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UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL

PLACE:ZHCC
8787 W. Airport Blvd.
Houston, TX 77071
Tel: 713-270-9339

TIME: Different timings for each group

DATE: April 12, 2026

Children's Session: The Sunday School session starts at **10:30 a.m. in-person and by Zoom**

Middle Group: The Sunday School session at **11:00 a.m. – in-person & by Zoom**



Youth Group: The Sunday School session at 11:00 a.m. **In person**



Calendar of Events for 2026:

- 12th April, Sunday - ZAH Carnival (complete)
- 15th May, Friday – WZCC Event
- 31st May, Sunday - Gahambar
- 24th – 26th July 2026 – Z Camp 2026
- 15th August, Saturday - Navroze Humbandagi and Function
- 4th October, Sunday – Gahambar
- 9th & 10th October, Friday & Saturday – Library Event
- 7th November, Saturday – Play by Shahnaz Sidhwa

REPORTS

LIBRARY REPORT

By: Jango Mistry

Exciting New Project is Approved – The Zoroastrian Heritage Museum.



First ZAH EC – 1977



ZHCC



Atash Kadeh

ZAH was born in 1977. Twenty years later, the ZAH Centre opened its doors. And a little over 20 years later, we proudly inaugurated our Atash Kadeh. Now, the ZAH saga continues.

PROPOSED Z MUSEUM SITE



ZAH AT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS HOUSTON

OUR ARTIFACTS LOANED TO AND DISPLAYED AT MFAH IN 2024



Another exciting milestone has all of us excited! After much discussion and deliberation by the ZAH Executive Committee and other leaders of our North American community, a proposal to build a Zoroastrian Museum on our property was put to our members at the ZAH Annual General Meeting and approved by a huge majority. We want to sincerely thank all the members who supported us in this effort and voted “Yes”.

The Museum will be a dedicated sanctuary designed to safeguard, interpret, and showcase the profound religious, cultural, and historical legacy of our community. It will serve as a bridge, connecting the wisdom of our ancestors to the curiosity of future generations and the global public. The “saga” I mentioned isn't just about a local building; it's about cultural survival at a time when our global heritage is under threat.

Important Facts to Know

This proposal is carefully structured to ensure that ZAH incurs no financial risk or obligation. The project would move forward only if all the following conditions are fully satisfied:

- No Financial Liability to ZAH
 - All funding for the museum—including full Phase I construction costs and a minimum of three (3) years of operating expenses—must be secured entirely from external sources.
- Independent Governance and Legal Structure
 - The museum will be established as an independent nonprofit organization.
- Balanced Representation
 - The Museum's Board of Directors will include equal representation from FEZANA and ZAH.
- Protection of ZAH Property
 - ZAH has agreed to lease the unused land on our property on a nominal lease price and for which no other use is planned. If the museum ceases operation or dissolves for any reason, the land and all improvements (including buildings) will automatically revert to ZAH at no cost or conditions.

Do we really need a Zoroastrian museum, and what will we put in it?

- **Cultural Continuity:** As our diaspora grows, a physical anchor is essential to prevent the dilution of our unique traditions, languages, and rituals.
- **Educational Outreach:** The museum will be a premier resource for scholars and students, offering an authentic narrative of Zoroastrianism's influence on world philosophy and human rights (such as the legacy of the Cyrus Cylinder).
- **Public Presentation:** By opening our doors to the world, we replace misconceptions with understanding, fostering a spirit of Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds for generations.

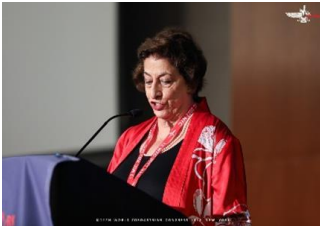
SHAHNAMEH



Aderbad Tamboli



Kayo Sidhwa



Aban Rustomji

BEHRAM ROJ JASHAN



- **Imagine interactive displays** of the Shahnameh or the history of the Silk Road come to life as you have never seen before.
- Imagine a **"Modern Literature Wing"** dedicated to contemporary Zoroastrian authors, especially showcasing the works and authors who have won the Bapsi Sidhwa Literature Prize and other book awards.

A Call to Action

We stand at a pivotal moment for the preservation of our identity. ZAH is already recognized as the pioneer of successful initiatives like our Centre, a world-class library, home of FIRES, and the much-admired Atash Kadeh. With the addition of the first museum in North America, Zoroastrians from all over North America will come to Houston to experience our "campus" of religious offerings.

As the famous Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." We have dared to take that first "single step".

Next Steps

Aderbad Tamboli, Kayo Sidhwa and Aban Rustomji will present the project with its main points at the FEZANA AGM in May. The entire general body of all North American Zoroastrian Associations will get a chance to learn and discuss the project. (FEZANA represents 27 member associations, 14 small groups, and over 25,000 Zoroastrians across the USA and Canada.) Look for the FEZANA AGM report in a future Manashni issue.

ATASH KADEH NEWS

By: Atash Kadeh Committee

The month of March welcomed springtime, sunshine, and started with a Behram Roj Jashan on March 2nd hosted by Anahita Kanga and family. Meher Mahino celebrates the divinity Meher Yazad, or Mithra, who presides over light, friendship and divine justice. This is a time to cultivate inner gratitude and harvest friendships and relationships.

On March 15th the Houston Zoroastrian Study Group (HZSG) started their analysis of the first Gathic Ha 28. This acts as an invocation and prayer for truth (asha), wisdom, and guidance from Ahura Mazda. Zarathustra asks Ahura Mazda for the strength and insight to fulfill his mission.

March 20th ushered in the new season with Nouruz at 9:46am in Houston. On March 21st, our Atash Kadeh held our annual Humbandagi prayers. A special thanks to Lyla Daroga and Vehishta Kaikobad who helped lead this event.

Our Houston Zoroastrian community is a pillar of strength and resilience. Humbandagi (shared) prayers help to unify individuals, provide us with consistent support, and foster a sense of belonging. Through unified prayer and intention, members can lift up one another, creating a foundation of trust and spiritual encouragement.

AVAN YAZAD PARAB JASHAN



The Avan Yazad Parab Jashan was held on March 22, 2026. We appreciate the generosity of our sponsoring families: Sam Bhadha, Tehmi & Firdaus Dastoor, Mahrukh & Rohintan Deputy, Roshan & Yezdi-Percy Engineer, Yasmin & Rustom Engineer, Abby & Homi Erani, Hufriush & Jamshed Irani, Dilnar & David Menesse, Arnaz & Jangoo Mistry and Shirin & Bahdur Sarkari.

Our AK Team is constantly working in the background to keep our beautiful hall running in full force. Machis and Tandarosti prayers continue each month as always. We also continue to zoom these prayers for the benefit of those who wish to attend remotely.

A special note of thanks as always to our Mobed, Ervad Pervez Gonda, who tirelessly keeps our Atash Kadeh flourishing with the help of Ervad Khushrav Nariman.

MISCELLANEOUS

Along the Silk Road — ZAH Performance at Asia Society

By Zubin R Mory



Asia Society Texas (<https://asiasociety.org/texas>) hosted its Spring Through the Silk Road celebration on Saturday, March 15, 2026 - a family-friendly festival honoring Asia's rich spring-time traditions, including Nowruz, the Persian New Year. The signature attraction of the day was a theater performance by the Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH), featured as part of "**Super Saturday: Spring Celebrations Along the Silk Road.**"

Asia Society described the show as a vibrant re-creation of a Persian marketplace, inspired by the historic crossroads of the Silk Road and showcasing traditions from Persia, India, China, and Tajikistan.

The centerpiece of the event was an encore presentation of "**Along the Silk Road,**" first performed by ZAH members on March 21, 2026, at the ZAH Center during our Nowruz festivities. Staged in Asia Society's plush auditorium, the production felt remarkably polished — more like an off-Broadway performance than a community presentation by part-time actors and dancers.

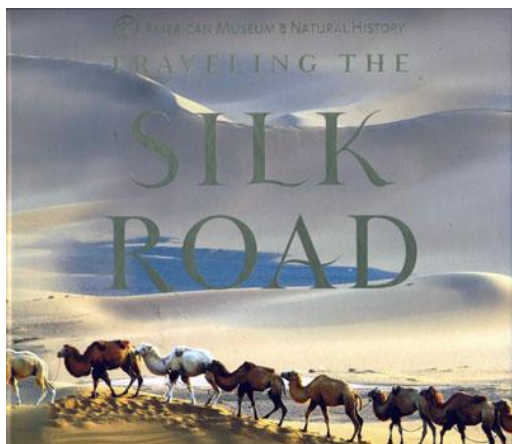
MAP OF SILK ROAD



As noted in the *Indo-American News* (March 27, 2026 edition):

"The highlight of the ZAH Nowruz function was a spectacular, colorful show full of pomp and pageantry presented by the community. This extravaganza was envisioned and directed by Vehishta Kaikobad, and dozens of ZAH's established and budding performers, dancers, and future Broadway stars participated. This group, which included members of all ages and from various walks of life, has to be commended for their dedication and months of effort. The whole program included months of hard work to rehearse parts, learn and choreograph dances, and set up the audio-visuals, props, and stage.

ASIA SOCIETY – ZAH TABLE



“Along the Silk Road,” took the crowd through ancient Persian history, culture, and rituals using a kaleidoscope of colors, costumes, music, and dance. The enthralled audience was transported into a colorful bazaar with a cacophony of music in ancient Samarkand or Tashkent. There were Persians and other nobles, merchants, kings, queens, and the young lead dancer, whose performance and costume captivated the audience and tied the narration together.”

The performance at Asia Society lived up to that praise. Participants across all age groups delivered a truly professional production. Several performers who had not been part of the original ZAH show graciously stepped in to fill cast-gaps, and the youngest participants charmed the audience throughout. Behind the scenes, an exceptional crew managed stage work, music, lighting, props, and audiovisuals with precision. A heartfelt thank-you to **Vehishta Kaikobad** for her vision, dedication, and leadership — twice in two years she and her team have created grand, colorful productions filled with energy and splendor. The experience was a feast for the senses, transporting viewers to another time and place.

Spring Through the Silk Road featured diverse participating organizations which included:

Museums

- Children’s Museum of Houston
- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Religious & Cultural Organizations

- Zoroastrian Association of Houston
- Arab American Cultural and Community Center
- Houston Baha’i Community
- Islamic Arts Society
- Ismaili Council

These organizations conducted fun activities around the “Persia/ Nowruz” theme for children and adults alike. The activities combined learning and entertainment and all-in all created a fun and festive environment.

ZAH-Organized Activities

- Artist at Work: Nowruz
- Coloring Cards
- Clay Lotus Flower
- Silk Road Display
- Roman Community Mosaic
- Haftseen Table Display
- Rare Books and Ancient Artifacts on Zoroastrianism and the Ancient Persians (courtesy of FIRES)
- Ashem Vohu Prayer in Sogdian language
- Books on the Ancient Silk Road
- 1001 names of Ahura Mazda and a calligraphy scroll with the names

EGG DECORATING



NOWRUZ PIROOZ OPENING BENEDICTION



HAFT SEEN TABLE BY NATASHA ATASHBAND



Activities by Other Groups

- Ebru Water Marbling
- Egg Decorating
- Gold Foil Engraving
- Henna Art
- Japanese Cherry Blossom Tree Collage
- Silk Road Script: Arabic Calligraphy

Participating in events with a large attendance potential at prestigious venues like Asia Society gives Houston's Zoroastrian community a meaningful and visible platform to share our heritage and presence. It brings positive visibility and strengthens our connection to the cultural fabric of the city. We look forward to next year's celebrations.

Zoroastrian Association of Houston (ZAH)—Ringling in the Nowruz with Friends, Family and Food

By Zubin R Mory

This article appeared in Indo American News on March 27, 2026

The Zoroastrian Association of Houston (<https://zah.org/>) is home to the Zoroastrians in Houston. It serves as a cultural and religious epicenter to the Parsi diaspora from India, Pakistan, and Zoroastrians from Iran and North America. Nowruz celebrates the arrival of spring among regions and people of Persian culture. Parsis of India and Pakistan (and the diaspora) celebrate it with gusto in their unique way and call it "Jamshedi Nowruz," to distinguish it from "Parsi New Year," which they celebrate in August.

The UN marks March 21 as "International Nowruz Day" and describes it as "an ancient celebration of life, rebirth, and the triumph of light over darkness, with roots extending back over 3,000 years to the era of Zoroastrianism."

The Nowruz table is called Haft-Sin Table and is a central part of the festival. It features seven symbolic items starting with the Persian letter 'S,' representing renewal, health, and prosperity.

ZAH members celebrated Nowruz with pomp, splendor, music and food at its Center on West Airport Blvd with 250+ gracefully dressed guests, on 3-21-2026. The evening started at Bhandara Atash Kadeh (Fire Temple) with a short community prayer which fulfilled spiritual needs. And then, off to the festivities! The guests were welcomed in our decorated center in true Parsi fashion, with Bollywood music by DJ Masti and appetizers from Karahi Boys. A grateful shout-out to the ZAH Entertainment Committee for the decorations and creating a festive and joyful environment. No Parsi function would be complete without "apro Scotch Daru and Parsi pegs" being poured.

ALONG THE SILK ROAD



IN A PERSIAN MARKET



But the highlight of the evening was a spectacular, colorful show full of pomp and pageantry conceived and presented by our members. The extravaganza was the vision and direction of Vehishta Kaikobad in conjunction with tens of our budding performers, dancers, and future Broadway stars. The show had enthusiastic community participation and included all age groups, from kids to individuals in their 70s. This group has to be commended for their dedication and months of effort put in to rehearse their parts, learn and choreograph their dances, and set up the audio-visuals, props, and stage.

The show, “**Along the Silk Road**,” walked the crowd through ancient Persian history, culture, and rituals using a kaleidoscope of colors, costumes, music, and dance. It transported the audience into a colorful bazaar with a cacophony of music in ancient Samarkand or Tashkent. There were Persian and other nobles, merchants, kings, queens, and the young lead dancer, whose performance and costume enthralled the audience and tied the narration together. An encore performance is scheduled at the Asia Society Texas (<https://asiasociety.org/texas>) on 3-28-2026.

Once this performance ended, the community pivoted from the past to the future. Parsis are synonymous with education, charity, and professional excellence in India, and we take great pride in our philanthropic pursuits. ZAH and its various subcommittees have set up educational scholarships to recognize and reward children who excel in school and college. About \$25,000 were awarded by scholarship committees to a dozen students, encouraging kids to excel. Thanks to all those gracious people.

ZAH felicitated Lourdes Remond, Community Engagement at MFAH (<https://www.mfah.org/>) for her commitment to strengthen the relationship with the Zoroastrian community. Done through meaningful collaboration, open dialogue and deep respect for shared heritage.

All good things come to an end, as did that evening. A super dinner was served, and gluttony ruled. Later, everyone danced the night away with the DJ providing awesome dance music. We look forward to a great year, good luck to all, and another super party in 2027! Nowruz Mubarak.

ZAH CARNIVAL

ZAH had another successful Carnival event on April 12, 2026 where \$10,400 were raised. A big thank you to all the volunteers who brought cooked food and donated the entire proceeds of the sale to ZAH.

OBITUARY

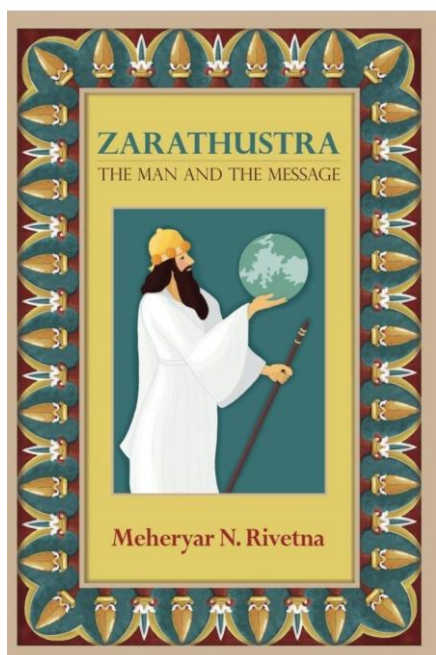
Pervez (Perry) Surkari passed on Saturday, April 18 at 7:51 pm. He is survived by his wife Mani (nee Meherhomji), his brother Eric Surkari in Toronto, sister late Nergish Yoe in Toronto, sister Gulee Printer in Toronto, sister Zarine Colabawalla in Boston and sister Gauver Surkari in London.

Perry is also survived by his nephews Zubin and Xerxes Surkari in Toronto, Sohrab Colabawalla in Boston, Sarosh Printer in Toronto, Shayn Yoe in Vancouver, niece Farizad Warren in Toronto.

ZOROASTRIAN TABLE AT AMERICA 250: CELEBRATING FAITH & FREEDOM



ZOROASTRIAN TABLE



AMERICA 250: CELEBRATING FAITH AND FREEDOM

By: Meheryar N. Rivetna

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized an Inter-faith event at its church in Spring, TX on April 18, 2026. The event fostered a program to celebrate America's diversity, unity and peacemaking between people of different faiths and traditions in America's 250 years of independence.

The Zoroastrian faith and ZAH were represented at the event by Nazneen Khumbatta, Arnavaz Sethna and Meheryar Rivetna.

The session commenced with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a beautiful rendition of the "Star-Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America".

The keynote speaker Steven T. Collins, a law professor at the University of Texas School of law, offered a comprehensive understanding of the importance of religious freedom, the challenges encountered, the import of becoming peacemakers in our spheres and the necessity of working together within our communities.

Each faith was assigned a table. The response and interest to know more about the Zoroastrian religion at the table was awe-inspiring. Nazneen, Arnavaz and Meheryar deftly answered the questions put forward by visitors to the table who were curious and eager to learn about the Zoroastrian faith. The three of them displayed on their table books on the religious principles, its history and culture for viewing along with pamphlets on the Zoroastrian religion for distribution (which were readily taken up). Nauzer Bilimoria had prepared a stand-up poster highlighting key Zoroastrian principles which adorned the display table.

Many of the visitors expressed a strong desire to learn more about Zarathustra and his teachings inviting Meheryar to speak about the faith to their respective communities.

The event was certainly an eye-opener that there is tremendous interest among non-Zoroastrians to learn about the contributions Zarathustra has made to world religions and to humankind, in general.

ZARATHUSTRA'S GUIDE TO LEADERSHIP

By: Meheryar N. Rivetna

Leadership entails an ability to influence and direct fellow human beings and their surroundings to a better state. It calls for strong motivation and vision to realize that goal. Zarathustra—the founder of the world's first monotheistic religion, the Zoroastrian religion—is one prodigious example of leadership.

The anecdotes related to Zarathustra's early life being undocumented are apocryphal. These unauthenticated stories may be given some credence based on his timeless compositions, the Gathas. His leadership acumen stands out from these profound verses. The Gathas are not mere directives for a good life. They portray Zarathustra's revelations for humankind to alleviate its travails; they illustrate his struggles to spread those revelations; his ultimate victory in establishing his doctrines. All experiences of an exemplary leader.

ASHO ZARATHUSHTRA



At a young age, Zarathustra is instructed by the “wise” men of his land. The teachings he receives stem from the traditions of the day. Tradition, however, demands that beliefs and practices be observed on blind faith and blind trust. Zarathustra realizes that traditions may not necessarily align with the laws of the one and only Supreme Force he called Ahura Mazda. He realizes early in life that just because something is done for a long time does not mean what is done is right. The flame of leadership in Zarathustra empowers him to learn by his own observations the functioning of natural laws using his exceptional wisdom and intellect. He breaks away from the traditions and practices of the era.

A leader does not acquiesce to falsehoods from fear of “looking bad” or being ostracized. Zarathustra emphatically rejects the beliefs and religious norms promoted by the clergy of his time.

Strong leaders often face solitude resulting from their strong convictions that many in their vicinity are unwilling to accept. Zarathustra was no exception to this reality. (Gathic Ha 46.1).

A vital attribute of a strong leader is tenacity. Zarathustra is relentless, as a leader must be, in getting his wisdom across to those willing to listen to him (Gathic Ha 30.2; Ha 31.1-2).

A leader unflinchingly commits her/himself to the cause she/he is set out to promulgate, even in the face of untold adversities. Accused of blasphemy, Zarathustra pushes forward fully aware that his accusers have no merit. He demonstrates that leadership quality in the Gathic Ha 43.11 (“...And though the task be difficult, and hardship may come my way, I shall proclaim Thy [Ahura Mazda’s] message which is the best for humankind”).

Leaders who have messages of great import to impart are often denigrated, shunned, ridiculed and humiliated, but they do not let their ideals die as a result. A leader’s belief in her/his noble cause remains ingrained in her/him with the conviction of its eventual fulfillment, because nature’s law dictates that rectitude triumphs over iniquity. The leader in Zarathustra makes no allowance for quitting. A true trailblazer, confident that his efforts will bear fruit, he marches on.

Leadership demands persuasion, not coercion. And that is what Zarathustra exhibits. He does not hesitate to admonish wrong doing; there is no sugar-coating in his reprove of cults and erroneous practices. A leader does not concede to insolence; she/he does not pander to unwarranted civility. Zarathustra illuminates all these qualities. Zarathustra has left an indelible mark on the importance of righteous living. Along the way, he gave humankind the hallmarks of what constitutes strong leadership.

MNE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS
THIS YEAR MNE SCHOLARSHIP GAVE OUT SIX SCHOLARSHIPS TOTALLING \$14,000



Diana Sabawalla



Jeh Mory



Natasha Dungor



Shireen Anklesaria



Siavash Mandegari



Zaal Mory

Congratulations to Our 2026 Scholarship Winners!

We are proud to announce this year's ZAH Congress2000 Legacy Scholarship recipients—an exceptional group of students recognized for their academic excellence, community involvement, and passion for their chosen fields. Please join us in congratulating them as they begin the next chapter of their educational journeys.



Josephine Irani will graduate magna cum laude from The Woodlands College Park High School and will study Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University this fall. A dedicated member of her school's marching band, she served as a euphonium section leader and was featured as a soloist, with the band advancing to state championships all four years. Josephine balanced rigorous academics, band, and service through honor societies, earning academic letters all four years, AP Scholar with Distinction recognition, national College Board honors, and selection to ALA Texas Bluebonnet Girls State. She aspires to pursue a career in healthcare and make a meaningful impact on others' lives.

Winner of the ZAH Legacy Scholarship Award for academic excellence



Shireen Anklesaria will graduate Summa Cum Laude from Lawrence E. Elkins High School. Throughout her high school years, she has been deeply involved in the Elkins Band and Guard program, where she serves as Clarinet Section leader. Shireen is also Vice President of the Elkins Girl Up chapter, reflecting her commitment to leadership and advocacy. In addition, she is an active member of DECA, where she advanced to the state level in the Accounting Applications Series, and competed in UIL Accounting, earning a place at the area level. Beyond school, Shireen is an active member of ZAH and currently serves as President of its youth group, where she continues to grow as a leader and role model in her community. Shireen plans to pursue a degree in **Business** on a **pre-law** track, combining her passion for leadership, service, and future aspirations in law.

Winner of the ZAH Legacy Scholarship Award for academic excellence, & Winner of the Cyrus Rohinton Desai Scholarship Award for academic excellence and community service



Zaal Mory is currently pursuing his **medical** education at the **University of North Texas Health** and is expected to graduate in 2029. While he has not yet decided on a specific specialty, he is focused on developing the skills needed to effectively serve his community and become a compassionate, dedicated physician. Throughout his education and future career, Zaal is committed to lifelong learning in medicine and to providing thoughtful, empathetic care to his patients.

Winner of the ZAH Legacy Scholarship Award for academic excellence



Jeh Z. Mory will begin pursuing an **MBA** at **The Wharton School** of the **University of Pennsylvania** this fall, with a concentration in **Finance**. He has spent the past three years working in fixed-income investing across Los Angeles and New York. Following graduation, Jeh plans to continue his career in the financial industry.

Winner of the ZAH Legacy Scholarship Award for academic excellence

AWARDS & ACCOLADES



Shireen Anklesaria wins InvestWrite first place award in the State of Texas

InvestWrite is a national essay competition, often functioning as a state-level contest in Texas, that pairs with The Stock market Game™ to challenge 4th – 12th grade students to apply financial knowledge to real-world scenarios. Texas students, including those from Plano and Coal ISDs, use it to analyze portfolio strategies, winning top national prizes for essays on long-term investment and ethical investing.

WZCC Event
Celebrating Our Zarathushti Industrial Leaders
Friday, May 15, 2026
Location: Zoroastrian Association of Houston
8787 W. Airport Blvd, Houston, TX
Dinner 7 pm to 8 pm
Presentation 8 pm onwards
RSVP - Yasmin at 713-301-1521
WZCC Members - Free
Non Members \$10



WZCC Houston Chapter Event
Friday, May 15th, 7 pm
Celebrating Our Zarathusti Industrial Leaders

A Movie Night, celebrating Zarathusti Industrial leaders : Poonawalla's, Godrej's , Avari's, Bhandara's and others.

Location: Zoroastrian Association of Houston - ZAH
8787 W.Airport Blvd, Houston, Tx.

Dinner 7p.m. to 8 p.m. ; Presentation 8 p.m. Onwards

RSVP - Yasmin @ 713-301-1521

WZCC Annual Membership \$50 per couple

This Event is Free For Members

\$10 non members.