

# metro

**quotemartial**  
This is a golden jubilee year of the formation of Sanyukta Maharashtra, including Vidarbha, and no one can stop me from celebrating it.  
**UDDHAV THACKERAY**, Shiv Sena executive president



Pali Hill has high aspirational value for the young, whether they're renting or buying

# Queen of hearts

**FRESH START** From businesses and consulates to the young and the spoilt, a whole range of south Mumbai tribes is packing bags and moving to Bandra — once a fishing village, now a fairground to live, work and party on

**sundayspecial**

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**MUMBAI:** "Breach Candy is boring," drawls Emma de Decker, programming executive at Blue Frog, the Lower Parel nightclub. "Bandra is the party place."

Which is why the 31-year-old French expatriate moved, a year ago, from a studio apartment in the tony South Mumbai quarter to a one-bedroom flat on Hill Road in Bandra. Also headed to Bandra is the French Consulate, which is moving from Nariman Point to the Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC).

Once seen only as an affordable alternative to staying in 'town', Bandra has emerged as the city's most aspirational address — its new 'town'.

Over the last decade, BKC — a mod-

CURRENT REAL ESTATE RATES (RS / SQ FT)			
SOUTH MUMBAI		BANDRA	
Malabar Hill	55,000-75,000	Bandstand	30,000-40,000
Altamount Road	42,000-75,000	Mount Mary	30,000-35,000
Napean Sea Road	46,000-70,000	Carter Road	25,000-30,000
Cuffe Parade	32,500-60,000	Pali Hill	25,000-35,000
Walkeshwar	45,000-60,000	Almeida Park	25,000-30,000

Source: Knight Frank India

ern, well laid out business district at Bandra (E) — has been the catalyst for a small-scale exodus from south Mumbai to Bandra. Both the British Deputy High Commission and the American Consulate have moved from Nariman Point and Breach Candy respectively to BKC. Most recently, the French Consulate closed a deal for its new office space in BKC's Woolhardt Towers.

"BKC is becoming the new city centre," says Abhishek Lodha, director of Lodha Group. And it's setting off a piggybacking effect. "With BKC evolving into the new financial hub, the corporates are also headed to Bandra," says Neeraj Gorwani, director, Gorwani Builders.

While south Mumbai is still home to old-money industrialists such as the Tatas, Ambanis and Birlas, Bandra is attracting what Gorwani calls the "new corporate cult". He says: "They represent the new generation of young entrepreneurs and well-paid executives looking to buy property in Bandra."

Bandra, home to some of the city's oldest *gaothans* (traditional villages) and cottages, is also home to some of the city's best new buildings, which offer spectacular sea views and playthings including car decks, sun decks and

swimming pools on every floor. And with those new buildings packed into a much tighter space than the wider expanse of south Mumbai, demand, and therefore, prices are rising.

While swank flats on south Mumbai's Altamount Road — named the 10th most expensive street in the world in a 2008 survey by Wealth-Bulletin, a UK-based news agency — cost Rs 40,000-

50,000 per sq ft, luxury apartments on Bandra's Carter Road and Pali Hill are a close Rs 30,000-40,000 per sq ft. And where purchase prices go, rentals follow. Fuelled by a continuous ebb and flow of new restaurants, and creative and commercial spaces, rentals of plush properties here are astronomical. Some, such as Narain Terraces and Kubelisque — both at Union Park — command Rs 12-15 lakh as monthly rent. Most are occupied all year round, fed by the surge of expats into Bandra.

"The Bandra-Worli sea link has significantly improved connectivity between the north and south of the city, making Bandra a key node," says Boman K Irani, MD of Keystone Realtors (Rustomjee). "With corporate houses moving here and the opening of high-end schools and hospitals in BKC, combined with its proximity to both the airports, rising property prices and its

upmarket population have made Bandra aspirational."

If BKC is the city's new commercial centre, Bandra West is its new lifestyle destination. "Bandra has created a clear identity for itself — a buzzing cultural centre that attracts the lifestyle seeker," says Lodha.

Furrokh Regina, a business development manager with Culture and Relocation, an agency that helps expats find flats and familiarises them with Mumbai's culture, says: "Earlier, most expats were located in Nariman Point and Ballard Pier. Now, the majority of them live in Bandra. One of the main reasons is the opening of the American School and the Dhirubhai Ambani School at BKC."

"Apart from its new skyline, Bandra also has gourmet stores selling imported meats and cheeses that expats tend to prefer. With the Celebrate Bandra festival, and a whole range of nightclubs, restaurants and retail spaces, they have a lot more to do here than they do in town," Regina adds.

De Decker says: "The expats in Breach Candy are mostly businessmen with families. Bandra has a different kind of expat — younger and outgoing. Most of my Indian and French friends live here."

And even hardcore townies are shifting base to the queen of the suburbs. College student, Bela M (who didn't want her last name used) and her family, who own a chain of city hotels, recently moved to Linking Road after living in Colaba for more than 20 years.

Even though she calls Colaba home, Bela says South Mumbai is "uptight" while Bandra is "chilled out". She says: "In Bandra, people are more eager to socialise and plans always seem to materialise, which does-

**EAT, SHOP, PARTY**

**BAGELS, CUPCAKES, SUSHI**

Bandra's multitude of eateries offer a host of international goodies. The new Ray's Pizzeria even offers New-York style pizza by the slice. The Carter Road stretch is a foodie's paradise with menus that span the range from dosas to donuts.



Bandra has a serious reputation for creating the genre of the **FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD PUB**. From the iconic Totos Garage Pub to the new, cozy chic Elbo Room, this place is never short of a table to catch a drink and catch up with friends. The best part — you can walk in with shorts and slippers and you won't raise an eyebrow.

**DESPITE ITS LACK OF MALLS**, Bandra boasts of an impressive line-up of branded stand-alone stores, the newest being FCUK on the Linking Road strip. This stretch is good for the whole spectrum from street scouring to high-street shopping at Mango, Aldo, Tommy Hilfger, Esprit, Nine West, La Senza and United Colours of Benetton.



At our Colaba outlet, we get lots of foreign tourists, but at our Bandra bakery, we have many more expat customers who live in the area.

**KAINAZ MESSMAN**  
owner, Theobroma bakery



Expats love Bandra's new buildings, some of which have triple apartments each with a plunge pool, swimming pool and gymnasium.

**FURROKH REGINA**, business manager, Culture and Relocations

Bandra's proximity to the airports and BKC and its scenic promenades have made Bandra the preferred new lifestyle destination.

**NEERAJ GORWANI**, director, Gorwani builders



SATISH RAVE / HT PHOTOS



(Top) Hill Road, Bandra's primary shopping street; (centre) Bonobo, one of its newer restaurants, off Linking Road; (bottom) Bandstand — good for jogging, sea gazing or just plain hanging out with friends.

n't happen that often in town. And everything is so convenient here. There are so many more places to shop and hang out at than in town."

The Trident, which opened in December last year, is the first five-star hotel at BKC. Visheshwaraj Singh, general manager, Trident BKC, says: "We find it more challenging to cater to this crowd than our Nariman Point clientele. These are young, well-travelled entrepreneurs with discerning taste, and spoilt for choice, given the

multitude of new restaurants in Bandra. We have to take our game to the next level here."

Within the first few days of its launch, the hotel saw 80 per cent occupancy, explained by BKC's affluent corporates and expats, and Bollywood's swish set from the Bandra-Juhu stretch.

The party continues.

## Of eggs & Easter feasting

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**MUMBAI:** The traditional hot cross buns symbolising Good Friday and the crucifixion of Jesus have been eaten, and it's time to whip up the Easter eggs.

For Powai resident Elsie Gabriel, the large chocolate and marzipan eggs representing the resurrection of Christ are the central focus of Easter Sunday. She buys some from the confectionery and bakes some at home, decorating them with colourful icing saying "Happy Easter".

"Easter is a spring festival and the eggs and chocolate bunnies, a favourite with children, are a symbol of new life," said Gabriel, an environmentalist, who complements these with a breakfast of bacon and bread.

While eggs can be spotted on every Easter table, Gabriel is a North Indian Christian, and her roasted chicken at lunch will be stuffed with some very



Powai resident Elsie Gabriel and her family celebrated Easter last year with chocolate and marzipan eggs. COURTESY: ELSIE GABRIEL

vegetables make it to the table.

No such thing for the traditional Kerala Christians, where meat rules the roost on Easter. "After 40 days of abstaining from non-vegetarian food during Lent, most Keralites feast on everything from fish and chicken to duck and pork," said Becky Chacko, a Navi Mumbai teacher.

She will make chicken stew with *ammas* — fermented rice

always a base ingredient."

For East Indians, Goans and Mangaloreans, it's the chicken vindaloo and pork sorpotels that form the staple Easter curries.

"Each community mixes the spices differently for these common curries, but they are a must," said Mahim home tutor Nirman Alvares, who will cook the traditional Mangalorean chicken

## 1 CHANCE FOR CBSE CLASS 9 POOR SCORERS

**MUMBAI:** Class 9 Central Board of Secondary Education board students, who have scored either E1 or E2 grade in any subject in their final exams, will get one opportunity to improve their performance, a latest circular by the board states.

In a previous circular, the board had said students will get five attempts. Class 10 students will still have five attempts.

"One chance of improvement of performance is to be given preferably within one month from the date of declaration of the results," said the circular. The board had earlier said that from this year it would not declare students as having failed. But students who will get E1 and E2 grades will not be considered eligible for Class 10.

"This is something like the re-test that students had to take to get promoted to the higher class," said Ananta Bis-

## UGC chairman asks state to open all teacher recruitment

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**MUMBAI:** On the annual convocation day of the University of Mumbai, University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Sukhadeo Thorat said Maharashtra must remove all restrictions on teacher recruitment.

Currently, the state allows only 50 per cent of open posts to be filled forcing colleges to recruit teachers on ad-hoc and contract basis.

"Our research shows that 50 per cent of colleges and 40 per cent of universities are functioning with temporary teachers. Quality faculty is a critical element of higher education and Maharashtra should aspire to reach the UGC recommended teacher-student ratio," he said.



A constable detains BVS president Abhijeet Panse for protesting at the convocation ceremony at Fort campus. HEMANT PADALKAR / HT

should at least increase it eight times."

"The Sixth Pay Commission has given teachers a good deal and matched the salaries of PhD holders to IAS officers at the entry level. I hope in Maharashtra the same has been implemented," he added. The

per cent of the student output comes from there."

More than 1.6 lakh degrees were conferred at the convocation, but only medal holders and toppers were awarded degree certificates. This is the first time that students will have to collect their certificates

**OLD OR REVISED COURSE?**

Students taking their final-year Commerce exams through distance education can now opt for either the old syllabus or the revised one, the university said. The TYBcom exams will start on April 8.

degree certificates despite the delay in convocation.

The slogan-shouting activists went up to the podium and distributed leaflets before the police rounded them off.

"The university does not have a full time vice-chancellor and the additional VC does not have power to take any decisions. The prime minister talks of quality education but the University of Mumbai is only deteriorating," said BVS pres-