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O F I N D I A

## No Net Gain

Has internet censorship pushed India back in the eyes of the world? **P 18**

## Forty Years Of Freedom

How Bangladesh has shaped up 4 decades after independence **P 17**



AHMEDABAD

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### NEWS DIGEST

#### AMRI protocol barred calling for help

As the toll from the country's worst hospital blaze rose to 91 on Saturday, the haze around the question about why the fire department wasn't immediately called began to lift. **P 9**

#### Sibal defends PC against 2G charges

Communications minister Kapil Sibal on Saturday mounted a spirited defence of P Chidambaram against allegations of involvement in the 2G scam, saying the home minister had "no knowledge" that letters of intent for 2G licence, which fixed entry fee at Rs 1,650 crore, would be issued on January 10, 2008.

#### Anti-Putin rallies swell Russia streets



Tens of thousands of Muscovites thronged the Bolotnaya Square across the river from the Kremlin on Saturday to protest alleged electoral fraud and urge an end to premier Vladimir Putin's rule. **P 16**

#### 'Not exposed to euro crisis'

As concern over eurozone grows, Indian banks have assured that they have very little exposure to European banks as most international assets are in the form of loans to Indian-owned entities.

#### 'US ties with Pak a mess'

Gen Martin Dempsey, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff has said today a think tank that US-Pakistan ties were a "mess" following the Nato raid that killed 24 Pakistani troops. He said Pakistan continued to be a sanctuary for terrorists and its influence on the Afghan mission must be ended. **P 16**

#### Pak Taliban signals deal with govt

A senior commander of the Pakistani Taliban admitted to peace talks with the government and said a "formal agreement" was likely soon. This is the first time the Taliban brass has confirmed talks so far denied by Islamabad. **P 16**

### TIMES OF INDIA-IMRB QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

Delhi and Mumbai tie for third spot, Chennai, Kolkata finish at the bottom. But even the best is just about average

# Ahmedabad best city to live in, Pune close 2nd

Ahmedabad is the best of India's mega-cities, edging out Pune, Mumbai and Delhi in a very close contest. That's the key finding of an exclusive opinion poll conducted for The Times of India by leading market research firm IMRB across the country's eight biggest urban agglomerations.

But before residents of these cities start celebrating, here's a sobering fact. Even the best rated of them barely made it to a rating of "average" on a scale ranging from "very poor" to "very good". Clearly, there's a lot our town planners need to do before we can boast of our metropolises, new and old, becoming world-class.

The cities we chose for this survey were the only ones with populations of 5 million or more according to the 2011 census. Most cities have their areas of strength and weakness in a matrix of 30 parameters, which ends up evening out the balance quite a bit at the overall level. However, bottom-placed Kolkata showed up as a laggard on most counts.

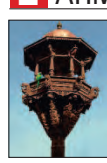
The results throw up an interesting poser: Could it be more than a coincidence that Ahmedabad and Pune, which are at the top of the rankings, are also the two smallest cities on the list? Perhaps India's cities manage reasonably well in the rankings, Delhi and Mumbai, also have historical advantages, one by virtue of being the political capital and a virtual city-state and the other due to its long reign as the country's commercial capital.



### OVERALL RANKINGS

#### 1 AHMEDABAD

SCORE: 3.00



Strong showing in both physical and social infrastructure and on social and cultural values takes the city to the top spot

#### 5 BANGALORE

SCORE: 2.85



Weather, job opportunities and quality education the biggest pluses, but offset by commuting problems and cost of living

#### 2 PUNE

SCORE: 2.95



Rated the best city on very few parameters, but is near the top on almost all. Commuting woes are a big dampener though

#### 6 HYDERABAD

SCORE: 2.80



Scores high on social and cultural values, schools and colleges, but traffic and parking hassles and quality of air among the negatives

#### 3 DELHI

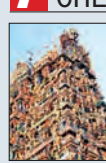
SCORE: 2.90



Top of the heap in social infrastructure and commuting ease, but loses out due to its low ranking on social and cultural values

#### 7 CHENNAI

SCORE: 2.65



Social infrastructure and leisure facilities, barring night life, give it a leg up, but weather and traffic issues pull its ranking down

#### 3 MUMBAI

SCORE: 2.90



Good physical infrastructure, public transport and leisure facilities, but stressful. Bad weather and few open spaces also a minus

#### 8 KOLKATA

SCORE: 2.50



Ranked near the bottom on most parameters, but among the best in terms of social and cultural values and entertainment facilities

Scores are on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is very good and 1 is very poor



### CATEGORY TOPPERS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Infra.</li> <li>Delhi</li> <li>Physical &amp; Civic Infra.</li> <li>Ahmedabad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment</li> <li>Bangalore</li> <li>Social And Cultural Values</li> <li>Ahmedabad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace Of Mind</li> <li>Ahmedabad</li> <li>Hyderabad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leisure Facilities</li> <li>Mumbai</li> <li>Commuting</li> <li>Delhi</li> <li>Mumbai</li> </ul>
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# Bapu's labour union cheats jobless mill workers of crores

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Ahmedabad:** At a time when Gandhian Anna Hazare is set to begin a fast against corruption, a Gandhian institution in Ahmedabad has been accused of fraud.

Mahatma Gandhi started Major Mahajan Sangh in 1920 to fight for the rights of textile mill workers and even undertook a fast to convince mill owners to give the workers higher pay.

Today, the sangh is being accused of subverting Gandhian values. Police in Ahmedabad has accused leaders of the labour union of siphoning off crores of rupees meant to be compensation for jobless workers of 29 closed textile mills. The FIR, filed on Saturday, has named Raman Patel, president of the sangh, its secretary Manhar Shukla, chartered accountants Amal Datt & Associates, private lender Mohanlal Shah, Bapunagar Mahila Co-operative Bank and the HC-appointed official liquidator as accused.

According to the FIR, savings accounts were opened in both cooperative

### Times View

The scam brings shame to the name of Mahatma Gandhi, who set up the Major Mahajan Sangh in 1920. It is indeed deplorable that a Gandhian institution is being accused of embezzlement of funds meant for former mill workers. This is corruption at its worst at a time when today's Gandhi, Anna Hazare, is leading a fight against this scourge.

and nationalized banks in the name of people who had never worked in a textile mill and the money withdrawn.

The scam came to light when Mansukh Parmar, who retired from Calico Mills in 1988, filed a complaint of fraud and embezzlement with the Navrangpura police. He told the police that when textile mills closed down in 1999, the Central government had come out with a scheme of giving the workers 18 months salary as compensation.

The sangh was asked to identify beneficiaries of the scheme and Parmar was on one of the committees identifying workers. Parmar alleges Calico Mills had 4,949 workers who were entitled for compensation. However, the sangh prepared a list of 5,757 names, 808 workers more than the actual number. He alleged that he was thrown out of the committee because he objected to this anomaly.

The sangh passed on the inflated list to the liquidator who issued cheques without verifying the names. Parmar had said in his complaint that instead of handing over cheques individually to beneficiaries, the liquidator gave all the cheques to the sangh officials.

The sangh officials have been accused of selling the cheques to a private lender at a discount. Police officials have found that at least 284 cheques have been issued in the names of people who had never worked in a textile mill. Yet, savings accounts were opened in their names in the Bapunagar bank and Rs 1.63 crore was withdrawn.

## Ajit seals UP poll pact with Cong

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** RLD chief Ajit Singh will seal a poll pact with Congress and join the UPA on Monday, strengthening Congress's hopes of finishing ahead of BJP in UP polls and stitching the only possible alliance in the forthcoming mega battle with SP, BSP and BJP as the other three poles.

Singh finalized the alliance in talks with Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi on Friday. **P 13**

## 77 sonography centres' licence suspended

Bharat Yagnik | TNN

**Ahmedabad:** In a bid to improve Ahmedabad's sex ratio, the district collector suspended licences of 77 sonography centres on Saturday after they failed to submit information on the women tested under Pre-Conception Pre-Natal Diagnostics Test (PCPNDT) Act.

The licences were suspended as the centres ignored repeated notices by the district health officer.

Collector Vijay Nehra said the 968 registered centres in Ahmedabad have to compulsorily submit Form F, which contains vital information like

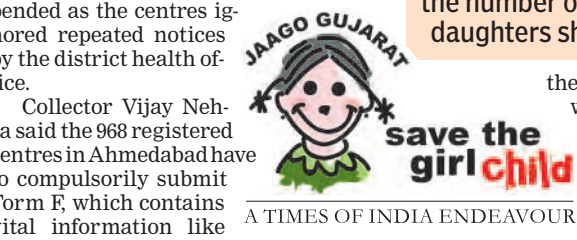
The centres had ignored repeated notices by the district health office to submit vital information like the name of the woman who underwent sonography, her age, purpose of the test and the number of sons and daughters she has

the name of the woman who underwent sonography, her age, purpose of the test and the number of sons and daughters she has.

"Besides not filing the requisite documents, these 77 centres failed to turn up for a special hearing for grievances," Nehra said.

He added they are strictly implementing the PCPNDT Act to save the girl child to improve Gujarat's sex ratio in the zero to six years age group which is still a dismal 886 girls per 1,000 boys in 2011.

The 2001 census had pegged Gujarat's sex ratio at 883 girls per 1,000 boys. TOI has been running a sustained campaign to save the girl child by creating awareness on the issue.



## BACHCHAN HOME IN AMDAVAD!



What you see here is the design of a house being built for Amitabh Bachchan at the Kensville Golf and Country Club near Ahmedabad. Though the developers, Savvy Infrastructures, refused to comment, TOI has learnt that the ground-breaking ceremony was performed on Thursday. Bachchan will be the neighbour of Sachin Tendulkar here. Indeed, who doesn't want to enjoy the quality of life in Ahmedabad!

# Tense yr-end for UPA as Anna revives stir

Signals Long Haul From Dec 27

Himanshi Dhawan | TNN

**New Delhi:** This year belied Congress's hope that the powerful performance in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections would ensure a smooth five-year stint at the Centre. Now, it seems that the year, marked by upheavals, may end on a turbulent note as well.

The party's bugbear and anti-graft campaigner Anna Hazare announced on Saturday that he will begin the third phase of his agitation for setting up a strong Lokpal on December 27, even as he dragged Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi into the line of his anti-corruption fire.

Talking to reporters here on the eve of his symbolic one-day fast on Sunday against the "weak" draft of the Lokpal Bill that was submitted in Parliament on Friday, Anna blamed Rahul for what he called the diluted legislation and said that he would continue his campaign until the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

The challenge may ensure that the government's crisis managers may have to be on their toes when they would have looked for a year-end break.

Alleging that the Lokpal committee had chosen to ignore assurances given by

## At 73, fasting not an option for Anna: Docs

Doctors who attended to Anna Hazare during his 288-hour fast in Ramlila Maidan in August have said another round could cause "serious damage" to the health of the 73-year-old. "At this age, he does not have too much reserves in his body to fall back on. His reparative power is at an all-time low. Anna should look at an alternative way to protest. Fasting isn't for him," one of the doctors said. **P 7**

the PM, the activist said that this could not have been done without Rahul's backing. However, he spared Sonia Gandhi, noting that she Congress chief was unwell and he did not wish to aggravate her illness. He even called her "leader of nation".

"They have cheated the whole country. The PM had given in writing that these three issues would be brought under the Lokpal Bill...The PM's letter was thrown into the dustbin. Why this volte face? Is (standing committee chairman Abhishek Manu) Singhvi's post higher than that of the PM?"

► All-party meeting called, **P 7**

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