

Graffiti defaces city's monuments

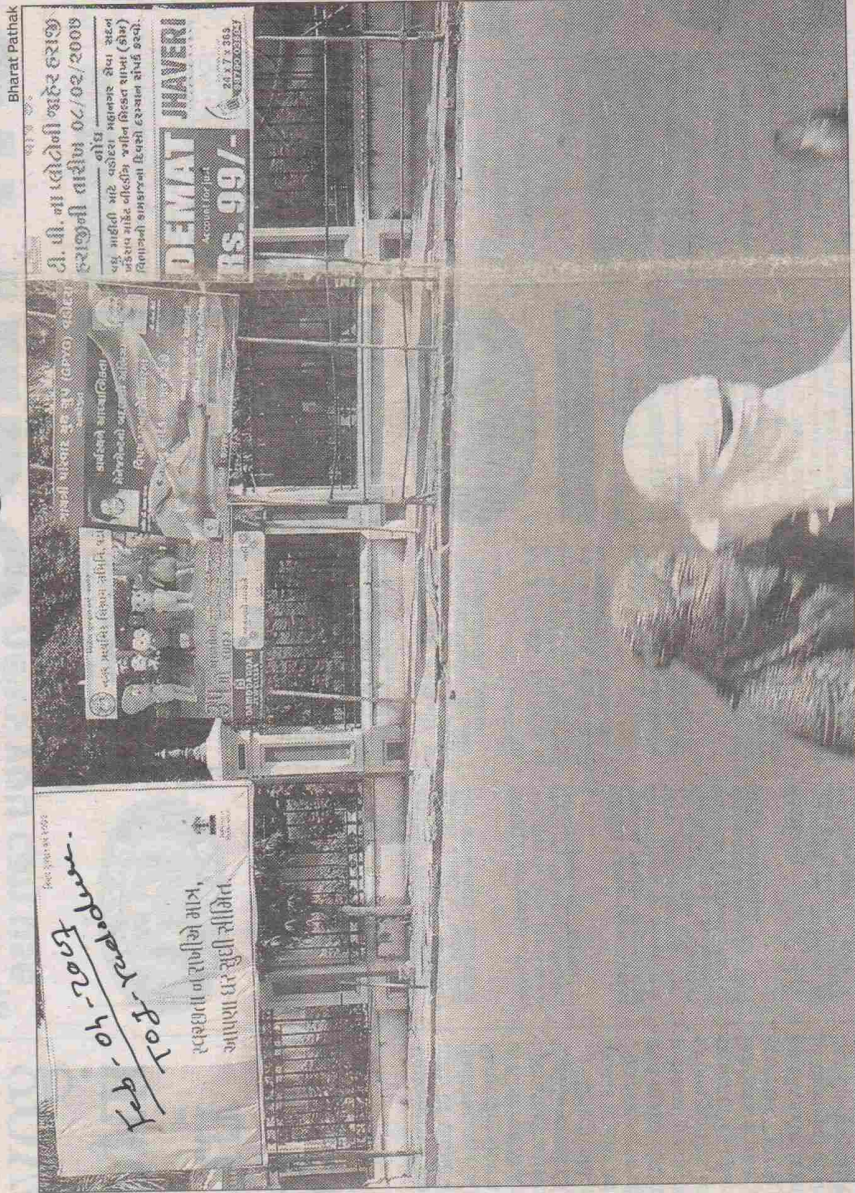
Tushar Tere | TNN

Vadodara: While both the state government and the Centre may be laying stress on infrastructure development and beautification of cities, what one regularly notices in the city is a plethora of banners put up on walls in the city and even historical buildings. Leave alone removing such banners, the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) itself contributes by putting up hoardings at any available place in the city.

The official hoardings put up by VMC at various prominent locations are heavily priced and bring it crores of rupees annually. But it not many are willing to pay for such premium legal space, and instead rely on free space. Sometimes they are even fined, but the banners never stop cropping up.

"There are a number of beautiful buildings and statues in the city. But a majority of them are covered with huge hoardings that are put by the civic body. It looks so horrible," said Amit Shetty, a resident of the old city. "VMC officials don't understand the value of this structures."

The civic officials' apathy towards important structures became evident when it allowed some organisations to put up hoardings and banners around Mandvi Gate in the old city area last year. The civic body too had put up a few huge



Hoardings and banners at Sayajigunj

hoardings that defaced the gate. The hoardings, however, were removed when some activists protested against the authorities. Interestingly, the civic body has set up a separate department for handling old monuments.

Sources said that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) officials too were not happy with the way VMC was handling old structures. The authorities have not been able to complete the repairs on Mandvi Gate that was initiated

ed a couple of years ago. "The magnificence of Raopura Tower, Sayajigunj Circle and Niyay Mandir is hidden behind banners. Some of the structures have even suffered damages owing to the hoardings," said Shailesh

Makwana, a commuter who passes through Raopura everyday.

Political parties too are not far behind when it comes to defacing monuments and walls on the city streets. The walls of SSG Hospital, buildings in

PEOPLE TALK

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Vipul Patel, ACTIVIST

We are concerned about such defacing of the city. We will come up with a policy regarding this and this will be proposed in the standing committee very soon

M K Das, MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER

MS University and even statues are defaced by the party activists during elections. The activists of ABYP had defaced a 100-year-old building near the university office last year. Same is the case with the All India Democratic Students Organisation or the NSUI that regularly target walls in different parts of the city.

"Civic authorities and even the common man don't value public property and structures as they don't understand their importance. We will have to develop a sense of belonging among citizens to preserve such structures," said Vipul Patel, who runs an NGO.

Bharat Pathak