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Starting troubles delayed Ahmedabad metro's arrival

Corruption, Huge Governing Body Were MEGA Hurdles

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: It was in 2012 that MetroLink Express for Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad (MEGA) had proposed a 76-km long and Rs 20,000 crore worth of metro rail project for Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar just before the assembly elections that year. A few months later, the project met a dead end when the executive chairman of MEGA, Sanjay Gupta, had to step down following allegations of Rs 300 crore worth of irregularities. Clearly, it was a big blow for the state government and the metro dreams of the cities. By September 2013, when the state government had appointed a new vice-chairman and chairman for MEGA, the governing body had bloated to around 250-odd staff. It took the new board al-



The Metro corridor podium being cast at Apparel park in Vastrapur

most a year-and-a-half to clear the mess that MEGA was tangled in, causing enormous delays in the project.

The new MEGA board had to end contracts of employees and contractors engaged in civic work and finally decided to reduce the staff to just 90 people. "We replaced some of the key posts with professional and government officers for maintaining transparency as it was paramount for us. We appointed a principal accountant general from CAG as our director finance. We have an officer from Delhi metro rail corporation who is our new director

technical, another director who handles systems is from Bangalore metro, and we have four chief engineers from western railways," says MD MEGA I P Gautam. He further adds, "My predecessor wanted to run a consultancy like DMRC which we felt was not feasible at that stage," Gautam added.

In December last year, Gupta was arrested after the investigating agency, CID (crime), alleged that he, as the executive chairman of MEGA, had paid Rs 147 crore for filling land measuring 20 lakh cubic metre at Bhat Koteswar-Motera



area for constructing a casting yard and a depot.

Sources in MEGA claim that Gupta was actually making a riverfront by reclaiming land at the site for a hospitality project. The CID alleged that only 9.42 lakh cubic metre earth filling was done while the cost of 11 lakh cubic metre, worth Rs 113 crore, was allegedly pocketed by Gupta.

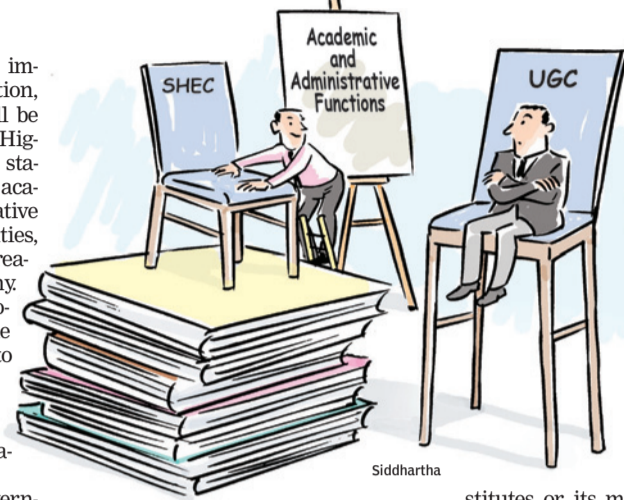
New edu policy: Gujarat for UGC-like body in all states

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Ahmedabad: In a bid to improve the quality of education, the state government will be suggesting creation of a Higher Education Council in states for improvement in the academic and administrative functions of the universities, apart from giving them greater academic autonomy. This is among the numerous recommendations the state government plans to send to the central government which has sought suggestions from the states for its New Education Policy.

Further, the state government is likely to recommend that the powers of the University Grant Commission (UGC) be given to the state Higher Education Council. The council will have similar powers but the UGC will be the main controlling authority.

The state government is likely to recommend that the universities be given grants based on their performance with the active participation and partnership of their alumni association and the colleges affiliated to them.



Siddhartha

There is also a proposal to recommend that central education institutes be given the responsibility of mentoring state educational institutes for improvement in quality. The state has cited the example of IIT-Gandhinagar which is mentoring IITRAM.

Government documents in this regard indicate that the state wants exchange of faculty, research projects between universities and central education establishments. The state government wants central in-

stitutes or its members to be given representation on the board of studies of state universities. This, according to officials, will improve quality of education and upgrade syllabuses.

The Gujarat government also tried to push its Common University Bill idea in the national policy by suggesting that 80% of the syllabus should be uniform for all universities in the state and the remaining 20% should be decided on the basis of the local needs of the university.

Partnership with private sector

The state government has suggested that a Centre of Excellence for higher education be set up on public-private partnership model in each university of the state. These centres should have partnership with the private sector. Also, industry should provide financial assistance to connect industrial products, research and their design with higher education institutions and universities.

Financial support

The state government has suggested that there should be an increase in the fee structure of the education institutes. This has to be decided on the basis of the course and the income of the family. Also, financial support should be obtained from alumni associations. Apart from these, the universities should be permitted to receive donations from industrial houses and the community for infrastructure development.

Two nabbed with fake currency worth ₹ 8 lakh

Second Seizure Within 10 Days

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The Special Operation Group (SOG) of city crime branch arrested two brothers, Mofizul Shaikh, 20 and Shabuddin Shaikh, 25, residents of Murshidabad in West Bengal, with fake currency notes worth Rs 8 lakh. In a span of 10 days this is the second seizure of duplicate currency by SOG. Top cops said that Rs 1.5 crore worth of duplicate notes have been pumped into Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Earlier, SOG had arrested Babu Mulla of Fatehwadi and Mohammed Ishrar of Uttar Pradesh with a consignment of



Rs 10 lakh worth of fake currency notes. "Mulla and Ishrar had confessed that in November they had pumped in Rs 15 lakh worth of fake notes in Ahmedabad market alone. A week later SOG officials nabbed the kingpin Raees Syed from Uttar Pradesh," said a crime branch official.

Assistant commissioner of police, SOG, BC Solanki arrested the brothers near Astodia Darwaja on Sunday morning. SOG officials said, "During in-

terrogation the duo claimed that they have been pumping fake notes in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi since the two years." Deputy commissioner of police, crime branch, Deepan Bhadrans said: "The fake currency notes of Rs 1000 and Rs 500 denomination are of high quality and have been sent for forensic examination. We have also written to the government mint in Nashik for verification."

An SOG official said, "While scrutinizing the bank account of Raees, we found Rs 92 lakh was deposited in his account at different stages. The masterminds of the racket paid him half the value of fake currency notes that were disbursed. Going by that, Rs 92 lakh deposited in Raees's account amounts to fake notes worth more than Rs 1.50 crore."

Cong wants say in municipal corporations

Ahmedabad: On Sunday, the Gujarat Congress shot off a letter to chief minister Anandiben Patel concerning fair representation in the standing committees of all the six municipal corporations. Senior Congress councillors in Ahmedabad have demanded at least one seat among the 12 committees in the standing committee.

"In other municipal corporations we have demanded at least two to three seats in the standing committees," said a senior Congress leader.

This time around, after a fair show in the civic body elections in rural areas the Congress is hopeful that it may get a couple of seats on pro-rata basis, as BJP has lost many seats in the district panchayats. BJP leaders are in talks with city Congress leaders to solve the issue. **TNN**

MAESTRO'S MOVES



Kathak exponent Pandit Birju Maharaj performed on the last day of Suvarna Parva, three-day Kathak extravaganza, at Tagore Hall on Sunday. The event marks 50 years of city-based Kadamb Centre for Dance and Music.

Japanese students learn about India

Ahmedabad: A team of three Japanese students from Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST) will attend India Ki Khoj programme at IITGN, along with 12 students from California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and 16 students of IITGN. This is the fourth edition of the ten-day long programme at the Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN), that helps foreign students learn about Indian history and culture. The programme will begin on Monday. India Ki Khoj was first started in 2011. **TNN**

India's 1st fitness concert held in city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: A first-of-its-kind dance concert was held on Sunday morning at Karnavati Club. Hundreds of residents danced to the directions of master trainers of world famous dance-based workouts such as Masala Bhanga, Zumba, BOKWA and others.

Workout experts such as trainer in Piloxing from US Jordan Ballard; trainer in fitness Fx from UK Richard Scrivener; Creator of masala bhanga from US Sarina Jain, and creator of BOKWA Fitness from US, Paul Mavi.

Indian fitness experts included Zumba trainer Sucheta Pal; folk fitness creator Ashwin Pandey; and yoga trainer Paval Gidwani gave health tips to Amdavadis.



Live international Fitness concert at Karnavati Club in Ahmedabad on Sunday

Dr Aalap Shah, director of ATP Fitness which had organised the event, said they had organized the fitness convention-2015 in the hope that it will serve as a platform for discussion and information on the subject.

Masala Bhanga for a good figure
Till recently Bhanga, a dance form of Punjab, was believed to be something rustic. But Sarina Jain, an NRI based in US, gave it a modern outlook by inventing an exercise form 'Masala Bhanga'. Now, Masala Bhanga is familiar to people in more than 20 countries. "I have been working on Masala Bhanga for 15 years," Jain said. She said Indian singer Jasbir Jassi was so impressed by her Bhanga that he gifted it a musical tune and workout form.

Sarkhej women to sell crochet online

Hold Inaugural Function At A City Hotel

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Sarkhej Roza Crafts and Women's Collective, a Sarkhej-based organization, launched an online platform for the women artisans preparing crochet artwork inspired from the Roza's motifs. The inaugural function was held at a city-based hotel on Sunday evening. For the organizers, it is culmination of two-year long process. So far, the artwork was available only in the vicinity of Sarkhej Roza.

Bhavna Ramrakhiani, a social worker associated with the collective since its inception, said that the idea started with Roza itself. "Over the years, one of the oldest monu-



Sarkhej Roza Women Crafts Committee launched its line of products made by local women and launched its website at a city hotel on Sunday in Ahmedabad. The projects, primarily made of crochet work, would provide livelihood to the local women, said organizers.

ments of Ahmedabad has transformed into a social centre. It was thus required to include the community living in the vicinity in the process and cultivate a sense of belong-

ing," she said. The project had started off with a group of young women in 2013 when Sheila Klein, an American sculptor and installation artist, was visiting NID

and met the group. Along with the students, they started working on crafts that could be sustained, and can become a source of livelihood. The 10-day workshop on crochet provided a firm foundation for the initiative.

"It was a bit difficult for me when we started off, as I had never engaged in any traditional craft. However, within six months, I started making various products including fashion accessories, home décor and embellishments," recounts Nasreen Saiyad, one of the first girls to enrol for the project.

Asiana Ajmeri, another girl associated with the project, said that it really encourages them to learn that their products would be used by persons beyond their area and Ahmedabad. "The art is inspired by the Roza and thus it will carry its essence wherever it goes," she said.

I-T litigation tracking goes online

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: To reduce time taken in litigation, the income tax (I-T) department has activated a PAN-based online system which enables the taxpayer to access cases on a click. For this, a database of over 5 lakh appeals and 1.50 lakh judgements has been created.

The move will cut time in appeal and litigation management in the department. Recently, the department had launched a business application software which uses PAN to track all the transactions and financial records of an individual and entity across the country.

This portal will enable I-T officials to monitor appeal dates, check cause lists and undertake research and analysis for strengthening their cases.

Breast cancer survivors advise regular self-examination

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Many breast cancer survivors took out a rally — named Pink Parade — in the city on Sunday to spread awareness about the deadly disease. The participants stressed on 'self-examination' for timely detection and cure.

The parade started from Samved Hospital near Commerce Six-roads and after passing through Stadium Circle and Ishwar Bhuvan, ended at the hospital.

Neera Shankar (48), a housewife and a survivor, said that on February 9 this year, she found some deformity in her breasts during self-examination. She soon approached doctors



Breast cancer awareness rally held in Ahmedabad on Sunday

and found on June 13 that it was a cancer tumor. "I was operated on June 16, and since then I am living a normal life," Shankar said.

Shakuntala Maheswari (69), a businesswoman, was diagnosed with breast cancer 15 years back, but timely diagnosis and proper treatment helped her to defeat the deadly disease. "Today, our lifestyle is such that every women is pro-

posed to breast cancer. I would suggest self-examination every month," Maheswari said.

At the event, 11 survivors were felicitated. Dr Nisha Joshi, assistant doctor at Samved Hospital, said that once the girl attains puberty she should do self-examination after completion of menstruation period. Those in the age of menopause, should select one date every month for self-examination.