

Sunday SPECIAL

RECAP



Showcasing talent
The final-year students of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Gandhinagar, showcased their creations at the annual fest. Innovative ideas were appreciated by all.



No Tobacco Day
A Vadodra-based cancer hospital marked the World No Tobacco Day on May 31 by installing some art works and organizing a street play. A number of enthusiasts participated.



Acting Workshop
A twenty-day acting workshop was organized by Surat Municipal Corporation at the Performing Art Centre in the Pal area of the city. The participants were given valuable tips.

SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA, AHMEDABAD | JUNE 4, 2017

Private is passe, villagers go old school

Morbi Villagers Invest In Making Their Govt Schools Surpass Standards Of Private Ones

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Ahmedabad: A group of villagers in Morbi have decided to tread an unconventional path, pulling their kids out of private schools to enrol them in the village government school. With the new term beginning in Gujarat schools from Monday, these 80-odd families of Harbatiyali village near Tankara in Morbi district will begin a fresh chapter in their lives, the fight to strengthen infrastructure at the government school.

While debate on the Gujarat Self-Financed Schools (Regulation of Fees) Act, 2017 rages, villagers of Harbatiyali have decisively refused to pay through their noses for sub-standard education. The movement is spreading to other villages in the area like Jivapar, Hirapar, Bhutkotda and others. Twelve other villages are making efforts to build committees to oversee government schools and enrol their kids there rather than private ones.

It started with efforts of Tankara taluka pramukh (president) Madhu Sanghani and her husband Ashok in January this year. "Few realize the kind of stress a tony school puts on individuals and families," says Madhu. "We started with Harbatiyali village, where we met stakeholders including the sarpanch, panchayat members, residents and the government school authorities."

"We spoke about ways to improve the school infrastructure, education and



At Harbatiyali, 80 families have pulled their kids out of private schools and enrolled them in the village government school

teachers so that students can get the best right at their doorstep," she added.

To set an example, the first parent to enrol his kid in the government school was Hitesh Nanera, a panchayat member. "My sister runs a private school, where my kids used to study. Now, they are at the government school," said Nanera.

Ashwin Ranchhod, the father of Angel, who will be in class IV at the government school this year, said there are strict rules to ensure quality of education. "We have formed a 21-member committee of elders, teachers and parents who can check the classrooms at any time and report on things such as teacher absenteeism," said Ranchhod. "We have also asked parents to regularly check their kids' workbooks," he said.

As the government school doesn't have a kindergarten (KG), from this ac-

The movement has spread to 12 villages nearby like Jivapar, Hirapar, Bhutkotda, where villagers are trying to improve government schools

ademic year the committee is bringing in a private teacher to convert one class to KG for toddlers.

School principal Magan Ujeriya said the experiment is a game-changer for government schools. "Citizens have pre-conceived notions of government schools but our school is different," said Ujeriya. "We have highly qualified teachers who are determined to make a difference and we have presented the opportunity to prove ourselves," he added.

"Our school has had a 100% pass rate in the class X board exams for many

years," he said, adding that some of the 20-odd private schools, where the children generally go, don't have as qualified teachers or as good infrastructure despite their hefty fees.

At Jivapar village, the movement started with the enrolment of 10 students who were earlier at private schools. Gram sabhas (village meetings) have been conducted in villages such as Hirapar and Bhutkotda to form committees and monitor the schools, which will directly benefit more than 150 students who currently go to private schools.

Mahesh Japda, a resident of Hadmatiya echoes the feelings of other villagers. "I got my two kids enrolled in the government school this year. I could not afford private schools but many had told me to choose a private school so that my children can grow properly," says Japda.

City schools on same path

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

It is not just villages in Tankara, the school board of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) recently took up a drive which led to 2,500 students leaving private schools for AMC-run schools. About the Tankara initiative, state education minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasama said, "The teachers appointed to government schools are highly qualified. Ahmedabad city has a similar initiative. It is good that people are taking the initiative to improve government institutions," he said.

Worried over students dropping out of AMC-run schools, the school board had decided to address pressing issues and win back the confidence of parents.

"Our principals and teachers have conducted several meetings in various parts of the city to convince citizens that AMC schools can fulfil their dream of quality education for their kids," said Lagdhir Desai, administrator of the AMC school board.

"We have also developed an app through which parents get SMSes with weekly test results," Desai said. Suketu Yagnik, the principal of Bagefir-dosh Gujarat Shala No.1 says, "We showed parents that classrooms are connected to BISAG through which students will be taught by experts via video with the teacher there to help.

TODAY WE MAKE MACHINES, WE DO NOT MAKE HOMES

Q & A

B V Doshi
FOUNDER OF CEPT UNIVERSITY

In a city, our preoccupations are slowly leading us to lose the context of our inner world, says Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi, eminent architect, educator and institution builder

Q The 'Power Station of Art' (PSA) contemporary art museum in Shanghai will host a retrospective exhibition covering 60 years of your work on July 28. How important is this to you?

A It's a unique exhibition which sees architecture as an experience. The idea was to fuse the real, virtual and imaginary together. Almost four container loads of exhibition material have been shipped to Shanghai. A friend told me about how the young Chinese are keen to see what I do, because they think there is something deep and rooted in contemporary regional architecture, which is not connected to the stylistic things that architects do today.

Q What is your concept of a future city?

A For me a future city should be time and energy conscious. Saving energy, time and judicious use of space are critical ingredients in our life. To these, you add lifestyle and your unique culture. If you can fuse them together, then the city can energize life. A city and its people should connect with their past, its heritage, their present, and be able to look into the future as well. The core of any city is whether you are able to use your time most effectively and create the sort of life you want to have.

Q What are we missing in our cities today?

A We are not thinking of life at all. We are thinking of life as a mechanistic one. Nobody talks of a home. We live in flats and always remain in transit. In a city, our preoccupations are slowly leading us to lose the context of our inner world, inner emotions and passions, and our sense of smell, taste, and touch. Like walking through a bazaar or practising our unique way of life. We are slowly emerging as a faceless society. We have been hit by technology, higher efficiencies, higher productivity, fast earning. But we have forgotten that all of us also need some place to be silent and settle in emotionally satisfying ways.

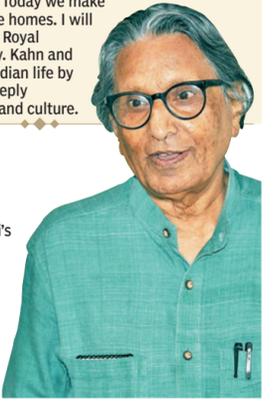
Q How has working with master planners like Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn influenced your work?

A Great people like Le Corbusier come once in 400 years. I am myself shocked to realize that I spent 12 years with him. When Corbusier came to India, he talked about the pact with nature. His planning and architecture had a human face. I learnt from him the importance of people-oriented architecture, ecological architecture, architecture which talks of frugality and energy conservation, but is connected with people's lifestyles and sentiments. Today we make machines; we do not make homes. I will be speaking on this at the Royal Academy in London in July. Kahn and Corbusier connected to Indian life by using its materials and deeply studying Indian lifestyles and culture.

Q Your best works till now?

A I did my house, Cept University buildings, Sangath and Hussain-Doshi's Amdavad Ni Gufa. These buildings talk of four different topologies. I don't believe that life is a streamlined thing and should be lived freely, congenially.

(As told to Paul John)



Homemade Snacks Always Travel With Globe-Trotting Gujaratis

Ashleshah Khurana

It's 3am. At Mumbai's international airport, Ilaben Mehta (49) is in an argument with the officials at the security check. Mehta's cabin baggage consists of neatly packed parcels, not clearly visible in the scanner. Upon uncovering the packets, a host of edible goodies are revealed — fenugreek theplas, masala theplas, khakhra-papad mixture, nylon pocha chivda and what not. "I cannot put these in the check-in baggage, you see the heat there will reduce their longevity," argues

Always ready to travel, but not without theplas!

Mehta who finally has her way with the authorities.

Thousands of Gujaratis, like Ilaben, ensure that whenever they travel within India or abroad, their favourite snacks are with them. "Homemade food is a boon when one goes to foreign countries. My wife always empties out the hotel room minibar and stacks it up with homemade snacks instead. There's nothing like coming back to the theplas and pickle after a long, tiring day of sight-seeing," says textile trader Mahesh Shah.

Theplas, which are basically non-stuffed fenugreek rotis cooked on a griddle, are shallow



While travelling in India or to abroad, Gujaratis love to carry their favourite snacks with them

fried in oil. One can have them rolled with cheese, or dipped in curd, or in morsels with pickle any time of the day to make a complete meal. "Even though we are non-

vegetarians, the meat in south-east Asian countries are a bit offensive in smell, so we carry fried snacks with us. "It's like gorging on goodies after sneaking in banned stuff into a hotel," says Krupa Gandhi, a student of architecture.

SUPER SHELF LIFE

- ▶ Thepla | 8 days
- ▶ Khakhra | 15 days
- ▶ Chivda and chakri | 10 days
- ▶ Gathiya | 12 days

Rekhaben Shah of Surat, who until some years ago was a door-to-door salesperson selling homemade snacks, now has an entire enterprise of vacuum-packed goodies that fly off the retail counters.

"The shelf life of Gujarati snacks is very long and we prepare them just a day before the travel dates," says Kusum Sojitra of Rajkot, an entrepreneur, whose family recently travelled to Bhutan carrying along 19 kgs of vacuum-packed khichdi, pav-bhaji,

khakhras and theplas. "It was a relief that hotel people agreed to reheat the food for us," said Sojitra. Whether it is Europe or Dubai, Thailand or Tahiti, Gujaratis ensure that their favourite snack are with them. Jani farsan now has specially packaged methi-gathiya boxes which offer delight to the taste buds.

"After having international cuisines for some days, the bland foods available abroad are no fun. A handful of homemade snacks just liven up the holiday spirits. We even carry them to the buffet breakfast as a standby because the Indian food abroad just doesn't taste the same due to difference in cooking medium, spices and ingredients," said Atul Patel, a businessman.

No Zika surveys in other Gujarat cities

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad/ Surat/ Vadodra: Since January the presence of the deadly Zika virus in Ahmedabad first came to light, massive health surveys were undertaken in the city.

Random blood samples that tested negative for chikungunya and dengue were sent to the BJ Medical College laboratory in Asarwa for confirmation. However, Gujarat's other major cities like Surat, Vadodra, Rajkot and other municipal corporation areas are yet to see any such preventive surveys. None of these municipal corporations have sent suspected Zika virus samples for testing to BJ Medical College, which is an authorized lab.

Health authorities are now worried ahead of the International Yoga Day event on June 21, when bet-

GOING VIRAL

Precautions after travel to Zika-affected places

- ▶ Talk to a doctor or healthcare provider after travel to an area with risk of Zika
- ▶ If you develop a fever with a rash, headache, joint pain, red eyes, or muscle pain, speak to your doctor immediately and tell him or her about your travel
- ▶ Take steps to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks after returning
- ▶ To prevent sexually transmitting Zika, use condoms
- ▶ Pregnant women should not travel to areas with risk of Zika
- ▶ Pregnant women should be tested for Zika on having returned from a Zika-affected place
- ▶ Pregnant women should get themselves examined in the second trimester after having returned from a Zika-affected place

ween five and seven lakh visitors will stream into Ahmedabad from these cities, exposing the population to the now dormant virus.

"The yoga event was announced on May 11. When the announcement was being made, the state government had known all through of the three confirmed Zika virus cases since February itself. Many organisations from Surat are already participating in the yoga event. The municipal corporations should have been informed of the Zika cases well in advance, to enable adequate precautions to be taken," says a senior member of the

Santosh Yuvak Yoga group, Sanjay Desai from the Pal Pam area.

Municipal health officials in cities like Surat, Vadodra, Rajkot and even Jamnagar confirmed that tested negative for dengue or chikungunya were not sent for Zika tests to Ahmedabad.

Surat medical officer of health Dr Ashish Naik told TOI that though mosquito control and blood smear sampling are part of vector control activity, no suspected samples were ever sent for Zika confirmation tests to BJ Medical College since January. "We have sent no blood samples for Zika tests from January this year till now."

Similarly, Vadodra's additional medical officer Dr Mukesh Vaidya said, "No suspected blood smear samples were ever sent for Zika virus testing to BJ Medical College for confirmation."

Jewellers to meet sales tax commissioner

Ahmedabad: The Union government announced 3% Goods and Service Tax (GST) on gold and gems and jewellery on Saturday. However, jewellers have no clarity on whether they should levy 18% tax on making charges as a service tax. "We will be meeting the sales tax commissioner on Tuesday next week regarding the matter. We hope our issue is resolved," said Rohit Zaveri, president, Ahmedabad Jewellers Association.

Besides, since the import duty on gold has remained unchanged at 10%, there is a marginal 1% difference in the tax burden on gold. Jewellers and bullion traders have welcomed the move. "The taxation has been in line with our expectations," said Shanti Patel, president, Gems and Jewellery Trade Council.

New UGC regulations trouble GU

MPhil, PhD Students Will Need To Pass Tough Tests

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Ahmedabad: The new set of regulations, UGC (Categorisation of Universities for Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations-2017, and University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Awards of MPhil and PhD Degree) (1st Amendment) Regulations, 2017, have cast a shadow over admissions in MPhil and PhD at the Gujarat University.

According to the new regulations, students seeking admission to PhD and MPhil courses in category III institutions will have to clear the

University	NAAC score (out of 5)
▶ Gujarat University	2.87
▶ Hemchandra Acharya North Gujarat	3.02
▶ Veer Narmad South Gujarat	3.02
▶ Saurashtra University	3.05
▶ MS University	3.16
▶ SP University	3.25

National Eligibility Test, State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) or State Eligibility Test (SET).

In the state, barring the Gujarat University, all remaining universities are classified as category II institutes or universities.

Officials said that the GU with a NAAC score below 3, will fall in category III, and



around 30%-40% students cannot clear the NET, SLET examinations. Moreover, the pass rate of these examinations are less than 2%, he said. The VC said that GU authorities will make representations at the UGC for relaxations of norms.

The new set of regulation has classified universities in three categories based on their National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) scores and National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings.

According to the new rules, to be in category I, a university must have NAAC accreditation with a score of 3.5 or above, while a category II university or institute must have NAAC accreditation with a score between 3.01 and 3.49. Those universities or institutes having a score of 3 or below are classified in category III.

Tata Motors' Sanand plant workers refuse company meal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The stand-off between Tata Motors Limited and the workers of its car manufacturing plant at Sanand is continuing with the latter deciding to stop consuming meals and food provided by the company from Saturday and instead go hungry during their working hours. The workers shunned company-provided meals demanding higher amount of compensation in the first year of the long-term settlement (LTS).

The negotiation between the company and the workers over the wage settlement has been going on for quite some time.

"Under the wage settlement agreement reached for Pune



plant, the company has agreed to disburse 73% of the wage hike in the first year of the settlement period spanning three years. Similarly, Sanand plant workers have demanded 67% distribution in the first year. While the management is the same (for both Sanand and Pune plant), why are we being offered lesser

compensation at 50% by the company," said Hitesh Rabari, president, Bharatiya Kamdaar Ekta Manch, a workers union at the plant.

As many as 450 workers of the Sanand plant boycotted food provided by the company from Saturday and vowed to continue to do so till their demand is met.

IMA doctors in Gujarat to join strike in Delhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat state branch of Indian Medical Association (IMAGSB) has decided to join the nationwide strike call on Tuesday. More than 6,000 doctors and medical students from across the country, including 250 from Gujarat, will participate in the 'Chalo Delhi' programme on Tuesday, and join the protest rally from Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium.

IMAGSB doctors claim that there were a number of issues the fraternity faces and despite several representations before the state government, there has been no redressal.

IMA has sought to suitably amend the Indian Medical Council Act. They have also sought amendments to abolish licence raj and exemption to single-doctor clinics under the Clinical Establishments Act.

"All the clinics and hospitals from across the country, barring emergency services, will remain closed from 8am to 2pm, on Tuesday - June 6, to mark their protest and will also sign an online petition," said Yogendra Modi, president, IMAGSB.

