



THE TIMES OF IN

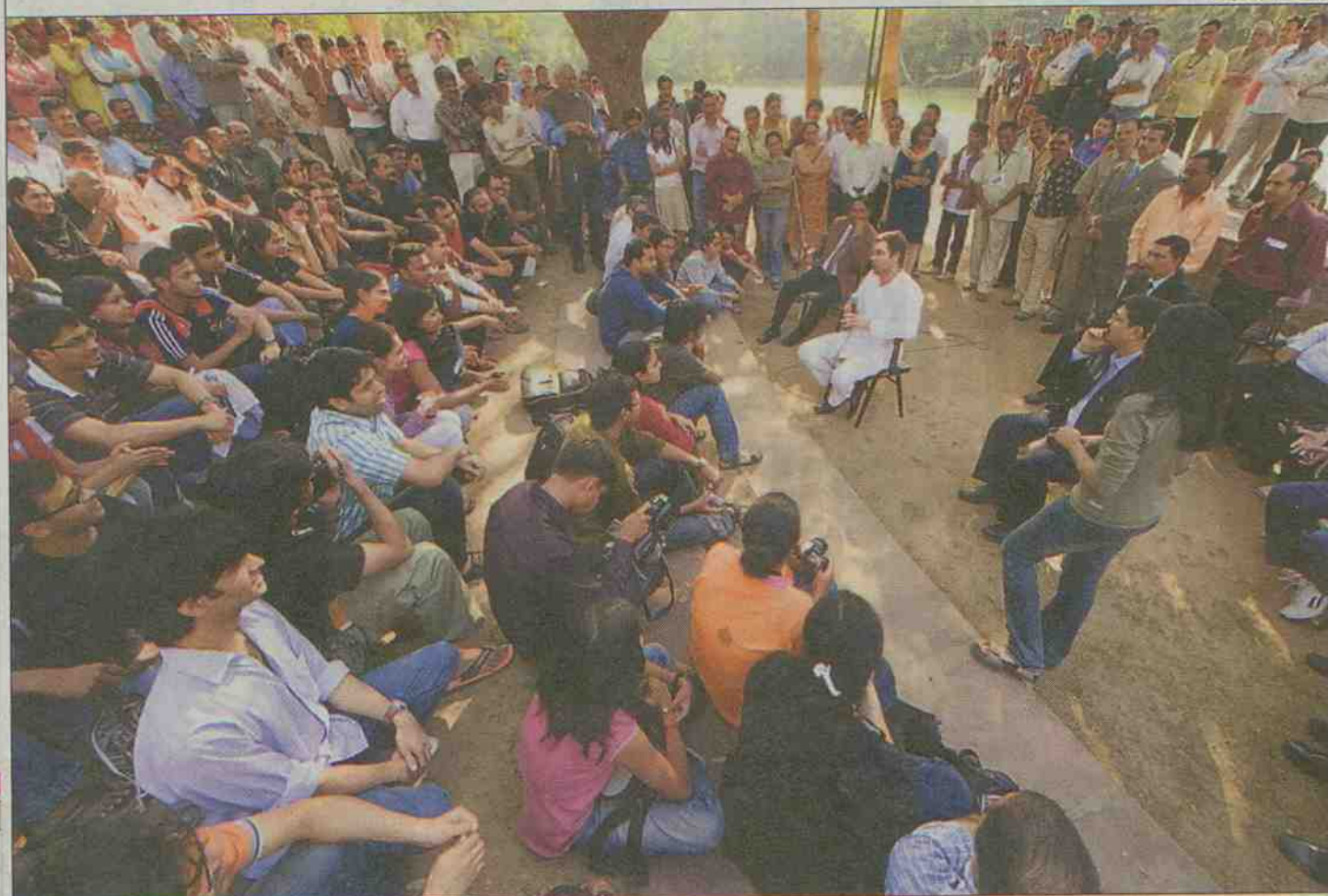
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SCULPTURE SET UP IN HONOUR OF IRAQI
SCRIBE WHO THREW SHOE AT BUSH | 11

BHUPATHI-SANIA IN MIXED-DO
FINAL AT AUSTRALIAN OPEN | 2

GIVING POLITICAL DESIGNS

Davepak John Matthew



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi interacts with students at National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad on Friday | P 2

Rahul breaks NSG cordon to meet fans

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The blue-eyed boy of Congress Rahul Gandhi once again broke through all barriers to bond with the frenzied crowd which had gathered to see their icon.

After addressing the Abhay Udan Valedictory function, he went to pay

homage to Vir Kinnariwala memorial at the entrance of Gujarat college. As he proceeded towards his car, he saw a huge crowd waiting for him.

Pushing aside the NSG commandos, Rahul Gandhi rushed towards the people. Within minutes, he was lost in the swarm of people. Rajiv Patel who shook hands with Rahul, says "This is the dif-

ference between Modi and the Gandhi's. Had it been Modi, the police would not have allowed us to even move while his convoy is moving, but this man came amid us as a part of us. Both of get the same security."

Jankiben Ramanbhai, a resident of Vadaj, says, "I held his hand and he

even blessed my two-year-old daughter. He is such a nice person and a true leader. He is like his father who died while meeting poor people."

Realising that the number of people was increasing, NSG commandos had to whisk Rahul away. He then got into his car again but craning his neck out of the car, he kept on waving the crowd.

REACHING OUT

10 young achievers felicitated



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: As a part of the Abhay Udan Mera Bharat Mahan function, Congress felicitated 10 young achievers from Gujarat. They were from different fields like education, sports, acting and singing.

Aishwarya Majmudar, the winner of a singing competition was jubilant after meeting Rahul Gandhi. "I found Rahul to be a very friendly person as compared to other politicians. He asked me about the languages I sing in and also at what age I began singing."

Majmudar said Rahul was very pleased and he even said that he was happy with my answers. "He is a lively person," she added.

While Aishwariya found him friendly, Neha Seth, a software developer and a entrepreneur, found him extremely soft spoken and attentive. "Somebody was briefing him of our achievement and he was quick to respond and ask relevant questions. He immediately noticed the American accent and

enquired about it. I told him that I had studied in a foreign university.

Naishal Shah, a topper in Chartered Accountancy examination said that he did not get a chance to talk to him much. "Since I was the first one to be felicitated, he just me where I belong to." Shah says that the joy of meeting Rahul was more than his academic accomplishment. "Meeting a national leader and getting felicitated by him was never dreamt by me," said Shah.

Among the others felicitated were Prachi Desai (TV and film actress), Rupesh Shah (Gold medalist- world billiards championship), Fenil Shah (National champion in chess under-11), Ankit Rajpara (National chess championship under-13), Niraj Patel (Cricket, outstanding performance in Ranji Trophy), Parthiv Gohil (Versatile Singer) and Sufiyan Mohsin Shaikh (youngest swimmer to have crossed the English Channel in the year 2006).

The Times of India 31/1/09

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'Gandhi - my philosopher, guide'

Ahmedabad: A youth icon and All India Congress Committee general secretary Rahul Gandhi in his nearly nine minute speech focused mainly on the father of the nation and even referred to Gandhi as his philosopher and guide.

Rahul Gandhi addressed the crowd at the valedictory function of Abhay Udan, Mera Bharat Mahan. Keeping away from political bashing Rahul Gandhi stuck to the theme of Gandhi as it was martyr's day — the day Gandhi was shot.

Drucking a question he was asked at the National Institute of Design as to why politicians stay away from people and mover around in cars, he said that they are today's politicians whereas Gandhi was one person who did not have television or internet but wrote a thousand letters.

"People call me inexperienced, a child in politics, but I have Gandhi as my guide. Whenever I am faced with a problem or do not know an answer to a question, I refer to a book of quotations from Gandhi to find answers," he said. He even thanked Gujarat for giving the country a man who gave the country independence. He thanked Gujaratis as it is the state that has given him a philosopher and guide.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tries his hand at spinning wheel at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad on Friday

In his speech, he also said that like the British present leaders are using the divide and rule policy by creating terror, but Gandhi was someone who always worked at uniting people by removing fear and instilling confidence in them. Rahul said that Indians will take the country forward and political leaders will have no role to play in this.

■ An overzealous AMC congress corporator fought his way through heavy police handbust at Gujarat College.

According to Ellisbridge police station officials, Idarish Khan Pathan, an ASI with Zone 1 office, was deployed on Gate 1 for the VIPs when Rahul Gandhi came to address youth. At that time, Arvind Chaudhary, a Congress corporator, came with his entourage and sought entry through Gate no 1. When Pathan asked for a valid pass, he threatened him and when Pathan did not budge, he, with others, attacked Pathan and fellow cops and even tried to hit him. A complaint has been lodged with Ellisbridge police station.

■ NID literally turned in a fortress on Friday morning with strict no for any visitors at the campus. Foreign visitors, families and relatives of NID students were also not allowed to get inside the campus after Rahul Gandhi made entry into the campus. One of the family member who was not allowed to meet his sister said, "We came after travelling from a long distance and we are not allowed to go inside and also we are not able to get in touch with my sister who is studying here. It is simply putting inconvenience to public."

■ NID authorities remain tight lipped about the visit of Rahul Gandhi at the campus from mediapersons. However, the news got leaked and mediamen got themselves posted there stretching for four long hours for an interaction with son of Gandhi family who was on political visit to Ahmedabad. Interestingly, the Public Relation Office of NID were clueless on addressing the media over the visit of Gandhi at the campus and termed the visit as a 'private visit'.

■ As soon as Rahul Gandhi entered the Gujarat College campus, there was a sort of yelling contest between the Seva Dal and NSUI. Both groups began to scream — 'Seva Dal Zindabad', 'NSUI Zindabad'.

■ Some rural people in the crowd who had waited for nearly three hours to see Rahul Gandhi, after discerning him carefully, managed to simply say, 'laage chhe to bhanelo' (He looks well-educated)

Those above 35 no longer Youth Congress members

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: General secretary and youth congress in-charge of the AICC, Rahul Gandhi addressed the youth Congress workers for nearly an hour at the Congress headquarters in Rajiv Gandhi Bhavan, here. He was the first from the Gandhi family to visit this building, which had the Congressmen super excited.

Rahul began by making it very clear that the youth were top on his priority list. He set 35 years as the cut-off mark to qualify as member of the youth Congress, which had been swarming with middle aged people so far.

This is Rahul's first visit to Ahmedabad. He had earlier visited Gujarat during the assembly elections in 2007, when he held road shows in Surat, Vadodara and Dabod. Before that he participated in the Bharuch leg of the recreated Dandi march in 2005, conducted to mark 75 years of the salt march. The internal differences in the Congress surfaced even during the meeting with several youth Congress leaders alleging that there was partiality among the selection of the youth Congress leaders. Rahul said that those above 35 and are youth congress leaders would no longer be the members, they would be given responsibility in the congress committees.

He further said that the youth would face no problem in the new set up if they had the willingness to work for the party. To suggestions that only original Congressmen be allowed to participate in youth Congress elections, Rahul said that if a person coming from a different ideology was getting his workers and was giving a boost to the party and his set up there was nothing wrong. "The workers would win the election only if he has enough support which means that he would be beneficial for the party."



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RAHUL JUNIOR, THE PIED PIPER



Rahul gives charming political design to Congress in Gujarat

Spends Over Four Hrs With Students At NID

Team TOI

Ahmedabad: He smiled and they swooned. Rahul Gandhi not only gave some visibility to an Opposition party which is almost overshadowed and ambushed by Modi, but also made several female hearts skip a beat along the way.

In an elaborate first time visit to Ahmedabad, Rahul spent over four hours at National Institute of Design (NID) and had lunch at the mess, a chat with the students where he exhorted them to join politics. "We lost our father much before he died," he told them. "1984 onwards, he (Rajiv Gandhi) was so busy working for the country that he had no time for us. Initially, he was reluctant to join politics, but I have consciously joined politics to serve people," he said.

The NID bit was added to his itinerary at the last minute and the institute was informed only



SMOOTH TALK

late Thursday night. More than 150 NID students sitting in the tree-canopied amphitheatre at the scenic riverside campus had a free-wheeling session with Rahul.

He then went to Sabarmati Ashram to pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi on Martyr's Day and tried his hand at the spinning wheel. Girls from different colleges crowded around him here to get an autograph and the rising Gandhi star obliged.

He addressed a rally of youth Congress at Gujarat College, girls perched on their hostel balconies to take a glimpse at the Gandhisection. Trusha Patel, daughter of a local Congress worker from Junagadh, never cared to attend political functions.

But for Rahul, she came with her father all the way from Junagadh and was infatuated. "He is so cute! I like his height and the way he walks. He is really a darling," she said.