

# **FIRDOSH MEHTA**

19 JAN 2004

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Dear FEZANA Member Presidents, Representatives, Executives, Committee Chairs, Small Groups and friends.

I returned from my visit to India / UK a week ago, and I would like to present the following report of the activities and meetings held during my visit.

I arrived Mumbai early morning of Dec. 27, 2003 and went by car to Pune to attend The 3<sup>rd</sup> World Zarathushti Youth Congress. As a "PATRON" I was an "observer" during the sessions, but during Q/A and group discourse only the youth delegates would participate fully, except in one session, where I was part of the Panel.

I also presented a paper on North American Demographics, extrapolated from the article of Dr. Noshir Langrana in the Fall 1999 FEZANA Journal, with his permission.

We took the opportunity to increase awareness and the positive image of FEZANA and ZYNA as best as we all could during the Congress. Mention of FEZANA's Religion Education, Academic Education and ZYNA's Performing Arts Fund Scholarships was made.

Many ZYNA members were interviewed by Mrs. Hilla Guzder of PARSIANA.

To that effect the FEZANA contribution to the World Zarathushti Cultural Foundation was presented during Dr. Homi Dhalla's session. (Please refer to my e-mail to you of Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004)

The ZYNA members also presented a donation to the Youth Wing of WZO India for the various projects involving the youth hostels, museum etc. in Udvada.

We had an excellent participation of about 20 young adults from USA and Canada. The full complement of ZYNA Co-Chairs was present at the Congress. They were also encouraged to moderate a session and our team from California that performed the Persian Dance, won the Talent Contest.

More on the Youth Congress will be published in the FEZANA Journal in the various articles submitted by our youth. I was greatly impressed with the professionalism and maturity displayed by our youngsters, for which we all can be justifiably proud.

The Congress itself was organized and conducted in an excellent manner and the evening programs of socializing and interaction between our youth in congenial surroundings, with different themes every evening, was very impressive. The last dinner night, was the traditional theme evening with Daglees and Garas, where the Youth looked fantastic, at the Pune Agyari Compound. We were given the opportunity to present FEZANA's financial support to the Congress President, Mr. Sarosh Palkhiwalla; and the ZYNA subsidy to attend the Congress was presented to Aysha Ghadiali, Afreed Mistry, Cyrus Rivetna and Negin Sharyari. The ZYNA group also presented a plaque of appreciation to Sherazade Mehta as the outgoing Co-Chair of ZYNA. A "Lagan Nu Bhonoo" (Wedding Menu Dinner) was sumptuous.

This Congress also gave me the opportunity to discuss many of the youth issues and trends, to acquire a better understanding of the needs of our next generation, and to enable me to focus any future deliberations and activities to be in tune with the aspirations of our youth.

In Pune, I had discussions with Dr. Roxana Irani, who was partially sponsored by FEZANA to present her paper on Archaeological excavations at the World Archaeological Congress in Washington, DC earlier in 2003.

While in Pune, a follow up review was done with Malcolm Deboo of ZTFE regarding his activities with the Dastoor Meherji-Rana Library, Navsari, towards the Manuscripts Preservation. Malcolm was requested to make a detailed report for his activities and future plans to be submitted to us prior to the next FEZANA AGM in May 2004.

I had a short interview with Dr. Arnavaz Havewala and Er. Cyrus Dastoor of Frohar Foundation who presented me with a CD of their recording of the Chicago North American Congress 2002.

Also in Pune, the PARZOR Foundation UNESCO project and possible FEZANA contribution, was discussed with Lt. Gen. Adi Sethna.

After my return to Mumbai, I had a meeting with Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly of WZO Trust Funds, India in his office on Jan. 1st. During the meeting, I reviewed the various FEZANA donations made to individuals in India for medical and critical assistance, as recommended by the FEZANA Welfare Committee. Documents of fund transfers were reviewed and Mr. Tamboly was presented with a plaque of appreciation from FEZANA for his continued support and service to FEZANA.

On Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>, I had a meeting with eight Board Members and Directors of the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital to review the FEZANA donations forwarded to the Hospital from an anonymous donor in USA. We discussed FEZANA's structure as a not-for profit organization and the tax implications in USA for charitable donation receipts. Their accountants presented me with a 2" thick binder of all the accounts and receipts of monies dispersed for medical equipment and supplies. These documents will be on file with the FEZANA Treasurer.

I was also given a grand tour of all the facilities of the Hospital, which included the various wards, operating theatres, the ICU, the Geriatric and Physiotherapy wards, the Radiology and other various labs showing many modern state of the art equipment. The third portion of the donation was received by the Hospital while I was there, and it was agreed to send the last installment just prior to Naorooz in March 2004. The Chairman of the Board, the CEO and all acknowledged and thanked FEZANA's support and help in this venture.

I would like to thank Rashid Mehin, FEZANA Treasurer, for his efforts in transfer of these funds.

On Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>, I met with Mr. Yazdi Tantra of On-Lyne Comtech Ltd. regarding the web site he has set up for the WZCC India, and possible FEZANA promotion of the same. This activity is part of the global effort to get Zarathushtis connected over the e-net. Also met with Zarin and Kersi Commissariat of WZCC India.

On Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>, I met with Farrokh Rustomji, CEO of Sir J.J. Charity Fund regarding the suggestion for the Toll Highway in Western India for visitation to all the Atash Behrams. The connection with the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) was made in this regard, and Mr. Rustomji also introduced the concept of utilizing real time, satellite assisted medical support across the globe.

On Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>, we visited Iranshah Atash Behram in Udvada including the Dasturji Koyaji Mirza Hall and the WZO Museum. In the evening, we met with Erv. Parvez and Darius Bajan and family, and thanked them for their recent visits to FEZANA sponsored events in North America.

On Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> I also met with Mr. Jehangir Patel of PARSIANA and thanked him for his assistance and support for the distribution of the FEZANA Journals to subscribers in India and announcements of various FEZANA Scholarship activities. I was interviewed by Ms. Arnavaz Mama of PARSIANA, that evening.

On Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, I met with Ms. Bachi Karkaria and reviewed progress re: her Book project, in New Delhi, which FEZANA has partially supported with a donation.

#### WORLD BODY DISCUSSION MEETINGS:

On Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, a preliminary informal meeting of representatives of ZTFE (Rusi Dalal and Malcolm Deboo), the BPP (Minoo Shroff, Dinshaw Tamboly, D.R.Mehta, Erv. Burjor Antia, Behram Dastur, M.P.Colah) and myself, was held at the BPP Board room to discuss the agenda of the 8<sup>th</sup> January meeting and the concerns voiced in the local media, regarding a ZARATHUSHTI WORLD BODY.

On Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>, the World Body deliberation meeting continued at the Westend Hotel with same individuals as the Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, plus the traditional section of our community represented by Dasturji Dr. K. Jamasp Asa, Mr. Khojeste Mistree, Ms. Tehnaz Parakh and Mr. Adi Doctor. Dissertations by the invitees were tabled, which solicited the recognition of the Parsi/Irani/Iranian Zarathushti identity during the formation of a WORLD BODY. The discussions involved the recognition of the IZO/WZOI/WZOF consensual structure of One World Body as developed after the January 2003 meeting, now agreed upon in principle by ZTFE, FEZANA, FPZAI (BPP) and International Board Members of WZO, with future course of action being planned.

During the discussions, the WB-WG Report of Aug 03 was referred to. Other individuals including the Senior BPP officials, Mr. Sarosh Bana of WZO India, Mr. Behram Pastakia (ZAMWI) and Mr. Cyrus Rivetna (ZAC-Chicago) were also present. A tentative meeting of the Elected Leaders group is planned for the first week in July 2004 in London.

On Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>, I had a dinner meeting with Mr. Keki Gandhi, Secretary of FPZAI, in New Delhi to go over the deliberations of the Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> meetings.

Similar discussions were undertaken with Mr. Rumi Sethna and Mr. Sammy Bhivandiwalla of WZO-UK, and Mr. Dorab Mistry of ZTFE-UK in London on Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>, by me.

During the PUNE Congress, informal discussions were held with Mr. Minoo Shroff, Mr. Dinshaw Tamboly, Mr. Dadi Engineer & Ms. Sillo Kavarana (BPP Trustees), & Mr. Dadi Mistry (WZO –Delhi).

A detailed joint communiqué from ZTFE, FEZANA, FPZAI (BPP) and WZO will be forwarded to you all as soon as it is published by BPP, the host of the above meetings.

The above report is to keep you all informed about the various issues that FEZANA is involved in and my activities pertaining to them. Thank you for your confidence in the FEZANA Executive.

If you need any further information or details re: any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

*Firdosh Mehta. – President, FEZANA*