

**District Grand Lodge of India S.C.**  
&  
**Grand Chapter of U.S.R.A.F.I.C.**

FREEMASONS' HALL, SUKHADWALLA MARG, FORT, MUMBAI 400 001.



# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME II : ISSUE 4  
AUGUST 2023

Edited By : Bro./M.E.C. Noshir Godrej Paghdwalla  
District Grand Secretary/Grand Scribe Ezra



**This Newsletter is only meant to convey the news and events under the jurisdiction of the Scottish District, but is not its official periodical. The views expressed herein are solely that of the Editor, and not that of the District.**

## **HEARTFELT EULOGY TO A LEADING FREEMASON**



At the wheel of the Limca Special in the GP at the Juhu Airstrip on 9 November 1975.



Adi Malgham and Bomi Mehta Winners of April 1972 WIAA Rally



Before the sun cast its rays to brighten the dawn of Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023, our Worthy and Worshipful Bro. Bomi Savak Mehta, DSM – Past District Grand Master left this sublunary probation on being summoned to join that select band of Masons in the Grand Lodge above. In his passing away, we in the District, are truly aggrieved.

Death, howsoever it comes, is a mystery before which one cannot stand unmoved and unregretful. Yet, what came from Almighty God must one-day return to Him. Death, thus understood, lightens the burden of one's sorrow and enables one to submit to his Divine Will.

One of the basic concepts of every religion teaches that by living a good life, one is assured of immortality. While this concept does have a place in our rituals, it needs to be emphasised that a Mason's life must be exemplary at all times, in Public as well as in Private, both within and without the floor of the Masonic Temple. This was an ideal which our late revered Bro. Bomi lived up to.

We are all united not only in our desire to pay our respects to Bro. Bomi, but rather in our need to do so. For such was his extraordinary appeal that endeared him to every Brother and Companion in India but also with all those with whom he came in contact. It is a more remarkable tribute to him than I can ever hope to offer here today.

He was the very essence of compassion, a stricter to Masonic duty, an adherer of traditional rites and rituals, a doyen of Masonic knowledge. All over the world he was a standard bearer of the District Grand Lodge of India, Scottish Constitution. An amicable individual who transcended the barriers of race, class or creed, with his only motivation being the progress of Scottish Freemasonry

An alumni of St. Stanislaus High School in Mumbai he opted for the stream of Engineering and was a Senior Executive in the renowned 'Tata Consultancy Engineers'. An automotive enthusiast, he was a regular participant in car rallies, with a passion to driving he maintained till the end. An avid family man, he tended to his ailing wife till her last and particularly fond of his daughter Diana and son Mahiar and his wife Ayesha, grandchildren Rian, Ria, Reva, Arish and Aryan as also his great grandchild Leah.

No farewell words were spoken, there was no time to say goodbye. He was gone before we knew it and only God knows why. Goodbye is not forever; Goodbye is not the end. He shall live in our hearts. An emotional tribute message for the dear departed is such a heartfelt way to honour his memory.

### **EDITORIAL**

#### **What ails freemasonry?**

One of the most prominent problems some of our Masonic bodies are facing is the issue of declining membership. This is all the more pronounced in the Order of the Holy Royal Arch than in the Craft and the need of the hour is to initiate immediate measures to remedy the position.

First and foremost, the cause of diminishing rolls can be attributed to the changing working pattern in various vocations, the vagaries of travelling long distances, lack of awareness of the nuances of Masonry, etc. But can we continue to be a mute spectator and witness the downroll of our Ancient and venerated Order?

To understand the inherent malady, one needs to understand the joining members' goals, challenges, and worries, then translate these insights into strategies that exponentially improve member engagement. Many professionals – even the salaried class - are more time-starved than ever because some professionals have added to their roster of responsibilities. Also, some Chapters have a growing gap between the organization and the members. Perhaps it can be averred that the organization is out of sync with members and the proceedings they provide might not be exactly what members need and enjoy any longer.

There's long been a perception about the membership "dying" out and while there is certainly ample room for growth, I definitely don't think this is a doom and gloom story. I think that many of our Chapters have taken their foot off the gas, not pushing for membership growth as aggressively as they ought to do. It would not be wrong to state that a modicum of complacency has crept in in our fold and membership decline has occurred due to Senior Companions' indifferent approach to the needs, interests, and expectations of young members.

Unfortunately, many Masonic bodies have held steadfast to tradition, resisted change, and back-burnered innovation. They have got slightly out of sync and stopped putting their members' needs and interests first. It is paramount to understand what members need, want, and expect. To stay relevant and valuable, we need to understand their needs and also decipher what behaviours and deliverables will drive future success. This requires surveying members and opening up channels for on-going feedback and dialogue. I would also urge Chapters to deploy a diversified membership strategy which relies on the introduction of a varied spectrum of Companions, outreach to enrol new inductees, and being intentional about delegating decision-making roles.

There should be no hesitance in agreeing that there's definitely still hope for membership growth. In fact, now is a better time than any to step on the gas and take advantage of the world we're living in. Lodges and Chapters who will thrive are ones that adapt, innovate and are in constant communication with their members about what they want and need.

### **THE FINER NUANCES OF MASONRY**

Freemasonry is one of the largest and oldest global organisations. It traces its lineage to 1012 BC when King Solomon commenced to build the splendid Temple of God in Jerusalem. Its origins are lost in the unrecorded history of medieval times, but it was formally organised in England in 1717. As a fraternal organisation, Freemasonry unites men of good character who - though of different religious, ethnic or social backgrounds - share a belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of mankind. In my words, Freemasonry is an individual's journey towards becoming a better father, husband, friend, citizen and man, supported by other men at different points on the same journey.

Freemasonry is open for all sections of the society, Freemasons, who extol the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, have been attracting people from all walks of life and they continue the Masonic tradition and rituals in the city. It is a society that traces its origin to the times of King Solomon, Freemasons have long been considered a secret society by many. Their rituals and gestures - secretive codes to identify members- have only added to this belief.

Masons develop a connection built on shared beliefs and experiences. This creates a profound bond that transcends ordinary kinship. Freemasonry has no dogma or theology. It offers no sacraments. It teaches that it is important for every man to have a religion of his own choice and to be faithful to it in thought and action. As a result, men of different religions meet in fellowship and brotherhood under the fatherhood of God. A good Mason is made even more faithful to the tenets of his faith by his membership in the Lodge.

Brethren support and challenge one another, share knowledge and wisdom, and provide light and hope in times of darkness. Masonry espouses the idea that all human beings are equal, regardless of race, gender, creed or nationality and does not believe that the privileges of one are denied to the other.

Famous author Dan Brown, who was initially a critic, later wrote "I cannot adequately express the deep respect I feel towards an organisation called Freemasonry, where men of different faiths are able to break bread in a bond of brotherhood, friendship and camaraderie, though they are not born as blood brethren, they are brethren by choice".

Freemasons live by the principles of brotherly love, relief and truth. Brotherly love is caring for each other and our communities; relief is to humbly assist those in distress and truth meaning use of knowledge and understanding to improve ourselves, our families and our communities. In simple words, Freemasonry makes good men better.

Freemasonry has no dogma or theology and offers no sacraments. It teaches that it is important for every man to have a religion of his own choice and to be faithful to it in thought and action. As a result, men of different religions meet in fellowship and brotherhood under the fatherhood of God. A good Mason is made even more faithful to the tenets of his faith by virtue of his membership in the Lodge.

Masonry is one of the few societies that sprung up during the middle ages, whose origins and existence was shrouded in mystery owing to the prosecution by the Church and yet it did inspire some of the most rational thinkers, philosophers and scientists to not only become members but to also spread the knowledge about peace and harmony. For an organisation that has always prided itself in keeping a low profile, Freemasons' society is one that believes in some simple fundamental truths that drive them on, namely - Making good men better.

While working on the same principles, Freemasons from across the country celebrated the Universal Brotherhood Day on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023, as they have been doing for the last several years. The Universal Brotherhood Day mainly aims to spread the message of peace and harmony amongst everyone. While a lot of people do not have any clue as to what the Freemasons do as a society, they will be able to experience and understand how the organisation functions only when they become a part of it.

### **INSTALLATION AT CHAPTER RISING STAR OF WESTERN INDIA NO. 124 MUMBAI**



*The Exaltees of Chapter Rising Star of Western India*

Chapter Rising Star of Western India is one of the older Chapters in Mumbai, having had on its roll such illustrious stalwarts as MEC Pervez Mistry (Past Grand Superintendent) and MEC Dhunjisha Karkaria. However, of late its membership had shown a southward trend and as a welcome measure, four new candidates were inducted into its fold on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

The Chapter has of late making stringent efforts towards augmenting its membership by a few affiliations. Hopefully, the recent exaltations could be a precursor to similar efforts being made by other Chapters, who are also languishing due to decline in numbers.

### **UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD DAY**

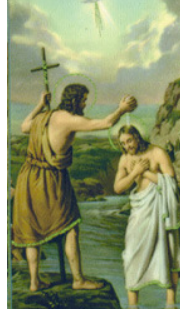
It needn't be emphasized amongst Brethren that "Universal Brotherhood Day" is celebrated every year on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June. On the European Continent, this celebration is also called "St. John's Day" referring to John the Baptist and represents the opposite / complement of Christmas.

Even otherwise, June 24 is quite significant Masonically. On June 24, 1717, what is referred to as the premiere Grand Lodge was formed in London, at the Goose and Gridiron Ale-house. This date is the first entry, for 1731, of a Lodge meeting in the colonies that became the United States, in an account book of St. John's Lodge in Philadelphia. On this date in 1734, Benjamin Franklin became Grand Master of what would be known as the "Modern's" Grand Lodge in Pennsylvania. On this date in 1791, the African Grand Lodge of North America was organized in Boston. It later became the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. On this date in 1797, the second Grand Lodge for African Americans was founded in Philadelphia. On this date in 1820, the Grand Lodge of Maine was formed. It is also UFO Day and St. John the Baptist's Day (patron of auto routes, candle-makers, health spas, road workers, wool workers) St. Jean Baptiste's Day (patron of Quebec) Fairy Day - Festival of

Contagious Magic. It is also National Forgiveness Day which is appropriate for the Reconciliation between the Several Constitutions in India.



*The main Foyer of Freemasons' Hall, Mumbai*



*Portraits of eminent Masons overlooking the Hall*

While working on the same principles, the Freemasons from across the country celebrated the Universal Brotherhood Day on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023, as they have been doing for the last several years. The Universal Brotherhood Day mainly aims to spread the message of peace and harmony amongst everyone. While a lot of people do not have any clue as to what Freemasons do as a society, they will be able to experience and understand how the organisation functions. The Freemasons' Hall at Mumbai has borne testimony to a number of celebratory events on 24<sup>th</sup> June over the years.

### **LODGE CATARACT NO. 909, BELGAUM**

For the past several years, Lodge Cataract 909 SC has always celebrated the Universal Brotherhood Day in an apt manner by organizing various charitable drives in and around the city of Belgaum. This year it had reportedly organised a grand function on the occasion of Universal Brotherhood day and donated six wheel chairs to specially challenged children from rural areas surrounding Belgaum. In addition, they also donated a laptop, a mobile smart phone, a mobile selfie stick, etc., to Ashray Foundation, (an organization taking care of HIV effected girls) totally worth Rs. 1,00,000/-.



*Aiding the needy*



*The recipients of the wheelchairs*

The doles were handed over at a specially organised function arranged at Belgaum attended by around thirty brethren including Past Masters and about twenty invitees.

### **LODGE ROYAL JUBILEE NO. 742, SOLAPUR**

Brethren from Lodge Royal Jubilee celebrated 'Universal Brotherhood Day' in keeping with their traditional practice. At a gathering of Brethren on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, Brethren took part in a unique way. Motivated by Bro. Dr. Bharat Mulay, each pair of brethren demonstrated the five points of fellowship and tied the band of brotherhood on each other. Specially prepared sweets were partaken and a celebratory cake was cut, after which, Bro. Vishnu and Bro Pankaj were felicitated for their professional and social achievement. The whole meeting was conducted in a cheerful mood followed by lively fellowship and a delicious Dinner.



*The Pledge of Brotherhood*



*Five Points of Fellowship*



*Cake cutting*

We, at the District level, would be glad to receive reports of other Lodges undertaking similar charitable and benevolent projects from their members.

## **DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF INDIA S. C. JASHAN - 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

A “Jashan” (the Indian-Zoroastrian word) or ‘Jashne” (the Iranian-Zoroastrian word) is a religious thanksgiving ceremony, or one that celebrates or commemorates an important event. A Jashan is therefore a name for an event that is part of the Zoroastrian calendar such as Jashne Mehergan, as well as the religious ceremony conducted during a special occasion.

Both public and private Jashans are conducted during special occasions, where one deems worthy of a religious ceremony of thanks and blessing. A Jashan ceremony is enacted for the well-being of both the spiritual and physical worlds. The living thank Ahura Mazda and Amesha Spentas (the Holy Immortals) and pray for their blessings from the spiritual world.

On Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2023, some of the brethren belonging to the Scottish Lodges in Mumbai joined hands in organising a Jashan at the Freemasons’ Hall to invoke the Blessings of the Almighty on all our Masonic undertakings. Consequent upon the performance of the Jashan, games and dinner were enjoyed by all present.

### **LODGE LIGHT OF IRAN NO. 1498, UDVADA**



*Lunch hosted by Bro. Noshir Randeria*



*Damanwala Dispensary where Lodge meetings are now held*



*Lavish feast – courtesy : Bro. Noshir Randeria*

Lodge Light of Iran is located in the serene and pristine surroundings of the small town of Udvada in South Gujarat. The Lodge derives its name because Udvada houses the highest grade of Fire Temple where the original fire brought from Iran by the Zoroastrian migrants centuries ago is maintained continuously burning till date. To the Zoroastrian Community Udvada is what Benares means to the Hindu Community, what Mecca is to the Muslims and what the Vatican means to the Catholics. The Brethren attending the Lodge Light of Iran took pleasure in visiting the Lodge because it gave them an additional incentive to pay obeisance to the Holy Fire.

However, the massive Bungalow premises of the Lodge, which besides accommodating the fully equipped Masonic Temple, also provided Boarding and Lodging facilities for nearly forty Brethren, was some time ago reclaimed by the landlord, which culminated in cessation of Masonic activities for a couple of years. Undaunted by this unforeseen event, the indomitable spirit of the brethren prevailed and they took recourse to holding their meetings at a hired room at the premises of the local Damanwala Charitable dispensary. Besides, Bro. Noshir Randeria very generously has been kind enough to provide the brethren with Boarding and Lodging facilities at his home during their visit.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023, yours truly had the pleasure of visiting Lodge Light of Iran and installing Bro. Noshir Randeria as its Right Worshipful Master.

### **OBITUARY**

Close on the heels of the sad news of the demise of our Past District Grand Master on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023, on the very next day we were sorry to hear of the recall of Bro. Dinshaw Rusi Pavri (more particularly known as Danny or Dennis in Masonic fraternity) to the Grand Lodge above. He was a Senior Mason from Lodge Caledonia No. 490 and Chapter Zoroaster No. 138, both situated at Mumbai.

He was a Senior Mason and son of our ex-District Grand Secretary Bro. Rusi Pavri and was a collector of Masonic literature. The Royal Arch Chapter in the town of Udvada is named after his father but is presently non-operative.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to his wife Roshan and pray to the Almighty to bestow on her the strength to bear this sudden loss.

## **PRECURSOR TO HALF YEARLY DISTRICT MEETINGS AT SOLAPUR**

Tradition simply means that we need to cherish what began well and continue what is worth continuing. Keeping this maxim in mind, the conventional choice for holding of the Half-yearly Communication of District Grand Lodge of India S.C. together with the Half-yearly Convocation of Grand Chapter of USRAFIC fell on the pristine and serene surroundings of Solapur in Maharashtra state.

And what a choice it was! To achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan and an indomitable determination to excel in one's intended goal, for productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort. The Brethren and Companions of Lodge Royal Jubilee and Chapter

**District Grand Lodge of India S.C.**  
under The Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland

District Grand Master  
Rt. Wor. Bro. Kersi Jamshedji Limathwalla

District Grand Secretary  
Bro. Noshir Godrej Paghdwalla

**HALF YEARLY COMMUNICATION & CONVOCAATION MEETING**  
Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th of July, 2023

Supported by:  
**Lodge Royal Jubilee No. 742 S.C.**

Venue:  
Hatch Free Masons Hall,  
Shiv Chhatrapati Rangbhavan Chowk, Solapur

RWM: Bro. En. Mohan Deshpande # 98224 02141  
Secretary: Bro. Capt. Parth Dawda # 99757 07099  
Convenor: PM Bro. Zubin Amaria # 98220 72090

Co-Convenors:  
PM Bro. Rajiv Desai | PM Bro. Dr. Bharat Mulaj  
PM Bro. Shirish Dantkate | IPM Bro. Vishnu Mondhe

Ganesh Gavankar proved it to the hilt by imbibing the axiom that desire is the key to motivation, but it is determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of one's commitment to excellence -- that enables one to attain the success one seeks. What you need is an event; to remember for a lifetime.

*Congregation of Scottish Brethren from all over India who attended the meetings at Solapur*



Hordes of Brethren hailing from all the four corners of the country converged at the four nominated Hotels to lend their support to the organizing committee who had spared no pains in their pursuit for impeccable planning. Upon arrival on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023, we from the District were comfortably ensconced in Hotel Surya Executive and after a leisurely lunch and a brief siesta, attended an especial convocation of Chapter Ganesh Gavankar when Grand Superintendent gave an enlightening lecture on the finer aspects of the Mark and Excellent Master's Degree. This was followed with a delectable dinner at Hotel Pratham.

### **CHARITY DRIVE**

On the following day, a multitude of even minded Brethren converged within the precincts of the "Sanskar Sanjivani Foundation" – a Charitable Institution for Lodging children abandoned by their parents hailing from the 'Pardhi' tribe that is renowned for its activities of theft and dacoity and who are under closely surveillance of the law enforcement agencies. The inmates are tended and reared by a husband and wife duo by the name of Mr. & Mrs. Parmeshwar Kale whose mission is to deter the children from venturing into the activities of their parents and to groom them to live a respectable life. For our amusement, they even put up an impressive impromptu entertainment. Lodge Brethren from Solapur donated a R.O. plant for drinking water purification.

*Amusing the children at the home*



*The host Gifting Tulsi plants to the visitors*



*Distribution of savouries*



The children entertained us with songs and were rewarded with a sets of new uniforms and sweets by the brethren. In turn, the proprietor of the Institution presented each of us visiting Brethren with a Tulsi Plant, known both for its religious and medicinal significance.

*Scrutinising the dwelling area*

*Group snap with the inmates*

*Distributing Uniforms for the children*



As we departed after a satisfying charity drive, we were left pondering at the commitment to social service of the couple managing the show. The immediate thought that comes to our mind is that Productivity is never an accident; it is a commitment to excellence -- that will enable you to attain the success you seek. On the other hand, plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work. Undoubtedly, some people look for a beautiful place; others make a place beautiful.

## **HALF YEARLY DISTRICT GRAND LODGE COMMUNICATION AT SOLAPUR**

After a delectable Chinese lunch at the 'Zen Restaurant' followed by a brief siesta, we headed to the Hatch Masonic Hall for the Half-yearly Convocation of Grand Chapter of USRAFIC and the Half yearly Communication of District Grand Lodge of India S.C. to ensue. The Brethren at Solapur had made arrangements of every aspect so as to make the event a success and to make the visiting Brethren from various cities of the country comfortable.

*The Group from Belgaum*

*Brethren from Secunderabad*

*Traditional welcome for all*

Displayed welcoming banners accorded a hearty welcome to one and all with three registering counters where each participant was given a welcome kit including the especially brought out souvenir, photo-identification tag, presentation items, etc. Carefully laid out tables at high tea beckoned the patronage of our Brethren prior to the meetings where there was a large element of renewing fraternal acquaintances, solidifying new friendships and having a fair exchange of views on Masonic subjects.

The Temple was overloaded with chairs and true to our liking for green environment, interspersed with green potted plants to accommodate all the visiting Brethren hailing from the various Scottish Lodges from every nook of the country who rubbed shoulders in gay abandon. The proceedings and ritual working were of a very high order and after a tea break, the brethren re-assembled in the Temple for the Half yearly Communication of the District Grand Lodge of India S.C. when the Temple was yet further packed like a can of sardines.



Since the capacity of the Dining area at the Freemasons' Hall was inadequate to bear the load of all the Brethren, a convoy of cars transported the Brethren to the Officer's club where fraternal bon-homie and camaraderie were conspicuous by its preponderance.

*Part of the Banqueting arrangements*

*One of the many banners*

*Garden Party*

## **TREE PLANTATION – PROMOTING GREEN ENVIRONMENT**

Greening is the process of transforming living environments, and also artifacts such as a space, a lifestyle or a brand image, into a more environmentally friendly version (i.e., 'greening your home' or 'greening your work place). Greenery in our living environment benefits more than just our health and well-being. It also facilitates water management and promotes biodiversity in built-up areas, and can help reduce the effects of noise pollution. In keeping with the Masonic obsession with green environment and to make a clean and green resilient move, the next morning was devoted to plantation of additional saplings within the compound of the Masonic Temple. It was a pleasure for us to be informed that similar saplings planted by us in the earlier years had now mushroomed into overbearing fully grown trees.

*Bro. Limathwalla - DGM planting a sapling*

*Bro. Paghdwalla - DGS watering his sapling*

*Bro. Epur - Dep Gr. Suptdt. doing the honours*

Truly is it said Greenery plays a strategic role in making the world more feasible. Plants provide essential biodiversity, ecosystem services, carbon sequestration and helps to reduce the Urban Heat Island effect. They cool the air, provide oxygen, remove harmful gases and air pollutants, and keep the air moist. It is very important to preserve the existing greenery, we need to grow a huge amount of trees and plants for the existence of human beings on this planet.

## **OPEN HOUSE AND INTERACTIVE MEETING**

Nearing mid-day on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2023, an initiative was launched to hold an Open House cum Interactive session for seamless and direct communication with the Brethren and prospective Masons, which was well attended by an attentive audience. Moderated by Bro. Limathwala – District Grand Master, Bro. Noshir Paghdwalla – District Grand Secretary and MEC Bharat Epur – Depute Grand Superintendent elucidated the Brethren on the importance of furthering their Masonic knowledge by joining the Royal Arch Chapter (including the Mark degree and the Excellent Master's degree) and then further obtain the degree of Royal Arch Mariners, the Cryptic degrees, the degrees of Captivity including the Red Cross and Babylonish Pass, etc.

The chronological sequence as they occurred historically were also explained in full detail, notwithstanding the progressive sequence speculatively practiced in Scottish Freemasonry.

*MEC Epur offering clarifications*

*The Orators with DGM and the Lodge RWM*

*Bro. Paghdwalla elaborating on a nuance*

### **CASUAL VISIT TO PUNE**



In an atmosphere of fraternal interaction and bon-homie, discussions on Masonic topics was a real treat with various ideas mooted for the further progression of the Order. The Brethren from Pune are always on the forefront in offering their utmost support to the District and their presence in good numbers at the District meetings have added flavour to the proceedings. Especial mention of appreciation of the support rendered by Bro. Anil Nair, Bro. Anantrao Yadwad, the Master ritualist Brothers Devesh and Gautam Hingorani, Bro. Manohar Jagdale, Bro. Aniruddh Dandekar and the ever indomitable spirit of ace .photographer Bro. Sanjay Velankar.

### **LAUGH A'WHILE**

