

Sports prevails over everything, including politics. If you encourage your children to play sports, whatever the sport may be, see to it that they have dedication, discipline, determination, sincerity and honesty," so stated guest of honor Merzban Patel, hockey coach and recent recipient of the Dronacharya Award, at the fourth All Zoroastrian Men and Women Arm Wrestling Competition held on November 16, 2019 on the grounds of the Parsee Gymkhana (PG) at Marine Drive.

"Encourage your children, especially those between five and eight years to take up any sport, not because they want to make it their career, but to become healthy citizens and to lead a good life," advised "Bawa" (as he is affectionately called by his students) Patel who expressed pleasure at being invited. This was the first time his role in the sport of hockey has been appreciated by his own community, he stated, PG being the first to laud his selfless and immense contribution to the game.

The managing committee (MC) wanted to invite Patel as guest of honor last year, but being the "evasive person" that he is, "we couldn't get in touch with him. Since he received the Dronacharya Award this year, he was our natural choice," mentioned MC member Rustom Jasoomoney who lamented that the "world class coach has no Parsi students!"

Surat's Vispi Kharadi, seven times Guinness World Record holder in various martial arts feats who was invited as chief guest, advised parents: "Don't



tell your kids what to do. Let them just play around, enjoy whatever they do. Don't force them. Just teach them discipline and hard work and they'll be on the right track." Kharadi was present that day for two reasons: "Because arm wrestling is my favorite sport which I've practiced and played for years and secondly to watch my mentor senior karateka Percy Bahmani (arm) wrestle."

Prepped with a specially custom-made podium table equipped with upholstered elbow pads and pins, courtesy

Grip and grit

The participants were fewer but the contest was fierce at the annual All Zoroastrian Men and Women Arm Wrestling Competition

Text: Roxan A. Driver
Photos: Mazda Studios

Viraf Chiniwala of Veldon Coats, the event commenced with the weighing in of the participants and allotting categories for men and women respectively. This year the number of participants dropped to half, 34 (27 males and seven females) as versus the 69 registered last year. That was a record since the Competition's inception four years ago. The youngest male to participate was 14 years, and female, nine. The eldest participants were aged 73 (male) and 53 (female). The heaviest male and female weighed in at 136.3 and 132 kg respectively, while the lightest male was 51.4 kg and female, 45 kg. As is the norm, the eldest participant, 73-year-old Aspi Billimoria inaugurated the event by cutting the red ribbon wound around the table.

For want of more female participation, the girls/women were clubbed into two categories — under 18 and open — the latter irrespective of weight. Hence the evening saw a mother-daughter duo wrestle it out. For the men's final



L-r, top: Merzban Patel, Vispi Kharadi, Rustom Jasoomoney and Farzana Kharadi; 2nd row: Mehli Golvala, Minoo Khan, Hoshang Kattrak, Behram Irani, Hutoxi Doodhwalla; 3rd row: referees and judges of the event; alongside: event banner; page 50: arm wrestlers in the throes of the game



Champion of Champions bout, a 19-year-old, weighing 70 kg, was paired against a 33-year-old's 97 kg.

Encouraging shouts of "Come on Karizma," "Mummy *khécho* (pull)!" "Cyrus *chhorto na* (Don't give up, Cyrus)!" rent the air as the 300+ crowd cheered their favored participant. The atmosphere was charged on the wintry evening with parents, family and friends animatedly yelling and cheering the arm wrestlers to fight it out. A short documentary film made on Kharadi's various world records was screened for one and all, with commentary by the martial art expert's wife Farzana.

The sport is a display of a combination of skill, grip, body leverage, mental strength with arm and shoulder power. Rules of the game were emphasized at the start by the referees and judges who are affiliated to the Maharashtra Arm Wrestling Association (MAWA). They had come specially from outside Bombay for the event. The competition is judged in accordance with international rules. A wrong grip or twist of the wrist can result in injury for the participant. To counter any unfortunate accident, the

Parsi Ambulance Division personnel were on standby.

How does the MC categorize participants, we queried? "Since we have limited entries in each category we usually go by age. Ideally it should be by age and weight," explained Jasoomoney in an email to *Parsiana*. Various factors go into making the evening a success: ascertaining the availability of the PG grounds on a suitable weekend; raising funds through sponsors; obtaining permission from MAWA; getting confirmation on



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the availability of their officials and arranging for their transport and stay in Bombay; stage and audiovisual arrangements, and most importantly catering, the email mentions. "We start

contacting the previous year's participants two months before the event and release advertisements a month earlier," he noted.

The PG team of Jasoomoney, Minoo Khan, Hamavand Shroff, Behram Irani and Hoshang Kattrak were specially named for the success of the event. The evening was compered by Hutoxi Doodhwalla. "With the complete support of (PG president) Mehli Golvala and staff of the PG along with the MC members makes the task (of organizing the event) easy and rewarding," acknowledged Jasoomoney. Participants had to pay an entry fee of Rs 350 which included dinner and a tee shirt. Overnight hotel stay was

promised to outstation participants on a room sharing basis, mentioned their advertisement published in the community Press. The "mag-nanimous"

sponsorship support of donors Ervad and Mrs H. P. Antia Trust, WZO (World Zoroastrian Organisation) Trust Funds,

Zoroastrian Co-operative Bank Limited, Veldon Coats, Dunnes Institute, Raymond Textiles, Peekay Wines, Khodadad Irani of Wibs, Khan and decorator Vivek Chaphekar was gratefully acknowledged.

With weary arms and spirits high, participants, invitees and the audience enjoyed the sumptuous buffet spread laid out by Good Food Concept on the verdant lawns of the Gymkhana.

Over the top

Winning the boys under 18 age group were Ayaan Desai, Rayaan Dadiburjoi and Rae Doctor, while Pashin Zaveri Rishad Sodawaterwalla and Desa bagged the first, second and third spo in the Juniors. The Seniors group (18-40 years with body weight below 100 kg saw Meherzad Chinoy, Farzad Drive and Shroff emerging winners. Bahmani, Ardeshir Khushrowshahi and Cyru Pooniwalla excelled in the 60+ years age group with septuagenarians Aspi Achari and Billimoria coming first and second respectively in the Super Class (over 70

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years). Vistasp Sanjana, Cyrus Sasoori and Sarosh Daruwalla emerged winners in the Master class (over 40 years, some having body weight over 100 kgs). Sisters Karizma and Delzeen Daruvala were first and second in the girls under 18. Their mother, Dilshad, came third in the ladies open category which saw newcomer Ferzana Daruwalla emerge supreme, followed by Khushnam Kasad in second place. Sanjana, Chinoy, Bahmani and Zaveri who formed Team Force took home the team champion prize. Cash prizes and medals were given to each winner by Patel and Kharadi. All participants were rewarded with gift vouchers, courtesy Raymonds.

While receiving his/her award every winner was greeted with thunderous applause which made Kharadi say: “Keep those claps going. It encourages one to excel more.”



Above: Table ready for inauguration; alongside, l-r: (1st row) Karizma Daruvala, Delzeen Daruvala, Ferzana Daruwalla; (2nd row) Khushnam Kasad, Dilshad Daruvala, Ayaan Desai; (3rd row) Rayaan Dadiburjor, Rae Doctor, Pashin Zaveri; (4th row) Rishad Sodawaterwala, Meherzad Chinoy, Farzad Driver; (5th row) Hamavand Shroff, Vistasp Sanjana, Cyrus Sasoori; (6th row) Sarosh Daruwalla, Percy Bahmani, Ardeshir Khushrowshahi; (7th row) Cyrus Pooniwala, Aspi Acharia, Aspi Billimoria



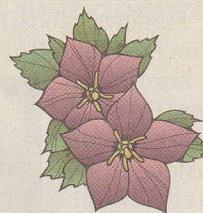
THE NANAVATI NARRATIVE

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Sylvia on an emotional level. “What is the meaning of playboy? Treating women casually? Before meeting Sylvia, Prem was very much involved with a friend named Pamela to have actually had numerous affairs. It was Sylvia who threw herself at him. As far as I can remember, he was careful to not make a move lest it tarnish her reputation and give rise to gossip.”

As he puts it, “Kawas had nothing against Prem, and Mamie had nothing against Kawas. The shooting was done in a fit of rage that clouded his discretion.” The onscreen Sylvia, in a tone conveying tenderness stated, “If you kill a person, you are guilty of committing an act of murder. In this case, matters just turned out differently. But Ahuja certainly didn’t deserve to die.”

Speaking about the rift between the Sindhis and Parsis, Viraf shared, “I am not sure if they or the subsequent generations believe that Ahuja deserved to die. As a Parsi, I believe we went a bit too far in trying to salvage the reputation of an entitled Kawas, the country, the Navy and the Parsi community.”



With
best wishes
from

**Farah
&
Tanya**