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EUROPEAN CHOWK COMING UP

Madrid, London To Influence Manekchowk Revitalization Plan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Manekchowk, the 600-year-old traditional business centre of the city, today is choked by street vendors, vehicles and encroachments. Today, this area which is still described as the 'jeweller's heart', because of its numerous jewellery shops, is in urgent need of a rejuvenation plan. The city heritage centre (CHC) recently prepared a concept map for Manekchowk along with Spanish conservation and sociology students.

The plan draws inspiration from "Mercado De San Miguel" in Madrid, Camden town of London, Union Square of New York and Omi-Cho market of Japan. The project was sensitive to budgetary constraints that may come up in the revitalization plan and looked at the organic formation of the market place — Manekchowk. "The Manekchowk initiative is not only a way to get healthy neighbourhoods, but also to give opportunities to local communities to become competitive and make a socioeconomic impact."

The plan not only gives impetus to the new economy but also deepens cultural and traditional roots of society," says Rajiv Patel of City Heritage Centre at Sankhdi Sheri. "We have a team of students from Spain who have been meticulously helping us prepare a concept plan for Manek Chowk rejuvenation. Beside being a jeweller's hub in the



A file picture of Manekchowk from the 1800's

day, the market transforms into a foodie's paradise by evening. This keeps the streets dynamic and ever-changing," says Patel.

According to a senior AMC official. "The active eatery bazaar operates into the wee hours and ensured that there are literally no break-ins at jeweller's store as food eateries are placed right in front of the shops."

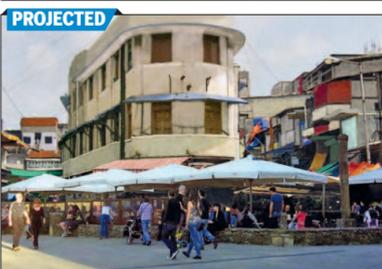
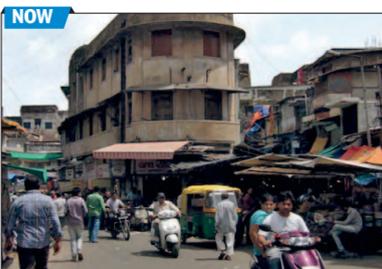
CHC has drawn examples from Mercado De San Miguel in Madrid where a small traders association got together and helped a complete makeover of the marketplace. Since the area's forte was also its food eateries,

a special society called the Gastronomo de San Miguel or The Gourmet of San Miguel promoted traditional culinary arts of the city. This helped revive the market area. Another example is the markets of Camden Town in north-west London where traders now hardsell its music venues, markets related to retail, music and entertainment. The study has also taken the characteristics of the Greenmarket program of Union Square in New York, which provided regional small farmers with opportunities to sell their fruits, vegetables and other products at open-air markets in the city.

"It's just a concept at the moment, but we are trying to convince stakeholders to become part of the project," says Patel.



Building facades with street cafes, furniture and bicycles



The streets of the old city will be pedestrian-friendly and free of vehicles

P C Thakur is new state police chief

HP Singh Gets DGP Rank, 15 Promoted To IGP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The state home department appointed 1979 batch IPS officer P C Thakur as state director general of police (DGP) late on Monday night, putting an end to speculations and internal turmoil in IPS circles. Thakur, currently posted as additional DGP (prisons), is expected to take charge soon.

Along with Thakur, Rajkot commissioner of police H P Singh has also been promoted to DGP rank. As many as 15 deputy inspector general of police (DIG) rank IPS officers in the state have been promoted as inspector general of police (IGP). All of them have been promoted at their current postings.

Thakur has served at various posts throughout the state, including Vadodara police commissioner. He was however caught on the wrong foot in the Sabarmati jail escape bid row of 2012. Terror accused of 2008 serial blasts had dug a 216 feet tunnel in an attempt to escape from the high-security jail which houses hardened criminals. A three-member fact-finding committee had been set up by the state government to probe into the matter. The



File photo of P C Thakur at Sabarmati Central Jail

committee has submitted its report as yet.

Thakur is known for bringing in reforms and education drives to Gujarat's prisons.

Among the officers who got promoted to IG rank include three additional commissioners of police of the city — Meera Ramniwas, J K Bhatt and Manoj Sashidhar. The other officers include K L N Rao, Rajneesh Rai, V J Gautam, S G Bhati, G S Mallik, Hasmukh Patel, Neeraj Gotru Rao, IM Desai, S S Trivedi, B S Jebaliya, D J Patel, and R B Brahmabhatt. The promotions were primarily given to IPS batches from 1992 to 1995.

AAP aur Hum! Confessions of an errant party worker

The impressive debut of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi triggered a massive interest in AAP Gujarat, which had so far maintained a low profile in the state. Apparently, the phone of state convener of AAP Sukhdev Patel — a noted education rights activist — hasn't stopped ringing with many people from civil society wanting to join the party since Sunday evening.

This was when the election results showed AAP's stellar performance. The sentiment was reflected at Vastrapur police station where 25-odd AAP party workers were taken after being detained at Vastrapur for illegal assembly while celebrating the Delhi AAP victory by distributing gund and chana (jaggery and horse-gram). Some policemen, in fact offered AAP members tea and were overheard saying that the common man is suffering in the country and parties like AAP should rise politically. A policeman who is nearing retirement and one who works on meagrely fixed pay also expressed interest for joining AAP.



Siddhartha

At a BJP internal party meeting held last week in Ahmedabad, several local leaders were asked to evaluate themselves — whether they have a clean image in public — ahead of the Lok Sabha polls and gauge their acceptance among voters. The meeting consisted of several top leaders including Anandiben Patel. Every leader was to speak of the pitfalls and problem areas in his or her constituency or ward. At this opportunity, deputy mayor Ramesh Desai stood up and accepted that he was embroiled in a

controversy over an illegal building in the Indrapuri ward of the South Zone area which has also stirred a hornet's nest. The five-storey structure was never pulled down, despite a number of notices by AMC. Standing committee chairman Bhupendra Patel was asked by senior BJP leaders to ensure that the entire building is pulled down and not just a few floors if they found it illegal. To this, one prominent BJP leader in the AMC replied that a few other top BJP leaders were partners in the said five-storey building.

Now, bouncers at weddings

What do you expect on being invited to a wedding party? Traditionally, family representatives courteously welcome guests with folded hands and a smile. But this festive season, the trend is to hire bouncers who pose a pretty scary picture with bulging muscles. A group of such bouncers left many invitees confused when they were received at a marriage reception at a party plot gate in Bodakdev. Many wondered whether this fad was set off by vice chancellors of Gujarat University (GU) later followed by principals and some businessmen, who want to show that they are important. The young have probably been impressed by bouncers and misconstrued them as a status symbol and hired them for weddings.



GAAM NU GOSSIP

Modi, Modi on the wall...

After the success of Narendra Modi masks, BJP office in Khanpur have now procured Narendra Modi projector pens. The first samples have just come in and local party workers were already working on the possibilities of their use in the oncoming campaign. The projector projects an image of Modi on walls and any bright surfaces claim party workers. When asked whether the pens could project movies or slide shows a senior BJP functionary said, "Oh they are simple pens and can just get the message across. Modi Modi on all walls". Modi paraphernalia has been a hit as the recently launched limited edition of smartNaMo phones launched in September are showing to have "sold out" on some popular e-commerce websites.

Highlights OF THE PROJECT

- 1 Improve the visibility of Manekchowk and create a distinct identity
- 2 Help Manekchowk continue to support city's diverse economic sectors
- 3 Help the business community to take advantage of Brand "Manekchowk" by working on cleanliness, uniform signage and making the overall area attractive and more pleasant
- 4 Rehabilitation of traffic and vehicle parking, prioritizing pedestrian areas. Contribution to improve the use and enjoyment of pedestrian areas inside this important historic quarter of the city.
- 5 Improvements of urban ornamentation by planting trees, installing new urban furniture and adequate lighting. Special lighting of historic buildings to make the city centre attractive for night markets.
- 6 Protect and enhance residential neighborhoods in the city centre
- 7 Preserve building facades and open space in Manekchowk and improve public access and connections. Create a space that is a reflection of the culture and history of Ahmedabad, an example of how tradition and modernity can go hand in hand.
- 8 Manekchowk to incorporate cultural visits and glimpses into everyday life in Ahmedabad



NEW SCHEME TO SAVE CENTRE FROM TRAFFIC

The domination of vehicular traffic in Manekchowk, if not curtailed, can sound the death knell on public life at the chowk. For this EMBARQ India, a non-profit NGO has proposed to Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) that it plans to work to enhance enhancing public space in the market area, by reducing traffic and think of alternatives to rejuvenate the business and ambience of the market area. Another major objective of the plan is to revitalize heritage. The vision document is being prepared by EMBARQ and will be in sync with the ongoing Bhadra rejuvenation project. The NGO has been associated with BRTS implementation in the city. EMBARQ participated in a workshop held in the city few weeks ago and had chosen revitalizing heritage spaces in the city. The revitalization of Manekchowk project was a topic chosen by the organization.



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Dr Rajesh Mishra (R) along with Kuttel Khan

Ahmedabad: Neglected kidney stones almost pushed Kuttel Khan (50), a noted Rajasthani folk singer, into the jaws of death. He developed a serious infection which caused him multiple organ failure. The singer came back from the brink after his entire village pitched in to save his life. Nearly 50% of his Rs 14 lakh medical bill has been paid by Hindu patrons.

On Saturday, Khan, who has given stage shows abroad and also featured in live music series on a music channel with noted musician, Amit Trivedi, expressed his gratitude to the Almighty and the people who had stood by him during the illness which saw him slip into a coma.

Village leader SS Bhati, who stood by Khan in his battle against death in the past fortnight, says that Khan suddenly took ill with fever and started having convulsions. He was

hospitalized but his condition continued to deteriorate. He developed multiple organ failure and slipped into coma. His relatives were told there was no hope of his survival but they could take him to Mumbai or Ahmedabad if they wished. "When he was brought to Ahmedabad, he was bleeding from his mouth, nose and some other places. We carried out a detailed examination and found that there were two big stones in his kidneys which had led to pus formation. This sepsis had then spread to the entire body and affected his liver, lungs and other vitals", critical care specialist Dr Rajesh Mishra said. Stents were put in Khan's kidneys and the pus was drained. His condition stabilized but on the tenth day, he suffered convulsions. It was found that the stents too had got infected. They were removed and only then did his condition improve.