



POONA SERVICE WHEEL

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IMPACT

R.I. District 3131

ROTARY CLUB OF POONA

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SPEAKER OF THE DAY

Padma Shri Pramod Kale—Space Research Scientist

Born on 4 March 1941 in Pune, Padma Shri Pramod Kale completed his schooling at M.C. High School, Vadodara, studied at Fergusson College, Pune, earned a B.Sc. in Physics from Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in 1960, and a M.Sc. (Physics–Electronics) from Gujarat University, Ahmedabad in 1962.

While pursuing his M.Sc., Pramod Kale gained practical experience in electronics and space research at the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad, where he began work on satellite tracking. After completing his degree in 1962, he worked under Dr. Vikram Sarabhai and became a founding team member of the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS), later receiving advanced training at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, USA.

He is a distinguished space research scientist who has served in several leadership roles at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Awards & Honours

- ♦ 1975: Shri Hari Om Ashram Prit Vikram Sarabhai Award for System Analysis and Management Problems.
- ♦ 1984: Padma Shri, conferred by the Government of India.
- ♦ 1991: Shri R. L. Wadhawa Gold Medal from the Institution of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineers (IETE).
- ♦ 1999: Bharat Jyoti Award, presented by the Front for National Progress.
- ♦ 2006: Aryabhata Award by the Astronautical Society of India for his lifetime contribution to the promotion of astronautics.

Mr. Pramod Kale has also published over twenty five publications on various subjects from 1964 until 1984.



AGEING IN INDIA

Introducing the speaker, Rtn. Hasnain Bahrainwala aptly observed, “*Experience is our greatest asset, and we are in a room full of assets,*” a fitting tribute to the wealth of experience among the audience.

PP Mansur Dalal opened his address by recounting a remarkable coincidence. On the same day as his presentation on *Ageing in India*, an appeal for funds for an old-age home, by Rtn. Hasmukh Patel, was met with an overwhelming response. Drawing on his extensive experience serving on national and international boards dedicated to ageing, he shared insightful observations and compelling statistics backed by credible research.



Silver Shift

India's population is ageing rapidly. The proportion of people aged 60 and above is projected to rise from 10.5% to 20.8% by 2060, meaning one in every five Indians will be a senior citizen. Kerala has already reached this level, while Jammu & Kashmir has the lowest share.

By 2046, India is expected to have more elderly people than children, and nearly one in six of the world's senior citizens will live in India. Southern India is ageing faster than the north, making region-specific solutions essential. Mansur also highlighted the challenges faced by elderly women, many of whom live alone, lack financial independence, and face social isolation and untreated illnesses. He emphasized that any effective ageing policy must be women-centric.

The Status of Our Seniors

The challenges faced by India's senior citizens - Nearly 75% live with a chronic illness, one in five has mental health concerns, and 40% have a disability. India also faces a severe shortage of geriatric specialists and widespread financial insecurity, with most seniors lacking pension coverage and depending on others for their daily needs. Mansur drew attention to the growing problem of loneliness, neglect, and financial abuse as joint families decline and younger generations migrate for work. While the *Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007* provides legal protection, awareness remains limited.

He concluded that seniors seek respect, dignity, and independence rather than charity, underscoring the need for better senior living facilities and technology-enabled care solutions.

The Response

Mansur outlined India's efforts to support senior citizens through Article 41 of the Constitution, the *National Policy on Older Persons (1999)*, the *Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007*, and NITI Aayog's *Senior Care Reforms Blueprint (2024)*.

He noted that the minimum standards for elder care homes, developed by a Government of India committee he chaired, are yet to be implemented. India also faces a shortage of trained caregivers, inadequate facilities, and low awareness of government schemes.

Emphasising the need for a dedicated Ministry for Ageing, Mansur introduced the **ELDER CARE** framework— to build a skilled caregiving workforce.



E- Educate the caregiver

L- Learning by caregiver

D- Demonstrate what they have learnt

E- Earn – aspirational path where caregivers can migrate to earn, (making it either time bound or contractual.

R- Return

He cautioned that unless urgent action is taken, India could soon face a serious caregiver crisis.

Drawing on global examples such as Malta, South Africa, and Mauritius, he stressed the importance of dedicated leadership and a universal knowledge platform to address the needs of an ageing population.

The Opportunity

(contd from pg2)

Mansur concluded on a positive note, highlighting the immense opportunities in India's rapidly growing senior care sector, which is expected to expand fivefold in the coming years. He stressed that meeting the needs of an ageing population will require strong partnerships between the Government and private sector. Rather than relying solely on independent living, he advocated for multi-generational communities where seniors can interact with families and students, supported by technology, social engagement platforms, quality healthcare, and affordable assisted living.

He urged Rotarians to move **from awareness to action** by engaging senior citizens through Rotaract, establishing neighbourhood activity centres, advocating for the removal of GST on senior care services, and supporting the creation of a dedicated Ministry for Ageing.

The thought-provoking session ended with the hope that elder care in India will receive the attention it deserves. True to its commitment to **Service Above Self**, the Rotary Club of Poona remains dedicated to serving the community and supporting meaningful social initiatives.

PP. Ashok Perti delivered the vote of thanks and concluded the meeting on a positive note. The fellowship dinner, graciously hosted by PP. Dhananjay Pandit, PP Atul Shah, and Rtn. Awadhut Walimbe, was enjoyed by all.



Birthday celebration—Rtn. Bhai Pandit and Spouse Chandrashekhar Manakawad



Top 3 winners of the quiz—

- A) R/Ann Archana Saran (represented by Rtn. Sahab Saran)
- B) PP Praful Shah
- C) Rtn. Raj Shahani

ROTARY GIVES PEOPLE THE OPPORTUNITY NOT ONLY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, BUT ALSO TO GROW THROUGH MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS, COLLABORATION AND A DEEPER APPRECIATION OF DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.

— RI PRESIDENT OLAUOMLA H. BABALOLA

A Proud Moment for Rotary and India.



Heartiest Congratulations to Rtn. Dr. Bharat Pandya (Rotary Club of Borivli, Mumbai) one being selected as Rotary International President for 2028-29.

Wishing him a successful and inspiring tenure ahead.

Rotary International Presidents from India

1. Nitish Chandra Laharry

Term: 1962–1963

Club: Rotary Calcutta (Kolkata)

Achievement: First Indian and first Asian RI President.

2. Rajendra K Saboo

Term: 1991–1992

Club: Rotary Chandigarh

Achievement: Second Indian RI President.

3. Kalyan Banerjee

Term: 2011–2012

Club: Rotary Vapi, Gujarat

Achievement: Third Indian RI President.

4. Shekhar Mehta

Term: 2021–2022

Club: Rotary Calcutta-Mahanagar, Kolkata

Achievement: Fourth Indian RI President.

5. Dr Bharat Pandya

Term: 2028–2029

Club: Rotary Borivli, Mumbai

Achievement: Fifth Indian RI President.

ROTARY RECOGNIZES THE COMMITMENT WITH THE PAUL HARRIS FELLOW PINS

The badge that celebrates generosity and service-

The ***Paul Harris Fellow Pines*** are one of the most important recognitions within Rotary International. They bear the name of ***Paul Harris***, the founder of Rotary, and are awarded to those who make significant contributions to the Rotary Foundation.

Each pin represents a level of contribution. The classic design features a golden ring with Paul Harris' bust in the center and laurels symbolizing honor and service.

There are two main variants:

1. ***Blue details:** Correspond to levels +1, +2, +3, +4, and +5. Blue represents the beginning of commitment and trust.

2. ***Burgundy/red details:** Correspond to levels +6, +7, and +8. Red symbolizes a higher level of leadership and sustained donation.



Rotary Awareness

Wearing a Paul Harris Fellow Pin is more than a symbol. It is the public commitment of a Rotarian to the Rotary mission: To Serve to Change Lives. Each little stone and every detail tells a story of generosity. Wearing it means: "I am here to serve"

In Peru and around the world, these pins are awarded in special ceremonies to recognize those who bet on education, health, peace, and community development. First Contribution for PHF will be Recognition PIN without Blue Sapphire, and further contributions recognised as mention above, on further respective Contributions.

REFLECTIONS BY MEMBERS



My Journey as the Indian Woman Engineer at Qatar Television

Joining the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Qatar Television, was a dream come true. I was overjoyed when I received the appointment. At the same time, I knew I was stepping into a world filled with challenges because I was the only Indian woman engineer in the television station.

The first challenge was transportation. My workplace was nearly 50 kilometers from my home, so I needed a driving licence. In those days, getting a licence in Qatar was not easy. During my test, the examiner asked why I wanted a licence. I replied, "I live far away, and I do not want to depend on anyone for a lift. I want to be independent." My answer impressed him, and I was granted the licence. Before I left, he smiled and said, "Just make sure you do not have an accident during the first three months." I took his advice seriously and

completed those months safely.

The next challenge was language. I was told that I needed to learn Arabic to work effectively with my colleagues. I immediately joined Arabic classes because I believed that learning the local language was a sign of respect and an important step toward becoming part of the community. There were cultural expectations as well. I was asked to wear coat over sari or salwar kameez was also acceptable. I respected the customs of the country and happily adapted to them. I was responsible for supervising seven Arabic women in my department. They supported me with administrative matters, while I carried out most of the technical responsibilities. It was a unique experience that taught me leadership, patience, and teamwork.

Travelling to and from work was another adventure. My office hours were from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and the road home passed through the desert. There was very little traffic, and sometimes camels crossed the road. If my car had broken down or a tyre had punctured, help would have been difficult to find. Thinking about my safety, I requested my management to allow me to leave work at 2:00 p.m., when school buses were still on the road. They understood my concern and approved my request.

Despite every challenge, my years at Qatar Television were among the happiest and most rewarding of my career. The organization gave me opportunities that I will always treasure. I served on the reception committee for the prestigious Qatar Open Tennis Tournament and was granted official leave to work as an event official during the tournament.

Since the Qatar Television team regularly covered the event, I appeared on television several times while carrying out my responsibilities. Seeing myself on TV brought me immense joy and a deep sense of accomplishment.

Looking back today, I realize that those years shaped me into a stronger, more confident, and more independent woman. Every challenge became a lesson, every obstacle became an opportunity, and every achievement strengthened my belief that determination, hard work, and courage can overcome any barrier. Being the only woman engineer at Qatar Television was not just a job—it was a journey that transformed my life and became one of the proudest chapters of my professional career.

- R/Ann Pushpa Jaypalan

People We Meet on Our Journeys

Life's most valuable lessons often come from unexpected encounters. One such unforgettable experience occurred nearly 36 years ago during my early career with Tata Motors (then TELCO), where I worked in the Software Sales and Export Division. I was travelling to Europe to participate in an international exhibition and had planned a short visit to Geneva, Switzerland, to meet my uncle. After checking in at Frankfurt Airport, I suddenly heard a familiar voice asking in Marathi, "What is a Puneekar doing here? I turned around and was pleasantly surprised to see legendary industrialist Hastimalji Firodia.



I had often seen him during my morning exercise sessions at Fergusson College Ground in Pune, where he regularly came with members of his family. Perhaps my height or familiar face had stayed in his memory. He warmly invited me to join him, arranged an airline lounge pass for me, and what followed was an extraordinary five-hour conversation that remains one of the most valuable learning experiences of my professional life. Despite being one of India's most respected industrialists, Shri Firodia displayed remarkable simplicity and genuine curiosity. He asked about my work in software, my family background, and was delighted to know that I belonged to the Shikarpur family which stayed in Ahmednagar for some years. He then recalled meeting my Father. That broke the Ice.

We discussed technology, manufacturing, India's industrial future and the rapid changes taking place around the world. One question he asked has stayed with me for decades: "Why doesn't India develop more indigenous software products?*" At that time, I had no convincing answer. Even today, as India has emerged as a global software powerhouse, his question continues to remind us of the importance of building world-class products, not merely providing services. He passionately believed that business should always serve society. His vision of creating affordable mobility for ordinary Indians through products like the iconic Luna reflected his commitment to inclusive growth. Long before "social entrepreneurship" became a popular term, he had already demonstrated it through action.

Before boarding, he advised me to choose a left-side window seat so that I could enjoy the magnificent view of the Alps. He even requested the airline staff to change my seat. It was a small gesture, but one that reflected his thoughtful and caring personality. That brief encounter taught me lessons no classroom or business school could have offered—humility despite success, curiosity despite experience, patriotism backed by action, and the courage to embrace technological change. Looking at India's remarkable progress today, I often feel that he would have been immensely proud of the nation's achievements.

I have since had the privilege of interacting closely with the next generation of the Firodia family and working with the foundation that carries forward his values. Under the able leadership of Padmashri Dr Arun Firodia, the legacy of innovation, nation-building and social commitment continues to inspire generations. Some journeys take us to new destinations. Others introduce us to extraordinary people whose words and values accompany us for a lifetime. This was one such journey.

— PDG. Dr. Deepak Shikarpur

SOME LESSER KNOWN BUT FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE PARSIS IN-INDIA.

PART 1.

1. EMPEROR AKBAR AND THE PARSIS.

Dasturji Meherjirana, the Head Priest of Navsari in South Gujarat, was invited by Akbar to his Court in 1578. After extensive discussions in the Ibadat Khana, Akbar introduced 3 major changes in his Court and kingdom.

- Introducing the Parsi Zoroastrian calendar, which has different names for each of the months and the 30 days. It was followed even in the reign of Jehangir.
- Installed a Fire in a special room, where the Attendant had to ensure that it was kept burning throughout the day and night.
- The Persian festival of Navrooz on the 21st of March, and which continued for the next 75 years.



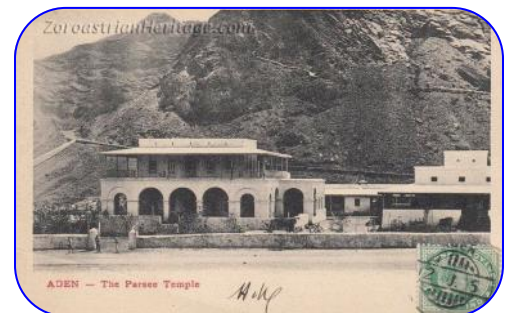
2. THE SACRED FIRE AT UDVADA.

The sacred Fire made up of 16 different fires from 16 different sources, was consecrated between 715 and 725 AD (as the exact year is not known) at Sanjan in Gujarat. The purification ceremonies for 15 of them were conducted over 1128 CONSECUTIVE DAYS, with prayers being offered during the day and night by Priests for over 14,000+ hours.

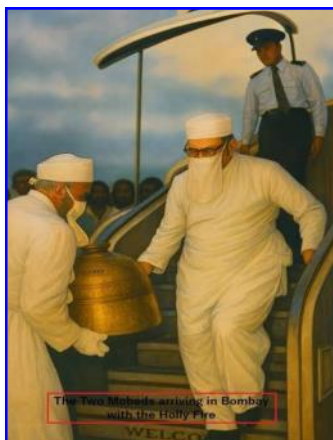
The Sacred Fire enthroned in the Iranshah Atash Behram in Udvada since 1742, has been alight continuously for the last 1400+ years. Prayers are offered 5 times a day. It is tended to by the Priests ONLY from 9 priestly families. Fire temples in Zanzibar, Aden and Shanghai were closed after the Communist takeover of these countries. However the one at Aden took a different course.

From Aden to Lonavla.

After the British withdrew from Yemen in 1967, the Holy Fire in Aden needed to be shifted to India. After hectic parleys between the govts of India and South Yemen, Air India was requested to step in. Mr. JRD Tata ensured that an ALL PARSI Crew under Capt. Sam Pedder, operated the AI Boeing 707 flight, along with the Priests on board, that airlifted the Holy fire to Bombay on 14th November, 1976. PM Indira Gandhi ordered the entire stretch from Bombay to Lonavla be closed. The Holy Fire was transported in the night, as per the rituals, and was enthroned at the Cowasjee Dinshaw Adenwalla Fire Temple (1889) at Lonavla, which incidentally is the only Fire Temple which has 2 consecrated Fires.



The Fire Temple at Aden.



The Priests arriving in Mumbai with the Holy Fire.



The Fire Temple as it stands today in Lonavla

(contd from pg. 7)

3. THE PRESENT POPULATION IN INDIA.

Parsis form 0.00003% of India's population, with a Literacy rate of 99.70%. It is reported that every day, 800+ million Indians avail or use atleast 1 product, Service or an institution produced, manufactured, built or created by the Parsi Companies/Institutions.

4. REFUSAL TO AVAIL RESERVATIONS.

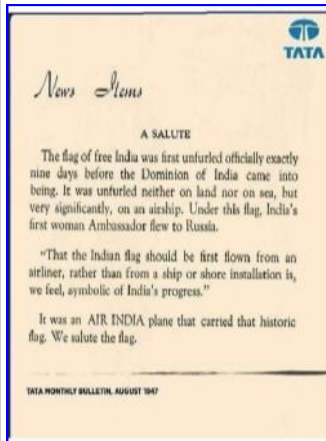
Even though Reservations were offered to Parsis during the Constituent Assembly Debates, it did NOT accept and Voluntarily gave them up. (Vol. 5 dt. 27-8-1947).

5. THE RICHEST PARSIS IN INDIA.

Five Parsis, as per Forbes India are among the 50 richest Indians, with Mr. Cyrus Poonawalla leading at no. 9 with an estimated personal fortune at US 21.7 Billion

6. UNFURLING OF THE 1ST INDIAN FLAG.

A. Madam Bhikhaji Cama, unfurled the 1st Indian Flag, having a different design, at the International Socialist Conference at Stuttgart in Germany on 22nd August, 1907. →

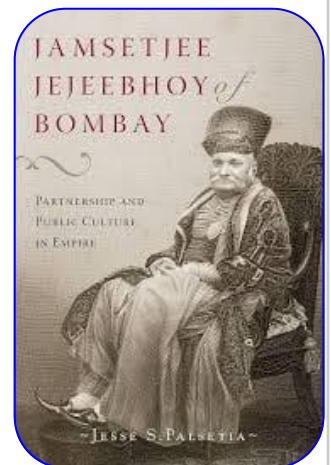


B. As per the Tata Bulletin of August 1947, the NEW Flag of India was unfurled on an Air India flight from Delhi to Moscow exactly 9 days before the Indian Dominion came into existence. ←



7. TWO EXAMPLES OF PHILANTHROPIC PARSIS.

A. Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the richest private citizen of India in mid 19th century, started his life collecting and selling glass bottles at the age of 16. By the time of his death in 1859, he had donated → for public purposes, at today's exchange and Inflation adjusted rate, a sum of Rs. 521.89 crores.



B. According to the 'EdelGive Hurun Philanthropic Report of the Century', the largest Donor in the world has been the Tata Group, with total Inflation adjusted lifetime donations estimated at USD 102.40 Billion (Rs. 9.50 lakh crores)- as 66% of the group's Net Profits are donated through the Tata Trusts, since their formation.

8. RAM MANDIR AT MANDLESHWAR (M.P.)

Mr. Pherozechah Bharucha a Civil Contractor, built the Ram Mandir from his personal funds at Mandleshwar on the banks of the Narmada river.

— Rtn. Zarir Dadachanji



WHO WAS I THEN?

A rotary blast from the past!

Our Rotarians / spouses have opened up their personal photo albums and shared some treasured photographs from a long time ago. Now it's your turn to put your memory to test! Look closely at each photograph and Guess The Rotarian / Spouse. Let's see who can guess them all! No cheating and asking who has shared the photographs. Those who have shared their snaps are also requested not to divulge it.

Every picture carries a little story and some nostalgia. A perfect mix for fellowship conversations to flow—but only next week once the names are announced.

Till then, keep guessing!



A



B



C



D



E

Please send in answers by stating the Alphabet and then the full name of the person in the photograph. Remember to specify whether Rotarian or Spouse.

Those members who have shared their photos are also eligible to participate.

So send in your answers by Wednesday 12th August—end of day.

Note from last bulletin Old age home fan contribution adding 16th donor -

16.Rtn Priyamvada Singh

Birthdays and Anniversaries this week

NIL	
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Programmes Ahead

10 Aug—Guest speaker Padmashri former Director ISRO Mr.Pramod Kale
17 Aug— Panel Discussion with new members
23 Aug—Monsoon Picnic

Attendance 03 August 2026

Rtns	55
Anns	19
Spouses	03
Guests	08
TOTAL	85

On behalf of :
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