

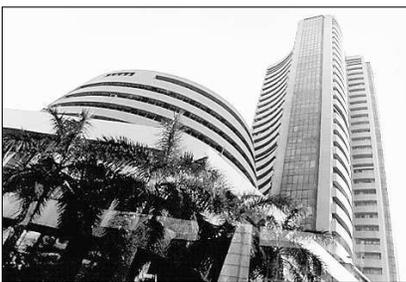
VIEWS



Amar Singh represents the broker culture. I definitely want the removal of this face from the legacy left behind by Charan Singh and Ram Manohar Lohia — **RAJ BABBAR, SAMAJWADI PARTY MP**

bloggers' park

Our daily column on what the world wide web is talking about

SENSEX HITS 10K
(THE REACTION)

■ Like Tendulkar, Lara, Gavaskar, Border, etc... now BSE Sensex has crossed the 10,000 mark. ...It's been a great performance by the markets in the last few years, unlike Indian cricket team.
<http://ankurraheja.com/weblog/?p=153>

■ The Sensex created history today after surpassing the magic mark of 10,000 points! It took 20 years to get into the five-digit mode while the last 1,000 points (i.e the journey from 9000 to 10,000) came in just 10 weeks.
<http://peakday.blogspot.com/2006/02/sensex-hits-10000.html>

■ Other than being a magic figure, it doesn't have much significance. Because, even at this level the P/E ratio of the Sensex is around 21.9 which is far lower than what it was during Harshad Mehta scams (40) or KP scams (100). ...My view is that the real growth will happen in second line stocks.
<http://chenthil.blogspot.com/2006/02/what-were-you-doing-when-it-hit-10000.html>

■ My romance with Sensex started when it was at 2800. I have always been optimistic — indexes the world over are anyway designed in a way that they can only go north in the long term. ...Only thing is, we didn't know it would happen so soon. ...Still eight years to go before 2014. Will we be 20k by then? Yes.
<http://animesh.wordpress.com/2006/02/06/a-historic-day-for-indian-markets/>

How green is my valley

In spite of the constructions and the heavy traffic along the Aarey Milk Colony road, it continues to be an idyllic picnic spot for schoolchildren

Rahul Srivastava, a PUKAR associate, specialises in urban issues, writes on traffic, trains, illegal construction, Mithi, monsoon... In short, all the things that make Mumbai go grrrr



The Aarey Milk Colony road that slices through Goregaon still remains, surprisingly, a favourite picnic spot for schools. Driving along the road inevitably leads you to a noisy bunch of shrieking children playing intensely on the park adjacent to Vihar Lake.

I had imagined — with all the construction around and the presence of heavy traffic — this would no longer be an idyllic spot. But it still is, as it remains a cheap form of mass recreation for kids.

I remember a little adventure on my own school-trip, when the spot was still impossibly remote. A little detour my gang made, away from the teacher's stressed-out eyes, landed us on a lonely hillock that looked suspicious to our Blyton-ised minds. An enormous wall, barbed wire fencing and a no-entry sign were read by us as delicious invitations to trespass. And we did. To see a sight I can never forget — the stunning view of the reservoir and the sight of its trapped, dark waters. However, we were spotted at once and rudely shoved off, along with a bunch of kids with water pots, who had apparently trespassed from a nearby slum.

Our teachers had informed us that the lake was one of the earliest engineering marvels that ensured water supply to us in the late 19th century. Our fourth standard text-book was devoted entirely to the city and had a whole chapter devoted to these lakes. Of course, as often



Driving along the Aarey Milk Colony road inevitably leads to a bunch of children playing in the park adjacent to Vihar Lake

happens with such texts, many things were omitted.

For example, the fact that even though the first phase of the Tansa Lake was ready in 1892 and provided the city an additional 77 million litres of water, this feat also contributed to a major health disaster. Urban geographer Mathew Gandy reminds us that due to lack of attention provided to drainage in the low-lying sections of the city, the increased water supply caused huge water-logging in the entire neighbourhood. This was counted as an important factor contributing to the series of bubonic plague outbreaks that spread terror in the city in the 1890s.

Such incidents reveal that great engineering marvels are often incomplete projects, in as much as they exclude some people. It surely was no accident that many of those water-logged low-lying areas happened to be poorer neigh-

bourhoods, which may also have been the worst affected by the outbreak.

While there is little doubt that the 19th century visionaries, engineers and planners had great foresight in infrastructural development of the city, it can't be denied that even then, a lack of sufficient resources meant they had to leave some people out.

In the context of water use in the city, that legacy of exclusion still survives. No wonder that water is still used by different classes in unequal ways. And residents of the Mira-Bhayandar region, along with fellow-citizens in *chawls*, slums and villages within the city, frequently find themselves rioting for water, being as they are, at the mercy of the water-mafia.

However, it is important to remember that this informal network of water-poachers and tanker lobbies feasting on the unequal distribution of

water, is not new.

A 100-odd years ago, when piped water supply first became a reality, the civic government ambitiously banned the use of wells and water tanks — seeing them as cesspools of dirt and disease. Yet, these very same primitive sources often helped the poor, as many of them happened to fall outside the purview of planned water supply.

Yet, when the rainfall around the 'catchment' areas near lakes were insufficient, it was the privileged folk in the city who began sponsoring tankers to collect water from these 'outdated' sources. These were the embryonic water mafias which grew as the city grew, along with all its infrastructural mismatch to become the monstrous power-brokers that rule the roost today.

They dig bore-wells, suck out ponds and fetch water from remote villages. They work in tandem with the planned water-supply that brings in piped water from thousands of miles to distribute unequally through the city.

And as the city grows, its thirst for water increases. For miles around, villagers sacrifice their rights over traditional water-bodies so they can be integrated into the organised water supply for the city. The leftover is quickly absorbed by the mafia.

The ensuing drought in villages means more migration to places where water is available, usually the closest city. From where they are often rudely shooed off from available water resources, some of which still remain picnic spots.

letters to the editor

Cross-over!

This refers to *MM's* expose on the pathetic condition of Cross Maidan ('Save Cross Maidan', February 6, 2006). This open space is perhaps the oldest and largest open-air toilet in the heart of the city. This prime land has, for decades, been used, misused and abused by beggars, urchins, drug addicts, slum dwellers and hawkers with total impunity. The arms of the municipal demolition squad reach the slums in distant central and western suburbs. So, why has it turned a blind eye to the squatters marauding a prime plot surrounded by landmark heritage structures? If

the BMC cannot maintain the maidan, it should hand over the land to private developers immediately.

K P Rajan, Borivli (W)

Sachin's comeback

The debate regarding Sachin Tendulkar's form has at last come to an end. His terrific century against Pakistan at Peshawar has proved that form is temporary but class is permanent. However, his innings was not flawless. At times, he was unable to find the middle of the willow. He showed his inability to defend perfect inswingers. He was even bowled by Rana,



when he was under 50. But a divine intervention (a no-ball) saved Tendulkar. After that there was no looking back. He paced his innings well and produced three very important partnerships. Great comeback by Tendulkar. Congratulations for reaching 14,000 runs in ODI. Keep it up, master!

Abhirama, Sanpada

Clarification

We wish to clarify that neither the tattoo parlour Funky Monkey nor any other establishment has anything to do with the picture of a controversial tattoo published in the weekend magazine *Buzz* on February 4.

The picture was downloaded from the internet, and for which this newspaper has already apologised.

The Editor

Want to be heard? Write in to us at mirrorfeedback@indiatimes.com



The construction boom created a shortage of sand for sandbag barriers. We find these potholes cosier to fight the Maoists...