

# City's sanitation satyagrah reborn 100 years after Bapu's

## Gandhi Began City's First Sanitation Drive In 1919

Paul John and Himanshu Kaushik | TNN

**Ahmedabad:** Almost 100 years ago on September 27, 1919, Mahatma Gandhi took to an Ahmedabad street and began the biggest sanitation drive ever witnessed in the city. The campaign co-ordinated by Dr Hariprasad Desai lasted for a month and a series of articles written by Bapu on the campaign were published in the journal 'Navajivan' under the title 'Gujarat nu patnagar, Amdavad'. Nearly 3,000 tonnes of garbage was removed from Ahmedabad.

Today we are a few weeks away from stepping into the 150th year of Mahatma Gandhi, TOI embarks on a war against the 72 lakh tonne, 10-storey high Pirana garbage future for the city. The mound today is a ticking bomb at the edge of the city and reeks of our apathy towards a simple behavioural change, segregating waste at home.

Bapu in a public meeting in 1924 in Ahmedabad would say, "I



may only say that my heart weeps to see the misery, the squalor, and the dirt in the streets of Ahmedabad as I pass through them. How can starvation and dirt be allowed to exist in a city of such riches and rich traditions?"

In recent years, Amdavadis kept producing 4,200 tonnes of waste every day. With this, the tonnes of plastic and toxic chemicals dumped at

Pirana site burns constantly, pumping toxic fumes into the air. At this point, many of us pinch our noses, turn our eyes away and drive away from Pirana as soon as possible so the city's ugliest sight does not assault our senses. As if the stench and the muck will disappear just because we are not looking at it. Unfortunately, it does not work that way. The more we ignore that mountain, the bigger and more unmanageable it gets. Today more such mountains are being created—the Sabarmati banks near Airport Road and the open plot in Jodhpur Gam are just a few of them.

## Pirana looms over NGT chief's visit

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Ahmedabad:** Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, the chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), said that the Pirana dump yard and three polluted rivers of Gujarat were among the issues that were discussed with the Government of Gujarat.

Justice Goel was speaking on the sidelines of the 1st LexTech Lecture at Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) on Saturday. He delivered the lecture on the theme 'Sustainable Development.'

"We held a meeting with the secretaries of urban development and environment departments of the Government of Gujarat along with chairman of the Gujarat Pollution Control Board on the pressing issues," said Justice Goel. "Of the 15 most polluted rivers of India, three—Amlakhadi, Damanganga, and Sabarmati—flow in Gujarat. And many of the 351 polluted river stretches lie in Gujarat."

Justice Goel said: "We also discussed Pirana. The state government has provided a time schedule for solid waste management at the site." He said that the government has provided a plan for setting up a waste-to-energy plant at the spot. "Steps such as waste segregation will also be taken up," he said.

Justice Goel said that the

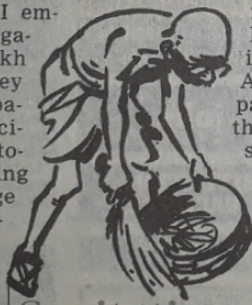


Justice Goel

state government has stated that action will be taken; it said that more time and funds were required. The NGT chairperson stressed the need to revive rivers by removing bottlenecks, putting curbs on drawing water from catchment areas, and above all taking action against those polluting water.

Justice Goel said that the NGT had earlier provided guidelines and better examples for solid waste management from spots such as Indore, Vellore, Ambikapur and Goa. He said that the drive to formulate rules for solid waste management began after a petition was filed by a Surat-based organization.

"We are initiating action against government officials, who do not take action in the stipulated time frame," Justice Goel said. "We have also made the process of filing complaints simpler. A software helps us process the application and take action."



**Sanitation Satyagrah**

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