



GLOBAL COUNCIL OF ZOROASTRIANS TRUST (GCZT) & GLOBAL WORKING GROUP (GWG)



The Mission of GCZT is to offer a platform to the Zoroastrian Community to come together and work together for the wellbeing and prosperity of the Parsi, Irani and Iranian Zoroastrian community worldwide.

Volume 3 - February 2026
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SUMMARY OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Global Council of Zoroastrians Trust (GCZT) & Global Working Group (GWG) Held
on 6 January 2026 | 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Venue: West End Hotel, Mumbai**

NEWSLETTER – 3



PRESENT

**GCZT SETTLORS, TRUSTEES, ADVISORS, GWG REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE MEMBERS, VIP GUESTS AND PRESS**

BENEDICTION - Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor delivered the benediction prayers, offering blessings that set a dignified and spiritually uplifting tone for the proceedings.



GCZT Board Settlers



Dr. Burjor Antia



Dinshaw
Tamboly



Kersy Bhesania

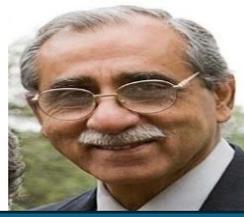
GCZT Trustees



Neville Shroff
Chairman



Dr. Burjor
Antia



Rohinton Rivetna



Sam Balsara



Yazdi Tantra



Meher Bhesania



Viraf Mehta



Kayo Sidhwa



Malcolm Deboo

GCZT Advisors



Dr. Rati Godrej



Noshir Dadrawala



Dorab Mistry



Homi Katgara



Adi Jehangir



Homiyar Madan



Arzan Wadia

CALL TO ORDER

- In accordance with provisions of Trust Neville Shroff was appointed the Chairman of the meeting.
- As the requisite quorum was present, the meeting was called to order.
- Meher Bhesania Trustee GCZT delivered the welcome address and moderated the meeting.



CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH



NEVILLE SHROFF

Neville Shroff, Chairman GCZT thanked the Settlers, Trustees, Advisors, Regional Representatives, Committee Members, VIP guests and those who joined the meeting via zoom. His speech positioned GCZT as both a **guardian of heritage** and a **driver of innovation**, calling for collective responsibility to ensure the Zoroastrian community not only survives but flourishes for generations.

The highlights of his speech are as follows:

Opening & Vision

- Neville welcomed attendees with gratitude and a call for **unity, vision, and resolve**.
- Extended **New Year wishes** for health, success, and prosperity across the global Zoroastrian community.
- Reaffirmed commitment to **peace, tolerance, and harmony** in turbulent times.

GCZT's Role

- He positioned GCZT as a **unifying institution** for a globally dispersed community that connects **historic heartlands (Iran & India)** with diaspora communities worldwide and provides a **consolidated voice** on the world stage, advocating for rights and preserving heritage.
- He added that it also tackles critical issues: **religious education, preservation of scriptures, maintenance of sacred fires**.
- Acts as the **connective tissue** of the global Zoroastrian family, ensuring continuity and unity.

Challenges & Opportunities

- He said that fragmentation and competition among organizations weakens collective strength.
- GCZT's mission is to **replace suspicion with support, foster collaboration, and build a legacy of unity.**
- North America was highlighted as a **model of federation and cooperation.**

Digital Empowerment

- He mentioned about the launch of a **new website** (led by Meher Bhesania).
- Upcoming **digital portals** for educational loans and medical assistance.

Strategic Framework – Five Vertical Pillars

1. Financial Stability & Resource Mobilization

- He touched upon diversified funding streams, endowment models, and asset preservation.
- Repurposing underutilized or defunct agiaries and properties.
- Transparent financial systems for long-term sustainability.

2. Community Engagement & Partnerships

- He mentioned the need for deepening alliances with trusts and diaspora networks.
- He touched on the Initiatives: free health insurance, Mobed Amelioration Program, senior outreach and said partnerships reinforce credibility and extend reach.

3. Talent Development & Leadership

- He said our focus should be on youth through mentorship, education, and leadership programs.
- New Path Initiative should be in place to nurture **future stewards of the faith.**
- GCZT will position itself as a **global hub for Zoroastrian talent.**

4. Innovation & Long-Term Vision

- The long-term vision of GCZT is to embrace digital platforms, pilot projects, and research-driven initiatives.
- Upgrade **Parsi General Hospital** into a world-class facility.
- Launch **digital diaspora networks** and integrated wellness centres.

5. Integrity & Ethical Governance:

- Commitment to transparency, accountability, and respect.
- Ensuring GCZT earns and retains trust through ethical stewardship.

Call to Action:

- Our community is facing challenges: shrinking demographics, limited youth engagement, funding sustainability, senior care gaps, fragmented trusts.
- Opportunities: **unity, innovation, rebuilding.**
- Urgent need for **dedicated funding and collaboration.**
- Formal invitation to trusts to join via the **Z Funds portal.**
- Screening of the film on "*Dadat – The Ethic of Giving*" at the Congress in Singapore to reinforce the sacred duty of giving.

Closing:

- Neville's closing remarks were - Stewardship requires **clarity, commitment, and concrete financial action**.
- The path forward demands **harmony, integrity, and teamwork**.
- He expressed his gratitude to **Viraf and the BPP team** for hosting the AGM at the West End Hotel.
- Concluded with blessings: *"May Ahura Mazda guide our path."*



Report of Former Chairman, Settlor and Trustee of GCZT - Dr. B. H. Antia



Following are the highlights:

Respected members of the GCZT,

It is my privilege to address you today and reflect on our journey over the past year. While this has been a year of consolidation rather than rapid expansion, it has also been a year of quiet resilience, thoughtful groundwork, and meaningful progress—both tangible and intangible.

Tangible Progress

On the operational front, we have:

- Established the offices of an Administrator and a Joint Secretary, ensuring smoother governance.
- Finalized our committee structure and successfully convened three Annual Meetings and one Semi-Annual Meeting.
- Launched five verticals to guide our work with clarity and purpose.
- Trying our best to complete the free insurance scheme for the needy in Mumbai—a testament to our commitment to social responsibility.
- Awarded the World Zoroastrian Congress and the World Youth Congress, reinforcing our role as a global convening body.

These are not just milestones—they are building blocks for a stronger future.

Intangible Gains

Equally important are the values and principles we've nurtured:

- We've strengthened the idea that we are one worldwide community without borders, pooling our resources for the benefit of all.
- The GWG concept has gained traction, and we must continue to enhance it.
- We've reinforced the principle that Regions remain autonomous, while GCZT serves as a coordinating and communicating body.
- By dispelling fears of central control, we've overcome one of the most difficult barriers to forming this global council.

These intangible gains are the soul of our progress. They reflect trust, unity, and shared purpose.

Transparency, Resilience, and Future Outlook

In the absence of dramatic expansion, our focus has shifted to transparency in governance, resilience in planning, and clarity in our future outlook. We are not just reporting limited achievements—we are laying the foundation for sustainable impact.

Our greatest challenge now is resource mobilization. To meet this, we are forming a strong finance team that will help GCZT fulfil its objectives with speed and precision. We must also define causes that resonate deeply with donors, and we will take important steps toward this at our formal meeting on 7th January.

Imperatives of Staying and Working Together

Let us never forget: Respect binds us. Trust sustains us. Compassion heals us. As a small community, our strength lies not in numbers but in unity. Please always remember the age-old Proverb “United we stand, divided we fall”. It my earnest appeal to all the members of our community settled throughout the world from America to New Zealand that we must live like a joint undivided family, ready to help each other in every situation. The imperatives of staying together and working together are not just ideals—they are survival strategies. They are the reason we endure, the reason we progress, and the reason we matter

Let us urge members of our community around the world to keep this in mind. Let us be the example of what unity can achieve.

Thanks to our sagacious forefathers, our community is rich in assets but unfortunately it is poor in planning/several of our valuable properties are lying vacant or hardly used or sometimes encroached upon and it is high time for Trustees of such Trusts to monetise the same and utilise its sales proceeds for the welfare of the poor and needy of our Parsi Zoroastrians community.

It is estimated that if such Trustees wake up and monetise their assets and utilise the sale proceeds thereof for betterment of our community. Hence, we will be able to take care of every poor and needy Parsi Zoroastrians from womb to tomb. We can give all such poor and needy Parsi Zoroastrians shelter, food and medical help and give them the best of education and settle them in life and also to look after them in their old age. So, I Appeal to all those Trustees to arise, awake and stop not till the goal of survival and welfare of our community is reached before it is too late. However, I would like to clarify that such Trustees will carry on their administrative work independently and without any interference from any source, but their objects should be to utilize the funds for the welfare of our community so that we can survive as long as Sun and Moon survive in this universe.

Closing

Taken together, our tangible actions and intangible values show that we are on the right track. Let us move forward with transparency, resilience, and a shared vision for the future.

Thank you.





THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR GCZT/GWG AGM 2025 PRESENTED BY: Sam Balsara, Trustee and Treasurer GCZT

Following are the highlights:

1. Corpus & Current Position

- GCZT reported a **total corpus of ₹145 lakhs**.
- Trustees acknowledged the need to **raise additional funds** to sustain operations and community initiatives.

2. Fundraising & Asset Monetization

- Suggestions included:
 - **Monetizing non-utilized community assets.**
 - **Exploring legal avenues to reclaim properties currently managed by defunct Anjuman's.**

3. Challenges Identified

- **Unclear title deeds** complicating property claims.
- **Local resistance** to redevelopment or monetization.
- Requirement of **legal and financial resources** to pursue reclamation and management effectively.

4. Strategic Direction

- Emphasis on **unity and collaborative efforts** among trustees and community members.
- Goal: **Preserve and strengthen community assets** for long-term sustainability.

5. Next Steps

- **Noshir Dadrawala** appointed to lead a committee in collaboration with **FAPZAI**. Dr Burjor Antia offered any legal help as and when required.
- Committee tasked with preparing a **detailed report** on asset management and fundraising strategies.



THE TREASURER'S REPORT FOR GCZT/GWG AGM 2025 PRESENTED BY: Yazdi Tantra, Trustee and Secretary GCZT

Following are the highlights:

Over the past year, GCZT has strengthened its role and celebrated a period of thoughtful groundwork and meaningful advancement.

Key milestones include:

- Appointment of a new **Administrator** and **Joint Secretary** and **expansion of committees in new areas**
- Reappointment of **M/s H.N. Sinor** as Chartered Accountants
- Strategic steps toward modernization, including the creation of a **digital platform** to streamline operation and maintenance of GCZT's website

These achievements reflect our commitment to strengthening governance, enhancing transparency, and preparing for the future.

Looking ahead, we anticipate a **productive and transformative year**, building on this momentum to deliver greater value and impact.



MESSAGE FROM ROHINTON RIVETNA, TRUSTEE GCZT

Coming Together and Working Together -- an Imperative

I bring you greetings from our Chicago community, where often the mercury drops to below -20 degrees, but inside, we strive to be warm and affectionate, caring for each other and working together for our common good and welfare.

Coming together and working together is not just a wish, it is an imperative for us, as symbolized by:

-the *Hamazor Hand Clasp*, “*together in strength, together in righteousness,*” that we are trying to revive in North America.

- the tying of the *Barsam*, symbolizing togetherness.

- the *Fravashi*, spark of divinity within each one of us that connects us.

- and many such teachings.

Yet we fail to live up to those imperatives.

In **North America** it took several iterations and a miracle to form FEZANA, a coordinating and communicating body, for the 27 Associations. It is now doing exceedingly well, a shining example of what we can do if we come together.

A well-established community has its 5 “Institutions of Humankind” (Governance, Religion, Commerce, Education and Arts and Science) working together for the common good.

In N.A. we have organizations set up to serve these “Institutions” – FEZANA, NAMC, IZS, WZCC, ZEDF, WZO-NA, SSZ, and others -- but sadly they are not working together.

We have resolved to right this by forming a coalition of all such organizations. The first meeting is scheduled at the upcoming FEZANA AGM this spring, courtesy of Kayo Sidhwa, FEZANA President.

In **Mumbai** there are dozens of Trusts, they all work in silos deciding for themselves who and what causes to fund, while the real need of the community may be different.

Another very obvious need is that the numerous baugs and colonies should come together into a Zarathushti Mandal of Greater Mumbai or something like that. This should have happened years ago.

I am sure there are other such examples. The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans seems to have taken a hiatus!

We hear that Zarathushtis are the largest landowners in Mumbai and the largest property owners, and this and that ... but all this comes to naught when our own live in abject poverty and our priests scramble to make a living, a poor reflection on our community. That must be set right, just not tolerable.

In **Australia** it is a sad story; Two attempts at forming a federation having failed -- they are now debating a third!!

Someone please let them know our imperatives -- to come together and work together. It is not that difficult.

Globally it is the same story, it took 30 plus years and many iterations and disappointments, to have finally come together as this Global Council of Zoroastrians Trust.

The global community today faces many critical issues. The Council has adopted five “Verticals” to work on.

Declining demographics is the most acute with a fertility rate of less than 1. But all is not lost if we look at Iran as an example where they were only 7000 in 1857 that grew to perhaps 30 to 40 thousand in the seventies just before the revolution. They did it by marrying early, marrying within and multiplying, having large families. If we are to arrest our decline our youth need to be made aware of their responsibility and made aware of the impending loss of a glorious heritage of 2 millennium. It is entirely up to our youth to reverse the trend.

Our youth are the custodians – the bird is in your hands; you may crush it or let it fly and soar.

We also need to be aware of the subtle almost imperceptible transformation that is taking place. Our ethno-centric religious community is gradually moving toward a ***religio-centric community***, as we shed our ethnicity in terms of language, sartorial wear, customs and traditions and with the paucity of priests soon to happen we are on track to becoming a humanistic community of Good thoughts, Words and Deeds. The warning bells have sounded for the impending loss of our ethnicity. Food is probably the last to go!

Paucity of priests is another critical issue. In India lack of new entrants to a beaten down profession is a serious problem and, in the diaspora, it is even worse, as the first generation priests trained in the mother countries pass, the second generation, few and far between, are not expected to serve at the same level of competence.

Then there is the ***poverty*** in our community and the affordability of ***basic health care***. WZOT, BPP and several trusts are engaged in alleviating poverty and providing health care but it is not enough. Ask Dinshaw and ask Neville, how many appeals they receive from India for assistance, and know it too who responds -- mostly the Diaspora. And all these issues need funding!

Like other communities who have the religious imperative to give, such as “tithe, zakat and tzedakah, individuals in our community need to develop the **“Ethic of Collective Giving”**.”

There are several imperatives that require each and everyone of us to give.

One such imperative is “*Dadat*” as in Yatha Ahu Variyo prayer, *Dadat vastarim*, *Dadat* is to give.

You will soon see a film produced by GCZT organized by Meher on the subject of *Dadat*.

The above are 5 verticals GCZT has identified to work on, and none of those are insurmountable if and only if we open up our doors, the Trusts in particular, and begin to work together.

Hidden from view we have enough resources, both human and material, to bring about a Zoroastrian renaissance, if only we can work together.

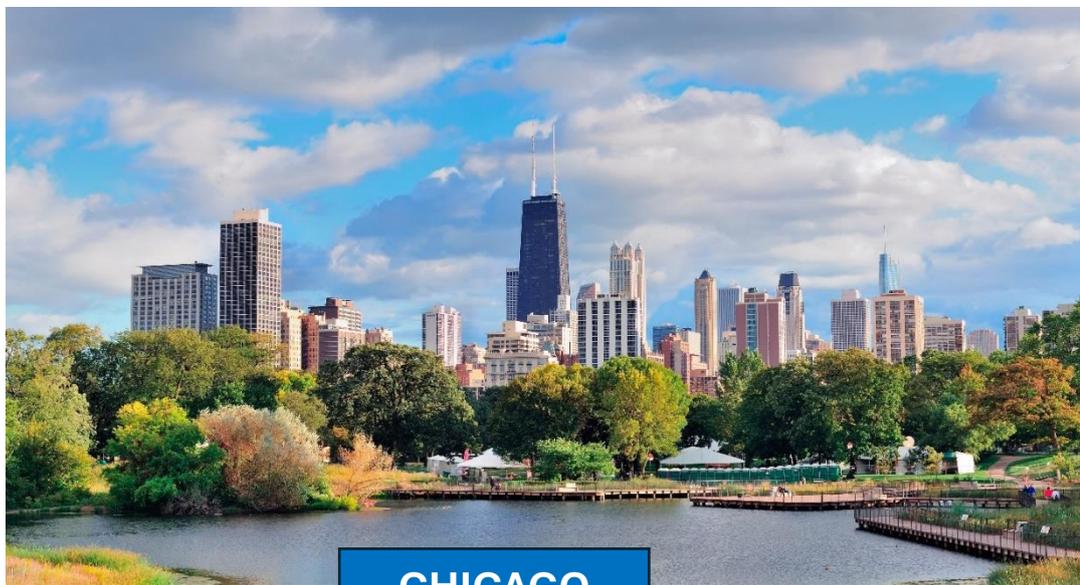
Here is a suggestion, every Region must form a coalition of all the trusts and organizations operating in the Region to communicate and coordinate their work so that all entities in the Region heave together towards our common goals.

I wish to leave you with a final thought:

This Global Council by the grace of Ahura Mazda has come together in the nick of time. It offers the best hope for our community survival and revival. The Council is the last vestige for our community to come together and work together worldwide. We share a common destiny.

Use it and mold it to its maximum potential, do not let petty differences come in the way, and we shall prosper like never before, and once more, become the “Shining City on the Hill.”

Atha Jamyat Yatha Afrinami.





BPP's contribution to the community by Viraf Mehta, Chairman, BPP

BPP is clearly working on a multi-pronged approach to sustain and strengthen the Parsi community. The initiatives can be grouped into three major pillars, each with significant impact:

1. Healthcare & Welfare

- **Parsi Irani Medical Insurance Scheme:** A landmark initiative, registering over 4,000 members in its first year. Its renewal and expansion show strong commitment to accessible healthcare.
- **Mental Health Fund:** A progressive step, acknowledging the growing importance of psychological well-being of community members alongside physical health.
- **Kathi Fund:** Ensures that even those who cannot afford Kathis are supported, preserving dignity and participation in rituals.
- **Education aid, medical support, and doles:** Despite financial constraints, BPP continues its legacy of welfare, ensuring no member is left behind.

Cultural & Heritage Preservation

- **Alpaiwala Museum Reopening:** Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Pheroza Godrej and Mrs. Firoza Panthakey Misstree, this revival safeguards cultural memory and heritage.
- **Property Redevelopment:** Plans for Navroze Baug redevelopment highlight modernization while maintaining Parsi-only covenants, balancing progress with tradition.

3. Youth & Family Support

- **Reduced marriage waiting times:** Housing allocation within 3–4 months is a major incentive for young couples, addressing one of the community's pressing needs.
- **Housing & financial incentives:**
 - Newly married couples receive a 1-bedroom house.
 - Families benefit from monthly child support until age 18, with scaled benefits for larger families.

Priest shortage and youth engagement: By encouraging young Parsis to take up priesthood and community roles, BPP is actively working to preserve religious continuity and cultural identity. This combination of **welfare, heritage preservation, and youth support** reflects a holistic vision: caring for the present generation while safeguarding traditions for the future.



ZTFE's contribution to the community Highlights by Dorab Mistry, Advisor, GCZT

Dorab Mistry, Advisor GCZT, gave a remarkable account of ZTFE's achievements and initiatives, The details are given below so that it becomes easier for readers to appreciate the scope of what's been accomplished:

Major Achievements

1. Vatican Engagement

1. ZTFE became the Zoroastrian contact with the Vatican.
2. Three audiences took place with the Pope, who spent notable time with the ZTFE delegation led by Malcolm Deboo, Javed Cantenwalla, and their Mobed.
 1. Presentation of a shawl and book to the Pope, were warmly received.
 2. Vatican has civil and foreign service, which includes significant Indian representation.

3. Dadabhai Naoroji's 200th Birth Anniversary



1. Celebrations honoring one of ZTFE's founders and a pioneering Liberal MP are being planned.
2. Patron Lord Karan Bilimora hosted a major that was attended by distinguished figures from Parliament, aristocracy, civil service, and the Zoroastrian community.
3. Plans for a large public event at the Zoroastrian Centre in Harrow (capacity 900), with a high-profile Chief Guest is under consideration.

Academic and Community Initiatives

SOAS Collaboration

1. Three doctorate students were supported this year.
2. Zar Amroli's philanthropy mentoring young Mobeds, ensures highly educated clergy for the diaspora.
3. Shapoorji Pallonji Institute of Zoroastrian Studies will facilitate training programs for Mobeds from India in public speaking and pastoral outreach.

4. Career Development



1. Zar Amroliya sponsored a career day attended by leaders in finance and private equity.



2. Sir Ron Kalifa, author of the influential *Kalifa Review* on Fintech, participated.

Youth and Cultural Programs

1. European Youth Conclave

1. This program is being planned for summer, expecting 100–200 young participants from Europe and India.
2. Scholarships and bursaries to support attendance are under consideration.
3. There is a growing Iranian diaspora in Germany.

4. Mobeds Program

1. Financial support was sent to India for Mobeds.
2. It is remarkable that during Muktaḍ prayers: 550 names rare recited daily over 11 days, with 150 vases in the common Muktaḍ.

Community Care

- **CZC or Care**

Care in the Zoroastrian Community celebrated 6 years of yeoman service.

.Legacy and Continuity

Leadership

Historical lineage of ZTFE presidents was shared by Dorab who said – Mancherji Hormusji Cama was the first President for two years), Dadabhai Naoroji (second, 45 years), Mancherji Bhowmagree (30 years) and Malcolm Deboo the current President is for the last 15 years.



Rusi Dalal, Trustee ZTFE, highlights the Historic Parsee Dinner at Mansion House

The Lord Mayor of the City of London, Alderman Alastair King, and Lady Florence hosted a historic Parsee dinner at Mansion House with Lord Karan Bilimoria to honour over 300 years of Parsi Zoroastrian contribution to Britain. ZTFE Trustee Rusi Dalal recalled the first Zoroastrian visitor, Rustom Maneck Seth, who came to London in 1723 and won a case against the East India Company - an early example of the community's resolve and integrity. Twenty leading Zoroastrians attended, including Sir Ron Kalifa, entrepreneur, governor, and trustee of major public institutions alongside prominent business leaders, bankers, lawyers, restaurateurs, and CEOs. The ZTFE President and Trustees were present, as was priest Yazad Bhada, who opened the evening with an Avestan prayer and blessing. The Lord Mayor praised the community's skilled contributions, while Dalal highlighted blue plaques honouring figures such as Dadabhai Naoroji, the first ethnic minority Member of Parliament; Ardeshir Wadia, the pioneering shipbuilder; and Freddie Mercury, the legendary musician whose influence continues to echo worldwide.

In his remarks, the Lord Mayor paid tribute to the extraordinary impact of Parsi Zoroastrians in Britain. Speakers emphasized that the early Parsi migrants did not arrive seeking opportunity; they arrived already as highly skilled individuals, ready to contribute their expertise to their adopted homeland. Their legacy is now woven into the fabric of British history.

The ZTFE's Zoroastrian Centre in Harrow stands as a symbol of the community's enduring presence and influence. The Mansion House dinner celebrated a legacy of service, excellence, and cultural pride — one that continues to shine brightly.





Highlights of community’s achievements in North America presented by Ervad Kayo Sidhwa, President FEZANA and Trustee GCZT

1. FEZANA’s Structure & Reach

- Federation of **27 associations, 14 corresponding groups, 24 committees**, an executive committee, and **18 Atash Kadehs**.
- A truly expansive organization representing Zoroastrians across North America.

2. 2025 – A Year of Progress

- Balanced **tradition with innovation, continuity with courage, and vision with service**.
- Marked by institutional growth, youth empowerment, and global engagement.

3. Youth Empowerment

- **6 youth-driven subcommittees** actively shaping FEZANA’s future.
- **ZYNA (Zoroastrian Youth of North America):**
 - 100 young leaders gathered for a retreat in Southern California.
 - At the North American Zoroastrian Congress, **42% of attendees were under 40** (surpassing the 40% goal).
- Building leadership skills and securing the future of the community.

4. Community Welfare Community Welfare

- Relief provided to some deserving **families and individuals** facing serious health challenges through WZO Trust.
- **Lifetime Achievement Awards** presented to **Rohinton Rivetna** and **Dolly Dastoor** for their contributions.
- Established North America's first **Mobed Endowment Fund**

5. Education & Scholarships

- **41 scholarships** awarded across undergraduate, graduate, performing, and creative arts fields.
- **4 new endowed scholarships** established to support future generations.

6. Heritage & Institutional Development

- New Atash Kadehs emerging in **Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana**, and the **Ontario Zoroastrian community**.
- Plans to establish **FEZANA Canada Charity** by mid-2025.
- Landmark **MOU signed in Houston** for a feasibility study on a **Zoroastrian Museum**.

7. Global & Interfaith Engagement

- Continued representation at the **United Nations** and other international forums.
- Focus on **peace, equity, and sustainability**.
- Strengthened interfaith presence and partnerships with organizations like **GWG**.

8. Social Media & Outreach

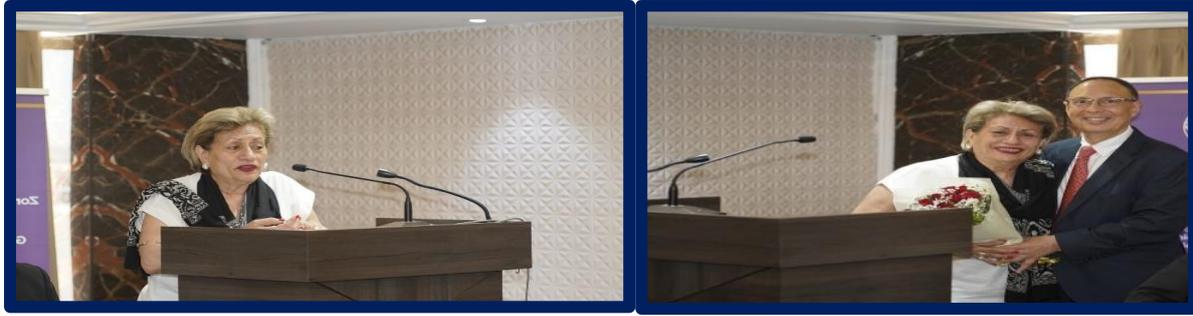
- Over **11.5 million followers** across platforms, amplifying FEZANA's voice globally.
- Collaboration with Texas State to place the **Khordeh Avesta** in their religion room.

Closing Message

2025 was described as a **year of enlightenment**—bridging generations, institutions, and global partners. The President expressed gratitude for trust, partnership, and shared commitment, invoking **Sarosh Yazad Panah bad** (may Sarosh Yazad's protection prevail).



Neville Shroff felicitates Kayo Sidhwa,
President FEZANA at the AGM



Highlights of Australia’s achievements presented by Farida Irani, Sydney, Australia

Unity in Diversity

- Farida Irani highlighted how people from Iran, Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan have settled in Sydney and other parts of Australia and are part of one association in Sydney known as AZA.
- Despite differences, the community stands united, which is a rare strength in diaspora settings.

Identity & Tradition

- To show commitment to lineage and for preserving our tradition our members in Australia have adopted a firm stance on defining Zoroastrian identity through Sudreh Pushi by an ordained Mobed and one member being a Zoroastrian by birth and not through conversion.
- At the same time, the community balances inclusivity by welcoming non-Zoroastrian spouses as full members and accepting their children, which reflects a liberal and forward-looking approach.

Religious & Cultural Life

- With 20–24 mobeds participating in Gambhars and other ceremonies, the community stands spiritually vibrant.
- Youth involvement, especially through Merzi Modi’s initiatives, ensures continuity and energy for the future.
-

The Federation Debate

- The idea of a Federation of Oceania has been circulating for decades initiated many years ago by our late Dr Sam Kerr, late Noshir Sachinwala and Parvez Kolsawala.
- While some see benefit there is resistance from others.
- Stalwarts like Neville and Rohinton—have argued strongly for the advantages of an umbrella body.
- Perseverance on this matter with help of Firoz and others shows determination to keep the vision alive, even when progress is slow. We will succeed eventually and are not giving up.
-

Service & Generosity

- Beyond rituals and debates, lies support to the **underprivileged**, especially through medical aid appeals received from Dinshaw Tamboly.
- The generosity of community members in contributing to every appeal reflects compassion and solidarity



Highlights of achievements presented by Firoz Pestonji, Perth, Australia

Firoz conveyed his greetings to all from the Oceanic region and said –

“Our community may not have centuries of recorded history in Australia, but we have built something meaningful together. Today, Australia is home to four Zoroastrian associations—Sydney, Melbourne, and two in Perth - the first was founded in 1997, and the second in 2012.

In 2018, the community proudly hosted the 11th World Zoroastrian Congress, welcoming many people from across the globe. As Farida rightly mentioned, the idea of a Federation has been with us for decades. The seed was planted by stalwarts like Dr Sam Kerr Noshir Sachinwala and Parvez Kolsawala back in 1998. Though progress has been slow, and despite setbacks—including the deregistration of the Federation we briefly established in 2022—we continue to persevere.

Melbourne and Perth still dream of building their own Dar-E-Mehr, and we are pushing for it. Sydney has been fortunate with generous donations, and we remain confident that we will achieve this goal.

Three months ago, I was elected President of the Zoroastrian Association of Australia, which was founded in 1997. I also serve as the sole Trustee of BAWAS, carrying the responsibility of supporting the Zoroastrian community in Western Australia. Perhaps, with Ahura Mazda’s blessings, the third attempt at establishing a Federation will succeed.

We have been fortunate to receive guidance from respected individuals from GCZT including even members of the Godrej family. Their wisdom has strengthened our resolve.

One of the most critical needs we see today is **communication across the Oceanic region**. We have created a WhatsApp group where grassroots members can connect directly, and this has been invaluable. Our challenges are unique and different from those faced by communities in India or the ZTFE.

Finally, we extend our best wishes to the Congress Committee of Singapore and to the Youth Congress next year. As they say, *Ahura Mazda willing, we shall get there—and all shall be revealed when the time is right.*”





**Report Presented by
Khodayar Attaie on behalf of IRAN**

Preservation and Philanthropy in Architecture:

Many Historic Zoroastrian buildings across IRAN –particularly in Yazd Province—are in need of restoration. Some of these structures are recognised as National Heritage Buildings of IRAN. Several have been successfully restored and repurposed as Restaurants, Cafes, Hostels and Guest Houses, generating sustainable income for the Zoroastrian Community.

Proposal: The Marker School and Orphanage Redevelopment

A Magnificent yet neglected complex in YAZD, known as the Marker School and Orphanage, needs to be revitalised and transformed into a Modern College dedicated to the study and advancement of Artificial Intelligence.

We Iranian Zoroastrians take Great Pride in our History of Educational Leadership—often in collaboration with our Parsi Brothers and Sisters—which led to the creation of some of IRAN’s Finest Schools. The Marker School Complex holds exceptional promise; its Grand, Historic Buildings lend the charm of Heritage. For your information the Marker School Complex has Huge Spacious Grounds which can accommodate new academic facilities, Sport Centers and Parking Areas. With the Right Support from Zoroastrians in INDIA and elsewhere, it could evolve into a “Mini Stanford University” and serve future generations forever.

The Marker School Complex was created by the efforts of the Great Philanthropist Pestonji Dossabhai Marker, and one point of interest is that at the head of this complex, there is a clock tower in the middle of a square named the Marker Square of Yazd. It is claimed that this Bell and Clock Tower marks the very center of all the land mass of IRAN, a point which fascinates many.

The Marker Square is situated in walking distance of the Atash Behram of Yazd and as such, many Iranians make it a pilgrimage to visit Yazd and this area, as they consider it the Heart of their Sacred Iranian Heritage. Unfortunately, the Greatest threat against the Marker School Complex comes not from outside but from within the Zoroastrian Community, where many wish to subdivide its valuable lands to create plots for housing.

For those interested in learning more about this Project, please visit the Telegram site titled “Marker Artificial Intelligence College of Yazd (MMAIY)”

A Call to Preserve Our Heritage:

Please do not give up on IRAN and its Zoroastrian Heritage. The World’s Oldest Atash Behram stands in Yazd, and the Tomb of Cyrus the Great is also revered as a powerful symbol of IRAN’s Ancient Civilisation, and the Iranian Youth of today looks up to them with Great Hope and Pride. Let us not turn away from our Roots or neglect them due to Political or Material Divisions.

Proposal for Migration and Cultural Stewardship:

Warm Greetings from your Zoroastrian kin in IRAN.

We write to you with Deep Respect and shared Heritage, seeking your attention and collaboration on a matter of Great Importance. As Zoroastrians living in IRAN, we face increasing challenges as a Religious Minority. Social and Economic pressures, coupled with Limited Opportunities and Cultural Isolation, have made it difficult for our community to thrive.

In light of these circumstances, we propose a collaborative migration plan that would allow willing members of our community to relocate to INDIA – a Country that holds a Vibrant Legacy of Zoroastrian Life and Parsi Culture. We believe this move would not only offer Safety and Dignity to Iranian Zoroastrians but also serve a Greater Purpose: The Preservation and Revitalization of our Sacred Institutions in INDIA.

It is with concern that we observe the Declining Population of Parsis in INDIA. Many Fire Temples, Dar-e-Mehrs, and Dharamshalas are left without Caretakers. The Continuity of our Rituals, Spaces, and Spiritual Responsibilities is at Risk. We see this not only as a Demographic Challenge but as a Sacred Calling—one that we are ready to answer.

Our Proposal Includes:

- Coordinated Migration Support for Iranian Zoroastrians willing to Relocate and Serve.
 - Legal and Logistical Guidance for Resettlement.
 - Community Sponsorships and Housing Partnerships.
 - Integration Programs to help New Commers contribute Meaningfully to Cultural and Religious Life.
- We are Not Seeking Charity—we are Seeking Solidarity. We wish to build lives that Honour our Ancestors, serve our Faith and Strengthen the Global Zoroastrian Legacy.
- We Humbly ask for your Support, Guidance, and Open-Hearted Collaboration. Together we can ensure that our Sacred Flame continues to burn brightly—in INDIA, In IRAN, and across the world.

With Hope and Humility, Zoroastrian Community of IRAN



PERSEPOLIS, IRAN



GWGME's contribution to the community in Dubai and GCC region by Meher Bhesania, Trustee GCZT

This is a fascinating snapshot of Dubai and the GCC in 2025. It really captures the region's transformation into a hub of innovation, sustainability, and community-driven growth. Let me break it down into key themes so we can see the bigger picture:

Dubai's Economic Positioning

1. **Smart economy:** Leveraging AI, digital platforms, and smart infrastructure to attract global investors.
2. **Sustainability:** Green initiatives, renewable energy projects, and eco-friendly urban planning.
3. **Innovation-driven:** Strong focus on startups, R&D, and technology accelerators.
4. **Tourism and investment hub:** Diversified offerings from luxury tourism to business-friendly policies.

GCC Growth Outlook

1. 2025 growth projection: 3.2%
2. 2026 growth projection: 4.5% This steady expansion signals resilience and creates fertile ground for community initiatives, cultural programs, and investment opportunities.

On Dubai Community Front – Formation of GWGME

1. **GWGME was founded in March 2025 by Meher Bhesania**, Regional Director and trustee of the Global Council of Zoroastrians Trust.
2. **Its mission is built on three pillars:** Connect, Care, Empower.
3. **Focus areas are:** unity, wellbeing, youth engagement, education, heritage, and culture.

Team Members Across GCC. Following are the members:

1. **UAE:** Firdaus Irani, Rumi Sarkari, Shirrin Sarkaree, Porus Guzder, Nowshir Engineer, Firuzi Kotwal, Nazneen Motafram, Tinaz Karbhari, Cyrus Debara
2. **Bahrain:** Cyrus Unwalla
3. **Doha:** Rumi Bhathena
4. **Kuwait:** Kayomarz Mistry
5. **Muscat:** Dr. Binaifer Bilimoria

Community Directory (4th Edition)

1. Released during Gahambar held on **23 November 2025**.
2. Developed by Meher Bhesania and GCC team.
3. Sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Freddy Sidhwa (Ocean Fair Group International FZE).
4. Highlights:
 1. **1,220** members listed
 2. **455** males
 3. **409** females
 4. **189** boys under 21
 5. **167** girls under 21

Special thanks to following members who rendered assistance towards compilation of the directory: Firdaus Irani, Kairmein Irani and Nazneen Motafram (Dubai), Cyrus Unwalla (Bahrain) Rumi Bhathena (Doha) Kayomarz Mistry (Kuwait) and Dr. Benaifer Billimoria (Muscat).

Programs held in Dubai (2025)

1. **Navroze Celebration** at Radisson Blu Hotel, March 2025
2. **Visit to Veggie Tech Farms Sharjah** - September 2025 (Transport was provided on complimentary basis by Porus Guzder – Owner, Incentive Connections)
3. **Sports Day** - October 2025 (Thanks to Mrs. Nargish Khambatta, Principal, and Senior VP GEMS Modern Academy for providing Academy’s playground for holding sports events.)
4. **Gahambar** - November 2025. The event was attended by 400 members and sponsored by Mr. & Mrs. Freddy Sidhwa.
5. **GCZT Writer’s Award Contest** was held in Sept and Oct. 25. Youth aged 15 – 35 years participated and submitted their essays on ‘The Ethic of Giving.’ Three winners were selected and awarded prizes – Delnaaz Dubash (1st prize holder), Ervad Rooyintan Nozer Mehenty (2nd prize holder and Parinaaz Chichgar (3rd prize holder)

Film Production – *The Ethic of Giving* (Dadat) was produced in December 2025. with support from Orange Production Company in Mumbai. This film is dedicated to promoting the spirit of generosity in our community. Let us be the generation that gives back — with **gratitude**, with **love**, and with purpose and be reminded of what our Prophet Zarathushtra preached.

This reflects a picture of a community that’s not only preserving its heritage but also actively engaging youth, fostering unity, and celebrating culture together.





Z Funds One -Time Registration Platform (India)

A very thoughtful and impactful initiative developed by GCZT for community members and Trusts in India is now available on GCZT.org website. This model is essentially a **shared ledger of charitable disbursements**, tailored for medical and educational needs in India. It's a smart way to combine transparency with privacy, and it could become a benchmark for trust collaboration.

Highlights of the initiative are as follows:

Core Idea

- Beneficiaries (medical or education needs) register **once** on the portal.
- Their requirement (e.g., ₹5,00,000) is visible to all participating trusts.
- Trusts can contribute partially (₹50,000, ₹25,000, etc.), and the portal tracks how much has already been sanctioned.
- Prevents **double-dipping** or misuse by applying to multiple trusts separately.

Benefits for Beneficiaries

- **Single registration** → no need to fill multiple forms across different trusts.
- **Transparency** → they can see how much has already been sanctioned.
- **Convenience** → data entry support available if they are unable to upload documents.
- **Accessibility** → can use mobile/internet, visit the trust, or approach the Administrator at GCZT for help.

Benefits for Trusts

- **Centralized applications** → all requests in one place.
- **Visibility** → can see total requirement and contributions already made.
- **Fraud prevention** → stops beneficiaries from collecting more than needed.
- **Efficiency** → trusts don't need to manage scattered applications.

Operational Flow

1. **Beneficiary registers once** → requirement entered on GCZT portal.
2. **Trusts access portal** → see requirement and current sanctioned amount.
3. **Trusts request supporting documents** → bills, medical certificates, etc. from beneficiaries
4. **Trusts sanction funds** → amount updated in portal.
5. **Transparency maintained** → all trusts see cumulative contributions.

Data Entry Support

- Trusts and beneficiaries may struggle with uploading data.
- GCZT provides administrative assistance:
 - Beneficiary can come to GCZT office.
 - Trust can refer beneficiary to GCZT.
 - GCZT staff enters data on behalf of beneficiary.

Privacy & Security

- **Trust identities not disclosed** to other trusts.
- Only **sanctioned amounts** and **requirements** are visible.
- Ensures confidentiality while maintaining transparency of funds.

Appeal to Trusts

- Adopt this **one-point portal** for all applications.
- Insist that beneficiaries apply **only through GCZT platform**.
- This ensures fairness, efficiency, and prevents misuse.

For more details – Visit GCZT.org and Zfunds.org

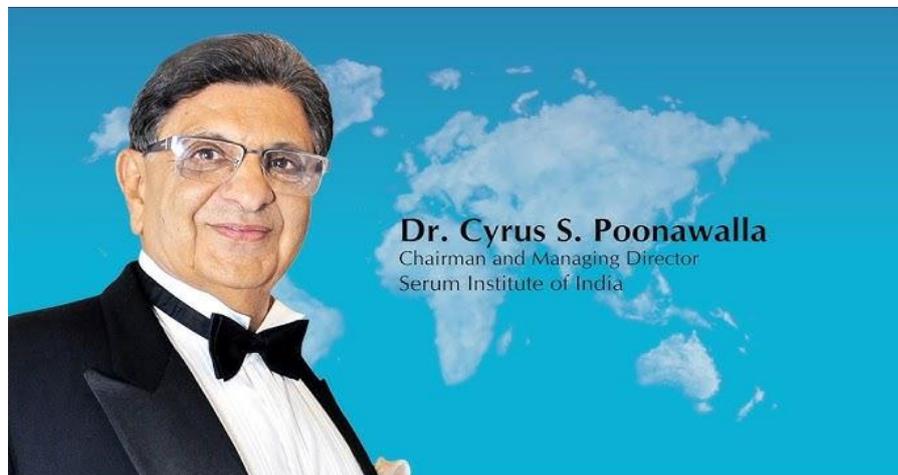


A NEW FILM ON ‘DADAT – THE ETHIC OF GIVING’ WAS LAUNCHED AT THE GCZT/GWG AGM ON 6.1.26



**GLOBAL WORKING GROUP IS SPREAD IN 10 REGIONS WORLDWIDE -
INDIA, NORTH AMERICA, IRAN, UK & EUROPE, AFRICA, MIDDLE EAST, PAKISTAN,
SINGAPORE, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.**





We extend our deepest gratitude to **Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla** for his extraordinary and heartfelt contribution of **₹10 crores** to **GCZT**. This remarkable gesture is not only a testament to his generosity but also to his unwavering belief in the work GCZT is striving to accomplish.

His support empowers us to strengthen our initiatives, expand our reach, and continue creating meaningful and lasting impact. Contributions like his inspire confidence, fuel progress, and remind us of the power of collective commitment toward a greater purpose.

We are truly honoured and deeply grateful for his trust, vision, and encouragement.

We are equally thankful to **Mr. Rusi Dalal**, Trustee **ZTFE**, for graciously arranging the meeting with **Dr. Cyrus Poonawalla** to discuss this important matter. His support and involvement have been invaluable and appreciated by GCZT Settlers, Trustees and Advisors.



Justice Shahrukh J Kathawalla, was the Chief Guest at the GCZT/GWG AGM. Highlights from his wonderful message delivered to the audience at the West End Hotel in Mumbai on 6th January 2026

Let me commence by wishing a very happy new year To paraphrase Robert Frost May this year be full of promises that we keep and three many miles that we may meaningfully traverse before we sleep.

Friends, amongst the many qualities that have defined the Parsi community one that stands out with quiet consistency is the Ethic of Giving. Not as a spectacle and certainly not for self-promotion but as an instinctive sense of responsibility towards society at large and the disadvantaged. For us Parsis Charity has always been a way of life woven into our faith our legacy and our daily conduct. So deeply embedded in our ethos and personality that members of other faiths appreciatively coined the famous phrase – Parsi thy name is charity. Mahatma Gandhi himself famously acknowledged the Parsi community’s philanthropic spirit stating – “I am proud of my country India for having produced the splendid Zoroastrian stock in numbers beneath contempt but in charity and philanthropy beyond compare. This is the legacy that has been entrusted to us by our ancestors which we must strive to perpetuate through successive generations of our community. The roots of this legacy lie in our Zoroastrian religion itself at the heart of our faith is the triad of Humata, Hukhta, Huvarshta – good thoughts, good words and good deeds. Charity in this context is not merely the act of donating money, but it is a moral action – a belief that one’s prosperity is inseparable from the welfare of others. When Parsis arrived on the western shores of India as refugees we came with as little prayer on our lips and a strong ethical code. As the community prospered through trade, industry and education the ideas that success will be shared became a deeply ingrained norm. Wealth was not something to be hidden or hoarded it is something to be circulated What is particularly noteworthy is that the Parsi ethic of giving has always extended beyond the boundaries of our own community. From hospitals and schools to libraries orphanages scientific institutions animal shelters public facilities and civic infrastructures, Parsi Philanthropy remarkable inclusive. The beneficiaries were not limited by religion caste or class but encompassed all strata of the society Perhaps the most visible expression of this lies in institutional philanthropy. Parsi Trust and endowments not as short-term relief mechanism but as long-term social Investments. These philanthropic trusts and institutions of our community have been structured for permanence reflecting a belief that giving should outlive the giver. At the centre of this tradition stands the names of individuals whose names have become synonymous with generosity Jamshetji Tata, Sir Ratan Tata, Lady Meherbai Tata Sir Cowasji Jehangir to the Readymoney family, the Petit

family, the Wadia family the Godrej family, the Pallonji Mistry family, the Poonawalla's and many others. Yet to focus only on famous benefactors would be to miss the essence of Parsi generosity. For every wealthy philanthropist who endowed a university hospital for other charitable causes there were thousands of ordinary Parsis who as per their capacity quietly sponsored education of the children of their household help funded medical treatment for the poor and contributed anonymously to several causes. Equally significant is the way philanthropy has functioned as social glue within the community from baugs and agiaris to welfare funds and educational scholarships Support systems were created by our forefathers to ensure that no Parsi was left unsupported. As India and the world grapples with widening inequalities social fragmentation and moral fatigue the Parsi ethic of giving feels more relevant than ever It challenges the notion that success is individual that wealth is private or the responsibility ends at one's doorstep. Instead, it proposes a more expansive vision of citizenship one in which prosperity carries obligation and where compassion is a civic duty.

Let me talk a bit about trust management because that is an important pillar of our philanthropic ecosystem. The trustees of Parsi Trust need to be vigilant when supporting causes and not supporting individual beneficiaries seeking charitable systems. The process needs to be transparent ethical and devoid of favouritism and nepotism. Trusteeship is an opportunity to serve and not an ego trip Trustee need to be approachable and fair in the discharge of their duties and not act as the owners or proprietors of the trust they are associated with. There can be no groupism among trustees wherein the group of trustees treat the other group of trustees as rivals. After the board of trustees is constituted, they ought and should work in harmony as one group and only one objective in mind namely the welfare of the trust its objects and its beneficiaries. By internal rivalry and one upmanship the trustees defeat the purpose of their trusteeship. The trustees cannot act keeping in mind rise in their popularity graph which will help them in winning election. The trustees are duty bound to support or oppose every issue or resolution that is placed before them strictly on merits without politicizing the same. The trustees should be aware that they are doing a thankless job and therefore should not bother about destructive criticism and hidden agendas as long as their actions are in the best interest of the trust its objects.

We need to have a centralised web portal for appeals and funds should be disposed from a centralised trust that publishes its accounts and shows how and where the money is disbursed. Some trust organisations despite collecting huge sums via donations through appeals do not share any statements of accounts and sadly there is no accountability. Right now, also there is a haphazard system of individuals putting out appeals and collecting funds directly into their personal bank accounts. I am told that very often much in excess of the individual's needs funds pour into these personal accounts and there is no way of monitoring how they are being used or what happens to the excess amounts collected. There are young able-bodied individuals some educated and some not who are just not wanting to work out who knock the doors of one charitable trust to another and collect a substantial amount which is much more than an individual earning by doing a job between 8.00 am to 5.00 p.m. All this needs to be stopped and the process must be streamlined as we cannot allow misuse or abuse of charity.

Another unfortunate fact is that there is a sharp decline in our willingness to support charitable causes. People don't donate willingly. From a community of givers, we certainly cannot decline to become a community of takers. The gratitude and appreciation level of the beneficiaries of the various trusts is rock bottom, and they now take all the benefits for granted and as a matter of right the time and effort put in by the trustees is not appreciated and the trustees are severely criticised often unfairly and false motives are attributed to them. But this does not apply to all beneficiaries as some are very appreciative. There is lot that needs to be done for the uplift and amelioration of the community members and our various trusts should find ways of coming together and doing this collectively. There is a lot of repetition that needlessly happens for instance recently two or three trusts have simultaneously floated mental health initiatives and have asked donors to fund them.

I am wondering if they could not work together towards this common goal in cooperative and consolidated way. The same holds true for educational assistance medical relief, mobed empowerment and so forth. We need to collaborate with each other more and criticise each other less. Our scriptures say Happiness comes unto him who brings happiness unto others. Every good deed is a prayer in action and philanthropy is the best form of prayer and on this note I would like to conclude Thank you for your time and attention and let us commit together to upholding the Parsi legacy of philanthropy for all times to come





Highlights from the wonderful message delivered by Burgis Godrej, Managing Director Astec Life Sciences and Head of Special Projects at Godrej Agrovet Limited at the GCZT/GWG AGM at the West End Hotel on 6.1.26 in Mumbai

It's a privilege to be invited here as a speaker at the GCZT AGM. I'd like to acknowledge the excellent work that GCZT has done. I've seen this firsthand through attending the 2025 AGM where I saw the power of convening various global Zoroastrian organizations to conceptualize and implement ideas for helping the community.

The ethic of giving and social impact is an incredibly important topic among Zoroastrians because of our religious values and traditions. Zoroastrianism emphasizes keeping the needs of society in mind and following ethical principles. Once a person is wealthy, a person can only become a spiritually advanced soul, an "Ashavan", through bringing happiness to others.

One way of bringing happiness to others is through charity, keeping the needs of the poor in mind and taking good care of the natural world with our emphasis on the Amesha Spenta's and Yazatas, like Bahman Yazad and Spenta Armaity.

However, even beyond giving to charity there is a focus on Zoroastrians making money fairly and honestly. Parsis are excellent examples of putting these Zoroastrian values into practice. We played a huge role in creating the building blocks of modern-day India – ships, textiles, steel and hospitality. In our culture, there is tremendous emphasis placed on fair wages, safe labour standards and environmental responsibility. Civic duty at every level- small or big- local community, state, country and global community has always been emphasized as well. I could see this Zoroastrian "local + global" environmental spirit firsthand at the Return to Roots program where we interacted with Filly Bapuna- the founder of the Udveda beach cleanup drive, as well as with RTR program founder- Aban Marker Kabraji-, to learn about her UN work on conservation of biodiversity.

I had the opportunity to meet many Zoroastrian youth around the world at various congresses, FOZAWAC sports events, WZCC events and the RTR program of 2025. It's important that we realize that Zoroastrian youth have different perspectives on various religious and community matters. However, I have noticed 3 common desires among Zoroastrian youth:

- 1) Build community – online and offline.
- 2) Achieve a proud sense of identity rooted in Zoroastrian values.
- 3) Some curiosity for ritualistic practices but a deeper curiosity to have more debates, discussions, , field trips and volunteering opportunities

1) Build community – online and offline.

Our RTR WhatsApp group is very active with more than just memes. Understanding the lived experience of Iranian Zoroastrians is very important to everyone in our cohort. Our Iranian brothers and sisters are alarmed at the rampant inflation, corruption and decline in living standards there. While it is hard to find solutions to their many challenges, it has motivated our group to offer support in whatever way we can. Despite their challenges, it is inspiring to see their dedication to their routine, still worshipping at religious sites in Iran like Demavand and ChakChak. Some among them think that Parsis and the diaspora live too comfortably a life and don't appreciate the sacrifices that Iranian Zarhostis have made for their faith. My interactions with them have deepened my sense of identity as a Parsi and as a Zoroastrian. It has also ensured that I see my ability to practice in India as a religious minority to be a special privilege. Understanding the challenges we went through in the past will ensure that we can cherish what we have in the present and plan well for the future.

Beyond online, the youth around the world crave community building activities like sports, Sunday school religious classes, field trips and well-structured mentorship sessions. I have seen huge turnout at various community sports events. I have played in the FOZAWAC tennis and chess tournaments and watched the recent Godrej Baug sepak tournament. For those unfamiliar with the sport, as I was 3 months ago, sepak is a Malaysian sport that combines football and volleyball. Think of it as volleyball but without hands. The ball has to be lifted over the net through your feet, chest or head ! This very challenging and unique sport brought together many people to cultivate camaraderie, have fun and foster lasting friendships.

2) Achieve a proud sense of identity rooted in Zoroastrian values.

While the youth are aware of all the many disagreements in the community, I think it will be helpful for them to reflect on what is unique about our community and what has made it so successful and highly respected, in India and around the world.

Return to roots participants were deeply inspired by the Tata archives in Pune that showcased the incredible values of many Zoroastrians affiliated with the group like the Tata family members and Nani Palkhivala. People realized the magnitude of the community's achievements. People knew about Parsi success in business but learned about other interesting facts. We heard the story of Meherbai Tata playing tennis at the Olympics in a gara and learned that at one point of time both the Indian and Pakistani ambassadors to the USA were Parsi.

Most importantly, we need to encourage our youth to become entrepreneurially minded and visionary in whatever they do.

When I say entrepreneurial, I don't necessarily mean starting a brand-new business, although we need more of that too. What I mean is the entrepreneurial mindset, which means saying "I have taken the time to create a goal and identify a problem that needs to be solved. I will focus on solving that problem

and achieving that goal”. This attitude clearly says that I will not use the obstacles to the goal or my lack of resources as an excuse.

Another beautiful aspect of the entrepreneurial philosophy is that it celebrates failure! Failure is an experiment that enhances one’s learning so that one can be more successful in the future.

We need to celebrate entrepreneurial stories in the community, especially in the present, and we need to brainstorm what future entrepreneurial success stories can be. Entrepreneurship is not just for the youth; some of the most successful entrepreneurs are experienced professionals who made the transition to entrepreneurship later in life.

3) Some curiosity for ritualistic practices but a deeper curiosity to have more debates, discussions, field trips and volunteering opportunities.

I found that the youth are interested in rituals and learning their meaning but are not the type to take anything at face value or because a community senior tells them “aain aapro dharm ma lakhyu chhe”. Instead, they are very receptive when someone explains the deeper meaning of the prayer/ritual, explains how it helps them deal with stress just like meditation can, explains why prayer is a better break from work or studies than social media is and explains why being part of a humbandagi is more rewarding than being part of a WhatsApp group. We need to explain what the symbolism is, the beauty of praying in the Avestan language, why we are a religion rather than a philosophy, and how Zoroastrianism can inspire us to lead a more meaningful purposeful fulfilling life.

We also need to measure what we are doing. I suggest that every time we do an activity, we should have feedback systems to determine whether the activity has deepened the spiritual or community connection.

To conclude, I believe that we need to maintain and preserve traditions, while ensuring that they are relevant to modern day youth and their concerns. What we want is an inspired youth that is proud to be Zoroastrian and is committed to a Zoroastrian way of life.

Thank you for having me here.



Neville Shroff felicitates Burgis Godrej at the GCZT/GWG AGM in Mumbai



Highlights from the speech of Dr. Doodhwala President, Surat Parsi Panchayat, Serving the Parsi Community for over 180 Years

Dr. Homi D. Doodhwala, President Surat Parsi Panchayat, stated that the Surat Parsi Panchayat, through its 12 charitable trusts, has been dedicated to the welfare of the Parsi community since 1841. Over the decades, they have expanded their services to meet the evolving needs of Zoroastrians living there ensuring healthcare, education, shelter, and social support.

Current Initiatives:

Healthcare (Yearly average of last 5 years)

- Parsi General Hospital – Annual expenditure: Rs.1 crore 6 lakhs
- Physiotherapy Centre – Rs. 27 lakhs
- Financial support to community members for taking treatment in private hospital for 130 members – Rs. 30 lakhs per year
- Reimbursement of medical insurance program, in which a total of 114 members, who are above 60 years of age, are provided with personal assistance out of the amount paid by them. The expenditure on this program for the year 2025-26 is Rs. 32,92,617/-

Education & Youth Development

- Scholarships – Rs. 20–25 lakhs annually
- Sponsorship for aspiring IAS/IPS candidates – Pre-training and admission assistance

Social Welfare

- Boys' & Girls' Orphanage – Rs.1 crore 10 lakhs per year
- Nariman Home (Old Age Home) – Rs. 1 crore 26 lakhs per year
- Central Kitchen – Rs. 58–60 lakhs per year
- Free lunches for community members – Rs.70 per day per person amount to Rs. 12 lakhs per year
- Tiffin services for the needy – Rs. 26–30 lakhs annually
- Distribution of food grains – Rs. 20 lakhs per year
- **Behram Roj monthly help** for the downtrodden community members is also a constant feature in the SPP's endeavour for community outreach and for this the SPP spent Rs. 48,78,992/- per year on average for 1400 persons for the past five years.

Family Support Programs

- Third Child Benefit Program Rs. 5,000 per month per child until the child attains the age of 25. Currently the SPP is supporting 19 families in this program and has spent more than Rs. 25 lakhs until now.

The New Initiative: Second Child Benefit Program

- Our community faces a grave demographic challenge: the death rate is 2.5 to 3 times higher than the birth rate. To address this, we are planning to launch a Second Child Benefit Program. This initiative will provide financial assistance to families who welcome a second child, encouraging growth and sustainability of the Parsi community.

Appeal for Support

We humbly invite benevolent Parsis, Charitable Trusts, and Philanthropic individuals to join hands with us in this noble cause. Your generous contribution will directly support families, strengthen our community and help reverse the worrying demographic trend.

Together, we can ensure that the legacy of the Parsi community continues to thrive for generations to come.

Please note our Bank details as under: -

Name of A/c. : The Surat Parsi Panchayat Funds and Properties Trust

Name of the Bank: Bank of Baroda

Branch: Machhlipith, Shahpore, Surat.

A/c. No. : 14870100012773

IFCS code: BARB0SHASUR (fifth character is zero)

For donations and support, please contact: M. No. 8980334161, office: 0261-2423221/2432978.

Email: office@suratparsipanchayat.com

Address: Surat Pasi Panchayat Office, Dr. Jamshedji Laskari Road, Shahpore, Surat: 395003



Farida Irani felicitates Dr. Doodhwala, President Parsi Panchayat, Surat at the GCZT/GWG AGM in Mumbai



Highlights from the speech of Brigadier Jehangir Anklesaria, President Parsi Panchayet Ahmedabad at the GCZT/GWG AGM on 6.1.26 at the West End Hotel in Mumbai

Brigadier Anklesaria, President, Parsi Panchayet, Ahmedabad touched on two deeply interconnected challenges facing the Parsi/Zoroastrian community today: **the unintended consequences of charity and the urgent demographic crisis.**

Key Issues

1. Charity vs. Self-Reliance

- **Concern:** Excessive reliance on charity and donations may discourage initiative among younger generations.
- Many young Parsis settle into a modest lifestyle (house + salaried income) without striving for greater ambition, partly because community aid cushions them.
- While charity is essential for the truly needy, indiscriminate financial support risks creating dependency rather than empowerment.
- **Possible approach:**
- Shift from *direct handouts* to *capacity-building programs* (skill development, entrepreneurship grants, mentorship).
- Encourage youth to pursue careers and innovation, while reserving charity for those genuinely unable to support themselves.

2. Population Decline and Family Support

- **Demographic Reality:**
 - 45 years ago, Ahmedabad had ~2500 Parsis; today fewer than 1400.
 - Death rate: ~24–25 annually.
 - Birth rate: fewer than 6 annually.
 - Sustainable growth requires ~1.8 fertility rate, but Parsis globally are below 0.8.

- **Current Incentives:**

- Parsi Panchayet provides ₹25,000 for the first child, ₹50,000 for the second, ₹1,00,000 for the third.
- These are one-time grants, insufficient for long-term child-rearing costs.

Possible Approach:

- Move from *one-time assistance* to *sustained family support* (monthly allowances, subsidized childcare, education funds).
- Let mothers stay at home for a few years and fund the salary to the mother to reduce the financial and emotional burden on mothers.
- Partner with government schemes for minorities to secure larger allocations.

Proposal to Minorities Commission:

- ₹10 lakh for the first child, ₹20 lakh for the second, ₹30 lakh for the third.

Broader Implications

- **Cultural Survival:** Without population growth, traditions, institutions, and identity risk fading.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Stronger engagement with the Minorities Commission and government bodies is crucial to secure structured, long-term support.
- **Community Mobilization:** Beyond financial aid, fostering pride, responsibility, and initiative among youth is essential to reverse decline.



**GCZT Trustee Yazdi Tantra felicitates Brigadier Jehangir Anklesaria ,
President Parsi Panchayet, Ahmedabad**



Achievements of the World Zarathushti Chamber of Commerce (WZCC) presented by Percy Master, Global President WZCC

Ladies and Gentlemen and dear friends of the Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce.

“WZCC is the only chamber of commerce in our community, and it carries a vital responsibility: to nurture the future generation. Our slogan, *“The Power of Youth for Driving Future Generations”* reflects this commitment. In fact, we have declared **2025 as the Year of the Youth**, because education and empowerment remain at the heart of our mission.

Youth Development

- Our core objective is to develop **intellectual, economic, and social values** among our youngsters.
- We have launched education programs, webinars, and spotlight sessions to encourage youth to come together.
- Through our **global youth network**, young Zoroastrians from India, North America, Canada, the UK, Australia, and even Tehran are connecting and collaborating.

Startup & Internship Programs

- One of our most important initiatives has been the **financing of startups**.
 - In India, through the **Minoo Shroff Memorial Fund**, we have supported 21 young entrepreneurs who are thriving in their businesses.
 - In North America, through the **Zoroastrian Educational Foundation in collaboration with FEZANA**, we have funded 11 youngsters.
- Last year, we launched an **Internship Program** to give recent graduates practical experience.
 - Over 50 business houses—both Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian—have come forward.
 - So far, 30 youngsters have been placed, with another 20–30 in the pipeline.

Women Empowerment

- We are committed to ensuring that women are represented in every panel and discussion.
- Our **women empowerment project** enables women to participate in diverse fields, ensuring equal opportunity and visibility.

Global Networking

- The **IZYN program (Z Youth Network)** has become a vital platform for youth interaction across continents.
- We are also creating **education funds in India and Iran** to provide scholarships for higher education, encouraging Iranian youth to study in India, which offers liberal visa arrangements.

WZCC 25th Anniversary Celebrations

In 2025, WZCC proudly completed **25 years**. To mark this milestone:

- A **Jashan ceremony** will be held at the Saher Agiary, with 25 Dasturs' performing the prayers. Blessings shall be bestowed by four Vada Dasturjis, followed by cocktails and dinner.
- From **8–10 January**, we will host a convention at the Taj President, featuring fabulous speakers and panel discussions.
- Over **150 members have already registered**, and more than **200 guests** will join us for the Awards Night.
- The program includes a visit to the **Alpaiwala Museum** and a farewell lunch at the **Ripon Club**.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate, we must also look to the future. We need **focused programs for our youngsters**, stronger networking systems, and innovative funds to address challenges such as fertility and demographic matters. Thankfully, the Indian Government is helping us with the '*Jio Parsi Scheme*', and our community needs to come together and help. If we do not have a dedicated program in place, our agiaries and institutions may struggle with declining numbers.

Friends, the future of our community lies in the hands of our youth. With Ahura Mazda's blessings, WZCC will continue to empower them—intellectually, economically, and socially—so that our legacy thrives for generations to come."





Key Themes shared by Vada Dasturji Khurshed Dastoor at the GCZT/GWG AGM held at the West End Hotel on 6.1.26 in Mumbai

1. Mobedi as a Calling, not a Career

- Vada Dasturji stressed that mobedi is not comparable to corporate life—it is a spiritual vocation that comes from within.
- The analogy of *two types of horses* (racehorses vs. carriage horses) captures the rarity of exceptional mobeds today.

2. Decline in Training Institutions

- In the 1970s–80s, there were nearly 90 students across Madresas (Dadar Athornan and Cama Athornan).
- Today, Cama Athornan has shut down, and Dadar Athornan has only 15 students.
- Producing “racehorses” (exceptional mobeds) from such small numbers is increasingly difficult.

3. Modern Challenges for Students

- Balancing secular education (like engineering) with priestly training is tough.
- Social media distractions contrast with earlier generations’ focus on prayers and studies.
- Parents hesitate to push children into mobedi due to financial insecurity.

4. Financial Insecurity

- Historically, mobeds lacked provident funds, mediclaim, or structured financial support.
- Recent schemes (Neville Sarkari’s stipend, Piruz Khambatta’s sponsorship, WZO Athornan Mandal Trust) provide some relief.
- Still, income from ceremonies is declining due to reduced demand and shorter durations of memorial prayers.

5. Respect and Recognition

- Mobeds often receive less respect compared to other professionals at community events.
- Families spend lavishly on weddings/navjotes but neglect to honor or adequately compensate the priests.
- Lack of dignity and respect discourages younger generations from pursuing mobedi.

6.Future of Higher Liturgical Ceremonies

- Complex rituals like *nirangdin*, *yasna*, *vendidad*, and *boi* are at risk due to fewer trained mobeds.
- Without mobeds, essential religious functions (chasniwalas, pall bearers, liturgical ceremonies) cannot continue, threatening community survival.

The Core Dilemma

- **Mobedi is spiritually vital but financially unsustainable.**
- **The community depends on mobeds, but fails to support them adequately.**
- **Respect and dignity are as important as financial aid.**

Possible Paths Forward

- **Individual Sponsorships:** As Dastur suggests, rather than large corpus funds, direct sponsorship of mobeds by individuals can make a tangible difference.
- **Community Awareness:** Families must be reminded to honor mobeds with dignity, not just token payments.
- **Hybrid Education Models:** Allowing students to pursue secular careers while still serving as mobeds part-time could sustain the tradition.
- **Structured Benefits:** Provident funds, mediclaim, and pensions for mobeds should be institutionalized.

Khurshed Dastoor's words are both a warning and a call to action: without respect, financial support, and community commitment, mobedi risks fading away, leaving a spiritual vacuum in Zoroastrian life.





Highlights of presentation by Farrokh Mistree – WZCC IZYN

WZCC Thrust 1 - Promoting Intellectual, Economic, and Social Value Coordinators: Farrokh Mistree & Karishma Koca

WZCC Thrust 1 advances the shared mission of the Global Working Group (GWG) by empowering Zoroastrian youth, strengthening global connectivity, and transforming dialogue into tangible programs. Its purpose is to create opportunities for individuals to generate **intellectual, economic, and social value** beyond the resources they directly control—maximizing the synergy among these three forms of value for the long-term benefit of Zoroastrian and broader communities.

Strategic Alignment with GWG Objectives

1. Building a Worldwide Zoroastrian Community “Without Borders”

Thrust 1 serves as a recurring global forum linking youth and regional communities. **Key 2025 Activities:**

- IZYN presentation on Gen Z and heritage at NAZC 2024
- Strengthening IZYN’s digital presence
- WZCC Spotlight on Iranian Zoroastrians (Feb 2025)
- “Zoro Chit Chat” youth dialogue between Parsee and Iranian communities

2. Convening Community Leaders to Address Shared Challenges

WZCC Spotlights across six regions (Australia, Canada, India, Iran, UK, USA) foster cross-regional learning and collaboration. **Key 2025 Activities:**

- NAZC 2024 public forum on Gen Z and heritage
- Conference paper on sustainable resilience (ICoRD25, Hyderabad)
- January 2026 session inviting participation in the WZCC 25th Anniversary Legacy Fund

3. Supporting Parsi, Irani, and Iranian Zoroastrian Communities

Thrust 1 nurtures the Iranian Zoroastrian Youth Network (IZYN) to build confidence, communication skills, and global engagement.

Key 2025 Activities:

- IZYN English program
- Collaboration with ZAWA and ZYNA
- Expansion of IZYN web initiatives **Legacy Focus:** A global youth-centered initiative supported by a dedicated Legacy Fund

4. Executing Projects Through Working Committees

The WZCC 25th Anniversary Legacy Fund is the flagship initiative for 2025–2026. **Purpose:** Empower Zoroastrian youth worldwide to learn how to create intellectual, economic, and social value—and how to integrate them for entrepreneurial impact. **Launch:** January 9, 2026 at the WZCC Convention **Theme:** *Empowering Iranian Zoroastrian Youth to Shape Our Shared Entrepreneurial Future*

5. WZCC–GWG Nexus: Turning Dialogue into Delivery

Guided by **Yasna 30.2** — **Observe | Reflect | Articulate**, Thrust 1 transforms regional conversations into actionable programs.

- **Observe:** GWG connects regions; WZCC converts dialogue into pilots and projects
- **Reflect:** Each participant considers their role in advancing youth entrepreneurship
- **Articulate:** Each person commits one concrete action to coordinators Katayun Kapadia and Farrokh Mistree

Closing Call: *Let the Dialogue with a Purpose Begin*





Key Takeaways from Co-Chair UN-NGO Committee FEZANA, Dr. Behram Pastakia.

- **UN NGO Status:** Hard to obtain, but FEZANA secured it thanks to the vision of stalwarts like KD Irani and Rohinton Rivetna. This status amplifies our voice on global issues.
- **Representation & Participation:** Each NGO gets limited seats at commissions, making it vital to use them wisely. Social media outreach and calls for participants strengthen engagement.
- **Religious Values in Action:** The AVA project on water conservation is a direct application of Zoroastrian reverence for nature. Linking this to UN goals like sustainability and poverty eradication makes our faith globally relevant.
- **The Gathas:** Daily prayer and reflection on Zarathustra’s words are not just spiritual practices—they are frameworks for ethical living. Their popularity in North America shows how timeless these teachings are.
- **Practical Pathway to UN Engagement:**
 1. Call for action
 2. Selection process
 3. Brainstorming (6–7 months)
 4. Conference (3–4 days)
 5. Lifelong commitment

How to Incorporate Zoroastrian Values into UN Work

- **Water (Ava Project):** Advocate for clean water access and conservation as sacred duties.
- **Earth (Spenta Armaiti):** Promote sustainability, agriculture, and climate resilience.
- **Truth & Righteousness (Asha):** Support transparency, justice, and ethical governance.
- **Care for Humanity:** Align with UN goals of eliminating poverty and hunger, echoing gathic principles of compassion.

Why This Matters

- When Zoroastrians engage with the UN, they aren't just representing a community—they're embodying a philosophy that has always emphasized care for the planet and humanity. Reading a Gatha daily transforms individuals; applying those principles at the UN transforms societies.
- It seems to me that the next step is encouraging more organizations to pursue consultative status, so our collective voice grows stronger. **Ruyintan Mehta** (the alumnus from IIT Mumbai - who launched an NGO caring for disadvantaged women in Kutch Gujarat, obtained a special status from the United Nations NGO in just five days.)
- What stands out is how the Gathas—texts written thousands of years ago—speak directly to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals today. When you say "*if I am working at the UN I am being a good Zoroastrian,*" that's not just poetic, it's practical: the UN's mission to end poverty, hunger, and protect the earth is essentially the lived expression of Asha (truth, order, righteousness).





Key highlights and challenges relating to Youth in the Zoroastrian Community shared by Arzan Wadia at the GCZT/GWG AGM at the West End Hotel on 6.1.26 in Mumbai

Successes

- **RTR Program Achievement:** Arzan emphasized that the RTR Program under his leadership last year was a **big success**, thanks to strong community support and the collective efforts of everyone involved.

Challenges Highlighted

- **Youth Participation:** Six youth from Pakistan were unable to attend due to non-issuance of visas, which limited cross-border representation.
- **Minority Commission Representation:** Parsi representation is currently missing in the Minority Commission since it was dissolved, leaving the community without a formal voice in that space.
- **Political Presence:** There is limited Zoroastrian presence in political fields in India. He said that with the upcoming World Youth Congress in 2027, this lack of representation could make things harder for the committee members to influence decision-making and making sure that youth and young adults from Pakistan can attend the Congress.

Youth & Social Media

Social media is becoming the main way people are staying connected and informed.

- Zoroastrian youth are very active online – especially from ZYNA & FEZANA, ZYNG, XYZ, FOZYA, and ZTFE.
- Youth from Singapore are promoting the Congress very effectively.
- Australia and Zealand youth also remain engaged.
- Large organizations (BPP, FEZANA, ZTFE) backing youth initiatives is praiseworthy.

Community Events

- **Z Games (North America)**
 - These are held every two years. The next are in Sacramento (July 4 weekend).
 - The event draws 700–800 attendees. It's one of the largest Zoroastrian-Iranian gatherings.
 - It's a multigenerational sporting event (grandparents, parents, kids on same team).
 - Four days of fun. The event is open to all.
- **Z Youth Leaders Forum**
 - Founded by youth leader Sanaya Master from Vancouver, Canada; this program takes place at the ASHA Centre in the UK and is well conducted by Zerbanoo Gifford.
 - It is a focused leadership retreat and participants find it useful.

Institutional Structures

- We need to build stronger frameworks for continuity and representation.
- Example: **ZYNA** with three rotating co-chairs shows how shared leadership can work.





Update on upcoming World Zoroastrian Congress in Singapore From 28th to 30th December 2026

We were excited that **Cyrus Driver and Roxana Daver**, came all the way from Singapore and attended the GCZT AGM on 6th January 2026 at the West End Hotel in Mumbai.

As the Organising Committee members, they, presented details of the upcoming gathering in **Singapore from 28th to 30th** at the iconic **Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre**.

Pre-Event and Post-Event Activities

- **27th December (Pre-Event):** Youth Mixer – an opportunity for young participants to connect and get to know each other.
- **31st December (Post-Event):** Organised visit to the **Zoroastrian House & Z Museum**, followed by an optional New Year's Eve party.

Venue & Accommodation

- **Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands** – a world-class venue in a world-class city.
- **Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel** – deeply discounted rates available.
- **Free shuttle service** – 10-minute drive from hotel to venue.
- Singapore's excellent public transport system makes commuting easy.

Registration

- **Opens 21st January** Singapore time (20th January for Western participants) with early bird pricing.
- Subsidised rates for youth and children, thanks to generous donations.
- Families are encouraged to attend – special tracks for childrens and teens.
- Separate rates for optional events.
- Payments will also be accepted for the **WZCC event on 26th**.

Program Highlights

- **Youth Participation:** Dedicated panel discussions to amplify youth voices.
- **East Meets West:** A balanced representation to replicate the vibrant energy seen in past congresses.
- **Iranian Participation:** Strong focus on encouraging high representation.
- **Sponsorships:** Supporting youth enrolment, deserving speakers, and wider participation.

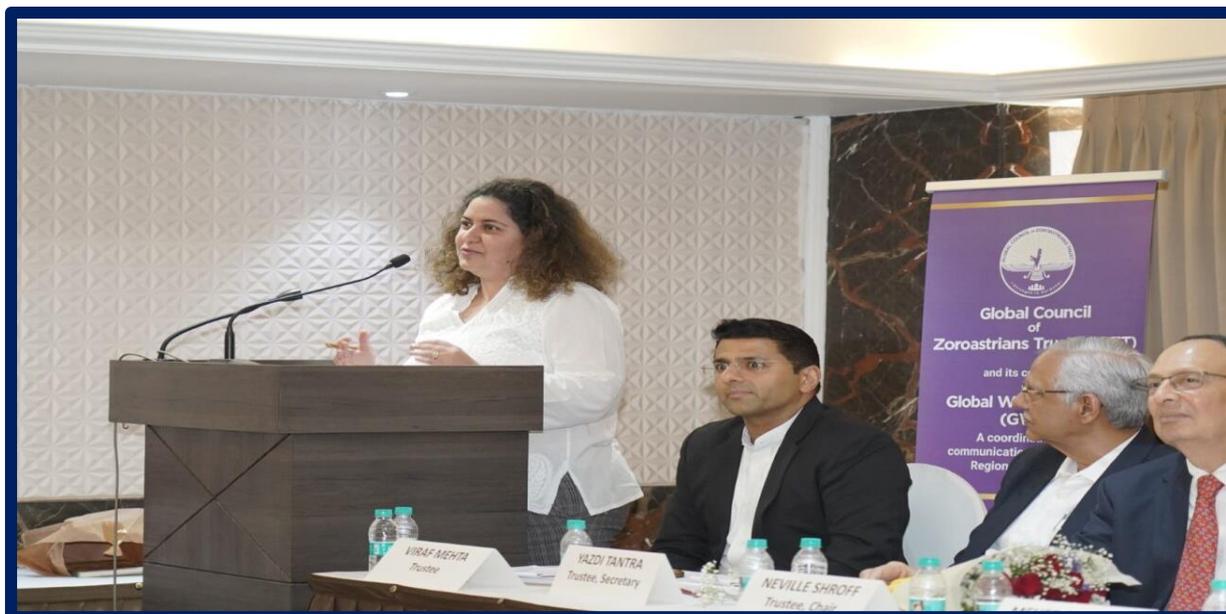
Why Singapore?

- A global metropolis, multi-cultural and welcoming.
- A perfect destination to combine learning, networking, and an end-of-year holiday.
- Iconic venues, cultural richness, and global accessibility.

Call to Action: We invite associations, sponsors, and community members to help subsidize youth participation and spread the word. Together, let's make this event a memorable celebration of **culture**, dialogue, and **unity**.



Proud Presenters at the GCZT/GWG AGM of the upcoming World Zoroastrian Congress in Singapore
Cyrus Driver (right) and Roxana Daver (left)



Overview of the World Zoroastrian Youth Congress (WZYC) presented by Delzin Irani – to be held in Mumbai from 20th to 24th Dec. 2027

Here’s a structured outline of **WZCY Bombay Congress 2027** based on what Delzin Irani shared at the GCZT AGM hosted on 6th Jan. 2026 at the West End Hotel:

Event Overview

- **Dates:** 20–24 December 2027
- **Venue:** Taj Lands End, Mumbai
- **Participants:** 1000+ youth (50% global, 50% Indian)
- **Cities for outreach:** Ahmedabad, Surat, and other major hubs in India plus overseas.

Key Objectives

- **Empower Youth:** Support those who cannot afford high prices with subsidies or sponsorships.
- **Shift Mindset:** Move away from charity-driven narratives, focus on entrepreneurship and wealth creation.
- **Showcase Success:** Highlight India’s business powerhouses and their transformation stories.
- **Future Leadership:** Inspire youth to carry the entrepreneurial torch forward to the next generation.

Marketing Strategy

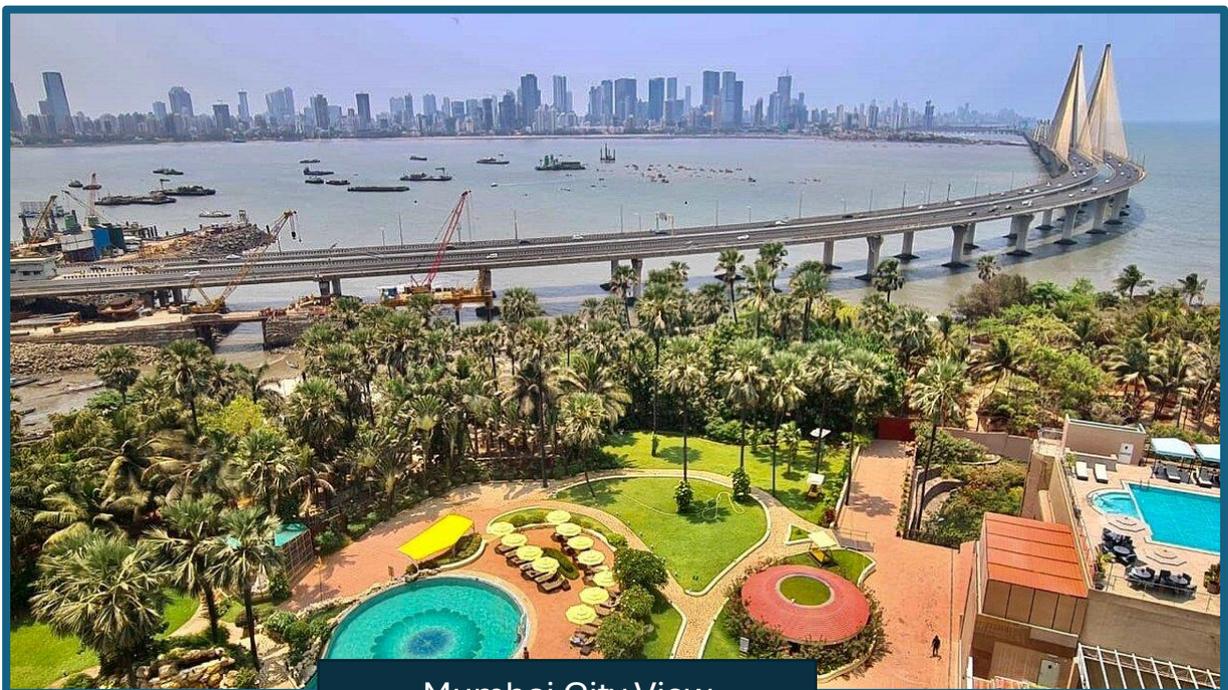
- **Launch:** Post-March 2027
- **Target Audience:** Youth networks, incubators, startup communities, and global youth organizations.
- **Channels:**
 - Social media campaigns (LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube shorts)
 - Collaborations with influencers in entrepreneurship and business education
 - Partnerships with local chambers of commerce and global youth forums

Program Highlights

- **Business Transformation Panels:** Case studies of Indian companies that reshaped industries.
- **Entrepreneurship Labs:** Hands-on workshops on building startups, fundraising, and scaling.
- **Global Networking:** Connect Indian youth with international peers for cross-border collaboration.
- **Mentorship Tracks:** Senior entrepreneurs guiding participants on practical wealth creation.
- **Youth Innovation Showcase:** Platform for participants to pitch ideas and receive feedback.

Value Proposition

- **Affordable Access:** Financial aid for those in need.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Practical skills, not just inspiration.
- **Global Exposure:** Equal representation of Indian and international youth.
- **Legacy Building:** Encourage continuity of entrepreneurial spirit across generations.

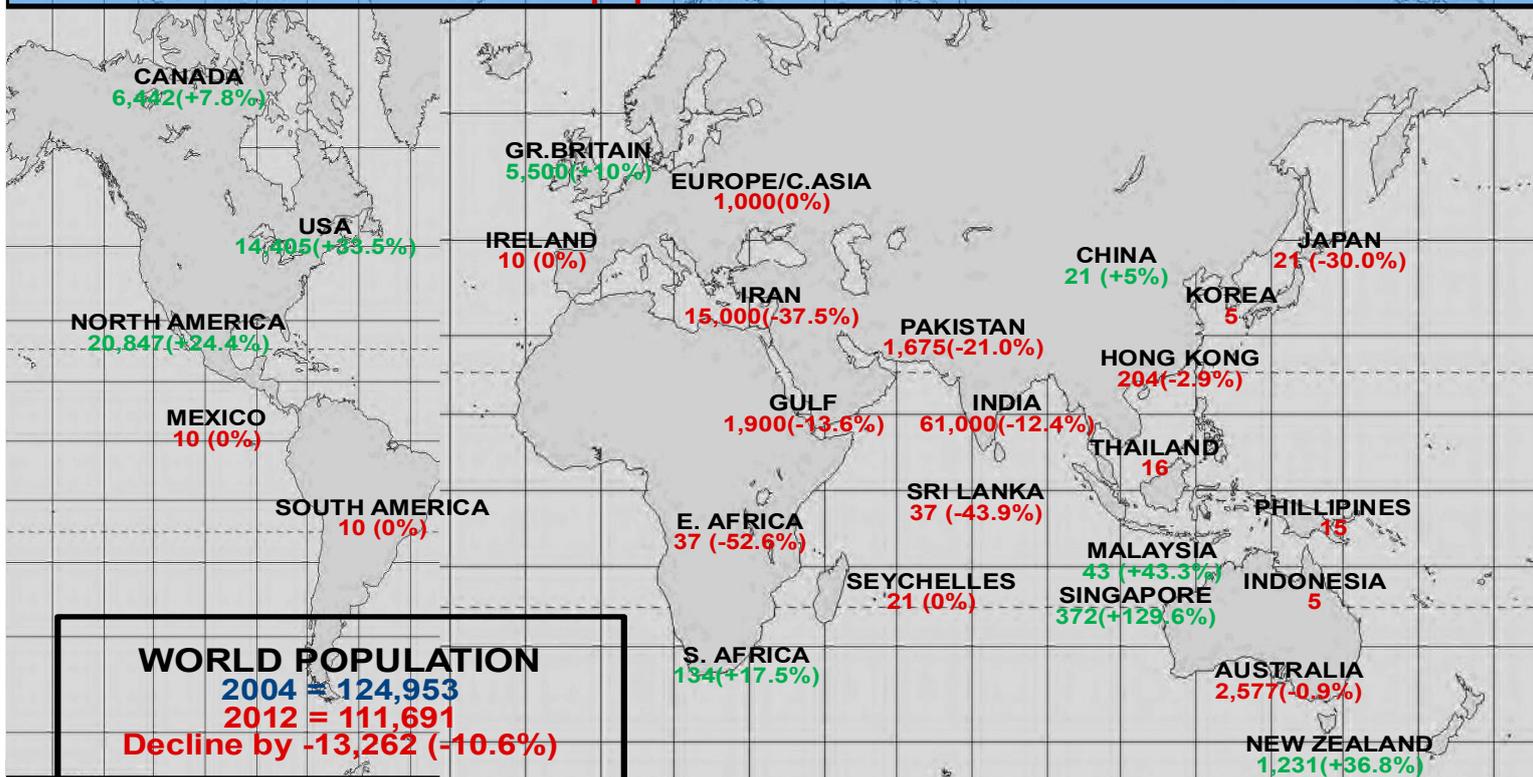


Mumbai City View



WORLD ZARATHUSHTI POPULATION 2012 (Growth/Decline since 2004)

Countries with population less than 100 are not shown.



GCZT Meeting, Mumbai, January 2026

Highlights of Zoroastrian demographics worldwide presented by Roshan Rivetna

India: Once the largest population centre (peaking in 1941 at ~114,000), India is now in decline (57,264 per the latest Indian census).

- Aging population (24% over 65 compared to only 5% of India's general population).
- Fertility is low (0.9%), with late or non-marriages contributing.

- Intermarriage has grown from ~20% to ~39% in India between 1991 and 2011.
- Over 20 years, 3,456 births vs. 17,000 deaths — a stark imbalance.

Iran: The population numbers for Iran also show a decline, despite the Census numbers.

North America (USA & Canada): Numbers are increasing, largely due to immigration. Births contribute, but immigration is the stronger driver.

- Intermarriage rates have risen sharply (23% in 1991 → 60% in 2011), which raises questions about identity and continuity. Even though children of inter-marriages are welcomed, there is fear of decline in numbers due to assimilation, in future generations.

Other Major regions: Mixed outcomes.

Among other major regions, Great Britain, New Zealand, Singapore show growth, the Gulf Region and Pakistan show decline, while Australia and Hong Kong remain steady.

Ethnicity and Religion

Change is inevitable, but is our community shifting from an “ethno-centric religious” faith (maintain customs, traditions, dress, language, food ...) to a purely “religious” faith, where people of diverse backgrounds follow Zoroastrian teachings and beliefs without ethnic ties?

Addressing Concerns

Roshan shared a survey of elders, next-gen leaders, and Intra- and Inter-married couples, who sent in their suggestions on how to inspire and engage our current and future generations to stay in the fold.

She urged each Region to form a “Demographics Task Force”, to discuss the observations and concerns, brainstorm and prioritize suggestions, and implement pro-active and corrective actions.

Everyone needs to share the “awesome responsibility to inspire our next generation with the glorious legacy of Zarathushtra, and bring about a Zoroastrian Renaissance”





Advisors' session facilitated by Sam Balsara, Trustee GCZT

Sam said let's start with the old project of ours mainly on Insurance and I request Dr. Rati Godrej and Homi Katgara as Advisors of GCZT to say a few words on the current state of the project and how far are we from implementation?



Meeting in Progress

Seen – Advisor GCZT, Dinshaw Tamboly

Update by Homi Katgara



It's now been about two years since we first launched the Insurance initiative said Homu, with the goal of providing **free insurance coverage to deserving community members**.

To recap briefly:

- At the outset, we approached several large business houses to sponsor premiums for **3,000–4,000 beneficiaries**.
- Although the idea was well-received, the funding did not materialize at that time.

After last year's meeting, we revisited the entire scheme. By then, the **BPP had introduced a paid version** of the policy. We then worked with **Maneck Dastur** to redesign the plan so that:

- It covers a **smaller number of people initially**,
- The **premium is significantly reduced**,
- And the cost becomes **affordable for the GCZT** to support.

We have already collected some funds and received commitments for additional contributions. The idea now is simple: **start small, begin immediately, and scale steadily**.

I would now request **Maneck** to give a brief outline of the revised policy.

Remarks By Maneck Dastur

“I want to emphasize that my focus remains firmly on Insurance, insurance, insurance. The Council had originally envisioned covering **3,000 Parsis**, but due to various delays and challenges, the number has reduced to **300 less-fortunate Parsis** who genuinely need this support. Even though the numbers are smaller, our commitment is unwavering. We will ensure that these individuals receive coverage, and we will continue to support and expand this initiative as it grows.

This is a **laudable effort**, and we are determined to see it through. Maneck then took questions and responded satisfactorily.”



Health Strategy - GCZT

Dr. Rati Godrej's Remarks

1. Setting the Context

As we begin a new year, it is important for GCZT to define clear resolutions and strategic goals for 2026, especially in the area of community health.

2. Insurance as a Priority

A large segment of our community cannot afford rising healthcare costs — diagnostics, treatment, and hospitalisation. Insurance remains a critical priority. However, before we reach the stage of hospital care, we must address the **overall health burden** within the community.

3. Understanding Our Health Challenges

Our community faces high rates of:

- **Hypertension**
- **Diabetes**
- **Heart disease**
- **Cancer**

For years, we have discussed elderly care, hospice, and screening programs. Now, we must shift from broad intentions to **focused, strategic goals**.

4. Choosing One Specific Health Goal for 2026

To make meaningful progress, GCZT must select **one clear, specific health priority** for the year.

Options include:

A. Diabetes

High incidence in the community. Opportunity for a comprehensive program: **education, screening, treatment, prevention**.

B. Cancer

Increasingly affecting younger individuals. We now have access to screening, diagnostics, and treatment pathways. A focused initiative on **awareness, early detection, and prevention** could save lives.

C. Lifestyle Diseases

Sedentary behaviour, poor diet, obesity, and alcohol use are major risk factors for multiple illnesses. A lifestyle-focused program could target youth and long-term community wellbeing.

5. Forming a Health Task Force

A small, committed task force — doctors, healthcare professionals, and others — should be created to:

- Define a **SMART goal** (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound)
- Identify the target population
- Set measurable outcomes
- Recommend realistic interventions
- Deliver time-bound results relevant to the community

This structure ensures accountability and impact.

6. Being Realistic and Achievable

We cannot fund expensive treatments like immunotherapy for all patients. But we *can* focus on:

- Screening
- Early detection
- Lifestyle modification
- Education
- Targeted support for high-risk individuals

Impact comes from clarity and focus, not unlimited budgets.

7. Supporting Innovation

Dr. **Rustam Kanga**, an IIT Mumbai alumnus now in Sydney, has developed an AI-based “sense of smell” technology for detecting **breast and lung cancer** with promising early accuracy (95%). He needs:

- A **faculty partner**, and
- Support to apply for **grants**

Dr. Behram Pastakia informed Dr. Rati Godrej that this is an opportunity for GCZT to support innovation that could benefit the community.

LET'S COME TOGETHER AND PROTECT THE
HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Closing Note

Neville Shroff, Chairman GCZT delivered the vote of thanks and closed the meeting.

Key Highlights:

- Our community tends to be **more of a taker than a giver** — collective giving is essential.
- There is significant potential in **collaboration between trusts**, especially regarding defunct properties.
- Appreciation to **Meher** for moderating the session and producing the film on Dadat.
- Mention of the **Singapore Congress** and **Youth Congress** — we must encourage greater participation.

On that note, thank you all very much.

GCZT Follow-up Meeting at Dadar Athornan Institute on Jan 7, 2026

An informal follow up meeting was held at the Dadar Athornan Institute the next day, on January 7. The meeting began with a Benediction by Er. Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia. He then gave us an insight into the running of the Institute.

Rohinton Rivetna then reminded the assembly as to the core mission of the Global Council, which was “Coordinating and Communicating.” Simply put: “What are the needs of various Regions and what can others offer.” He then opened a window into the past, observing that the early meetings of the “Coming Together Roundtable” -- the genesis of GCZT -- were held in *this very room* in 2006, 2007, 2008.

Key takeaways from the discussion that ensued at the meeting are given below.

1. Revitalization of the Mobed’s Profession. Students at the Athornan Institute are overburdened, therefore addition of Pastoral studies in their curriculum is not possible. We are to look elsewhere to provide instructions on Pastoral services to the community – such as delivering sermons, providing spiritual enlightenment, ministry in their hour of need, ... -- as post-ordination studies for Mobeds worldwide. Building respect for the profession was essential.
2. Health and Wellness. Hospitalization insurance for the needy was vigorously pursued for primarily Mumbai residents. Primary Care clinics – one in South Mumbai and another in North Mumbai, were suggested.
3. Alleviation of Poverty. Cooked meals service was an option. Meher Sinor’s offer to prepare meals is to be considered.
4. Coalition of Trusts in Mumbai, should be brought about, beginning with social engagement. A coalition of the various organizations in North America is being considered.
5. Defunct Institutions. The mantle was given to Noshir Dadrawalla to form a committee, to address this issue.
6. Declining population-- it was imperative that Regions address the very serious issue of our declining numbers as shown in the FEZANA worldwide demographic survey (FEZANA Journal, Fall 2013) and the SOAS survey www.genzandbeyond.com. Each one of us, especially our next generation, shares the responsibility of strengthening our community, and perpetuating the glorious legacy of Zarathushtra.



Pictures from the event

Heartfelt thanks to BPP for hosting the GCZT/GWG AGM in Mumbai





