in Bombay in 1912 on Hughes Road near Babulnath. It now has 37 buildings with 337 flats, a proximal Fire Temple across the street for the residents to worship at, and also houses the Alpaiwalla Museum was which built in the 1950s. The Museum showcases artifacts and material from archaeological digs in Iran, and other antiquities. It has now been restored to the best modern standards of world museums.
In the Parsi Junction issue of 19th July 2020 on the above controversy, we had pointed out as under:

“As the community is aware, over the last few months Yazdi Desai has been indisposed for medical reasons (we once again wish him a speedy recovery). During his absence, most of the Trustees under the solid and able leadership of Mrs. Armaity Tirandaz have done a stellar job. Mrs. Tirandaz’s leadership skills have been commended by one and all including some of her strongest critics.

The praise received by Mrs. Tirandaz seems to have pricked Kersi Randeria who has now sought to raise petty and futile objections on the validity of Mrs. Tirandaz’s role as acting chairman.

Let us break down this new objection by Kersi Randeria and see whether it holds any moral or legal ground to stand on:

The Election Scheme
Under the Election Scheme, (whether one likes it or not), the Senior most Trustee has to be mandatorily nominated as the Chairman as per the Election Scheme sanctioned by the High Court. Under the scheme, Yazdi Desai became Chairman as he was the senior most and under the scheme he continues to be the Chairman for his full term, unless disqualified under the provisions of the Scheme.

Role of the Chairman
The Chairman is one amongst equals. In consultation with his colleague Trustees he fixes the day and time of each board meeting, the agenda of the meeting and finalizes the Minutes of the meeting. In case of a tie, the Chairman of the BPP has a casting vote.

Absence of the the Chairman
Since April 2020, Yazdi has been indisposed. May he recover soon and take helm of his BPP Chairmanship.

The Lockdown
Since the lockdown in March 2020 there has been no officially convened board meeting, but the BPP work has not suffered as the Trustees are attending to all matters on conference calls almost every second/third day.

BPP cannot be kept leaderless or rudderless over a prolonged period of time of almost four months now. Technically, Yazdi has not missed a single board meeting but that has been because not a single meeting has been held since lockdown in March 2020. But over 60 Conference /Video Calls have been held among the Trustees which Yazdi has NOT been able to attend.”

Under Clause 31 of the Election Scheme, which Kersi continuously quotes, in case of absence of the Chairman for a meeting or two, the rest of the Trustees are supposed to elect the Chairman of that meeting. This is fine for temporary absence of the Chairman for a meeting or two. But no one contemplated a prolonged absence of the Chairman.

But there is no provision in the Scheme in case of prolonged absence of the Chairman for several months. This is a lacuna in the Scheme which nobody contemplated though there is a provision in such a case too which we will revert to later.

Kersi Randeria accuses Armaity Tirandaz as being ‘hungry for power and her grab for power continues’. Her humility and graciousness will be evident from the following.

In 2008 when Arnavaiz Mistry was elected a Trustee, she immediately requested the Board that she should be nominated as the Chairperson of the Ladies Committee running the Parekh Dharamshala, a senior citizens home, at Khareghat Colony, deposing Mrs. Zenobia Adajania who was the chair for donkeys years. The board agreed to her reasonable proposition as a Trustee on a committee appointed by the board cannot be sub-servient to an ordinary member.

Armaity Tirandaz was elected a Trustee in 2009 and she continued to work as an ordinary member under the chair of Arnavaiz Mistry. But in October 2015 when Arnavaiz ceased to be a Trustee, whilst Armaity Tirandaz was now a continuing Trustee, the Board under the defacto Chairman Kersi Randeria by a special unfair and unjust Resolution appointed Arnavaiz to continue to be the Chair of the Ladies Committee, as Arnavaiz was the mother of Kersi Randeria’s lady partner. Armaity willingly accepted her denigration and continued to work on the Ladies Committee as an ordinary member.

In March 2016, the term of Armaity Tirandaz came to an end and she re-contested and won the elections defeating the very same Arnavaiz Mistry who was backed by all the sitting Trustees except Viraf Mehta and Muncherji Cama who was not allowed to attend BPP Board meetings. But was justice given to Armaity by her colleague Trustees? NO! But once again an unfair and unjust decision was taken to allow Arnavaiz Mistry to continue as the Chairperson of the Ladies Committee which once again Armaity graciously accepted. And till today though rmaity is the Chairperson of the BPP board meeting, Arnavaiz continues to be the Chair of the Ladies Committee. So who is power hungry?

IS THIS THE PROFILE OF A POWER HUNGRY LADY? ARMAITY TIRANDAZ ACCEPTED THE BPP BOARD CHAIRMANSHIP AS ALL TRUSTEES REQUESTED HER AS THE SENIOR MOST TRUSTEE.

COMING BACK TO THE SCHEME:
As per the Scheme two minimum board meetings have to be held every month and preferably in the Boardroom. Due to the pandemic restrictions, there has been no official board meeting at all since last four months and hence technically all Trustees are already in breach of the Election Scheme. But it is only a technical breach due to unforeseen prevailing circumstances.

Further the Scheme does not provide for a board meeting to be held on line under Zoom yet all the Trustees agreed to have a Zoom online meeting which they did on 29th July 2020.

Similarly, in absence of the Chairman for a prolonged period there has to be an Acting Chairman in place of the
He has also said:

"Hence in the spirit of the scheme, and in Yazdi’s absence, Mrs. Armaiti Tirandaz would be Chairman being second senior most."

Further Viraf has said:

"I would request Mrs. Tirandaz to tabulate a final agenda in order of priority to be circulated to all before the start of tomorrow’s Board meeting."

Noshir in reply to Viraf has said:

"In the interest of peace and harmony and "in the spirit of the scheme" I propose that tomorrow’s meeting be chaired by Mrs. Armaiti Tirandaz."

By now you would have understood my concern - your spirit appears to be overriding the letter of the scheme.

May I request you to clarify whether there was any need to go shopping for the spirit where the letter is so clear?

Also, can we appoint today, the Chairman for tomorrow?

May I request an urgent reply as time is of the essence and many are banking on your "spirit" and not on Clause 31 of the Scheme of Elections.

Best
Kersi"

What an ugly mail to be sent to an advocate whose opinion is sought free of charge without even a thank you, first by Noshir and then by Kersi.

This is the ungrateful face of the deposed de facto chairman, Kersi Randeria. Berjis immediately in the morning of the Board meeting day replies to the technical issues as any lawyer is expected to do on basis of clauses of the scheme without referring to the changed circumstances caused by the pandemic. His reply is short and succinct:

From: Berjis Desai Date: 29/07/2020 09:08 (GMT+05:30)

“The legal position is as follows

At every meeting, before it commences, the trustees have to elect one amongst themselves to be the chairman; in the absence of chairman Mr Desai. The person so appointed as chairman will preside over that particular meeting, will confirm the minutes subsequently and sign them. It is not possible to appoint a chairman in advance, by the very nature of this provision. Such appointee will automatically cease to be the chairman as soon as the meeting concludes.

BERJIS”.

Berjis also advised both Noshir and Kersi to move under Clause 22 of the Scheme for removal of Yazdi Desai due to his continuous indisposition after giving him notice but this was not approved by the Board just as the Board did not approve taking any action for removal of Zarir Bhathena even though he was comatose for months in the Hospital. In Yazdi’s case he is under therapy and is most likely to be fit to attend in a few weeks time and hence there is no need to issue Notice as advised by Berjis as the only way out.

What Kersi Randeria has deliberately suppressed from Berjis Desai before seeking his Opinion is the Consent Terms signed by all seven Trustees in the High Court of Bombay. As per the Consent Terms it is laid down that the Chairman will 1) finalise the day and time of the next Board meeting in consultation with the other Trustees, 2) will prepare the Agenda but incorporating any item proposed by any Trustee therein and forward the same to all Trustees, 3) will finalise the minutes and forward to all other Trustees before the next Board meeting for approval/ratification 4) and after approval ensure that the Minutes are posted in the Logbook of Minutes.

Berjis has opined that ‘It is not possible to appoint a chairman in advance, by the very nature of this provision’.

Hence if according to Berjis Desai the Chairman of the meeting can be appointed only after the meeting commences than who will prepare the Agenda and send it by noon of the day of the meeting.

If according to Berjis, ‘Such appointee
(Chairman of the meeting) will automatically cease to be the chairman as soon as the meeting concludes' then who will prepare the Minutes and forward to others for approval at next board meeting.

THUS CONSIDERING ALL FACTORS OF THE ELECTION SCHEME AND THE LACUNA IN IT OF PROVISION IN CASE OF PROTRACTED ABSENCE OF THE CHAIRMAN, THE HIGH COURT CONSENT TERMS AND THE PANDEMIC CRISIS FACING THE NATION IN CONJUNCTION WITH EACH OTHER AND IN THE SPIRIT OF THE PREVAILING CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN COURTS ARE NOT WORKING, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT AN ACTING CHAIRMAN IS APPOINTED TO CONDUCT FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS.

### THE WZO TRUST FUNDS
THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION TRUST

FOOD GRAINS DISTRIBUTED & FINANCIAL AID DISBURSED TO ZOROASTRIANS IN ECONOMIC DISTRESS DUE TO COVID PANDEMIC

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WZO Trusts - Covid Aid Update as on 31 July 2020

Dinshaw K. Tamboly

Have you ever thought about what your dog is trying to tell you? Do you look at a cat and wonder what it is thinking about?

Most of us are aware of how animals convey information through their body language, but did you know that they also telepathically communicate with us? Every human has the innate ability to telepathically communicate with other living beings. You can understand your pet’s likes and dislikes better, find out why it’s behaviour has changed, get specific details about its health and even find out what advice it has for you to cope with the current situation.

Join Jiyo Parsi Friday Forum on August 7, from 6-7 PM IST, with Telepathic inter-species communicator, Priyanka Hosangadi to introduce you to the fascinating art of telepathic communication.

Pearl Tirandaz
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