

# City savours modaks of oats, cream cheese

Several Devotees Offer Exotic Variations As Prasad

Bella Jaisinghani | TNN

This festive season, a niche segment of Mumbaiers has been purchasing exotic modaks prepared from oats, cream cheese, hazelnut and blueberry to place before the deity as prasad.

A specialized European kitchen in Mumbai Central is concocting such experimental modaks. Its chefs blend rose cream cheese with cashew nut and pair peanut butter or white peppermint with dark chocolate to create exotic sweetmeats. Owner Neha Manekia says, "We are adapting non-Indian ingredients to create a familiar taste. For instance, dark chocolate coating over peanut butter tastes like salted caramel." Our clients include people who have been invited for Ganpati dar-

shan as well as devotees who install the deity at home. They buy up to five or six kgs at a time."

A 90-year-old caterer of authenticated Indian delicacies offers various options for different folks. "In Juhu we get customers who wish to

chip and coconut while kiwi fruit and gulkand are popular too. Meanwhile, in Ghatkopar, Gujaratis and Marwaris love very sweet kaju, pista, kesar and strawberry modaks," says Deepthi Chawla, director of the firm.

A store in Bandra prepares kiwi fruit, sugar-free cranberry mixed with cashew paste, blueberry as well as chocolate brownie modaks.

These modaks are priced anywhere between Rs 650 and Rs 1,500 a kg compared with basic mawa varieties that are available for Rs 400-450.

Yet, an eatery beside Siddhivinayak temple that prepares classic 'ukdiche modak' all year round has never felt the

need to extend its repertoire. "Now we pour ghee over the split modak the way it is served traditionally. Orders are taken a month in advance," says spokesperson Gopal Balgi.

enjoy modaks without the excessive sweetness of mawa and sugar. For them we prepare fried modaks using oats as the main ingredient. Children love tutti-frutti, choco

lego students from Bhavan's, Ismail Yusuf, Ruparel and Ruia as well school students from Parle Tilak Vidyalaya to download the Noise Watch app on their mobiles.

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## Cops watch immersion points via CCTVs

Vijay V Singh | TNN

Mumbai: The police are making use of CCTV cameras to keep a watch on the city's busiest immersion points to identify miscreants and possible terror suspects, if any.

Local and traffic police have installed CCTVs at crucial points at Girgaum Chowpatty, Dadar Chowpatty, Juhu Chowpatty and Malad Marve. These also help them monitor bottlenecks and crowds.

The police plan to take the help of Ganpati mandals to control the crowds and discipline them. They have set up temporary control rooms at the shoreline to monitor the crowds. "This will help us identify terror suspects and miscreants easily," said an officer.

Last year, approximately 1.83 lakh idols were immersed across the city and the number is expected to rise this year. On Tuesday, 7,800 Ganpati idols were immersed in Juhu Chowpatty alone. The police expect heavy crowds on Friday, Sunday and the last day of the immersion.

"We are trying to ensure the crowds remain organized and the control room officer stays in continuous contact with station officers at crucial points to ensure there are no bottlenecks," said Chherring Dorje, deputy commissioner of police.

The police, for one, have set up a temporary control room at Juhu Chowpatty. "Our better monitoring and coordination helped smooth flow of traffic on the road close to the Chowpatty on Tuesday," said an officer.

The officer further said that in the past, they had received several terror threat alerts and instructed Ganpati mandals to keep an eye out for suspects.

Keeping in mind the terror threat inputs received in the past, the city police have roped in the Border Security Force and Central Industrial Security Force to assist them during the 10-day Ganpati festival.

## CITY PANDALS AT THEIR CREATIVE BEST

The inaugural round of judging for the annual Times Utsav Moorti Sanman began on Thursday

Pics: Sanjay Hadkar



### AZAD NAGAR SARVAJANIK UTSAV SAMITI OR ANDHERICHA RAJA

LOCATION | Andheri West

USP | Devotees who have completed the Ashtavinayak yatra will instantly recognize this wooden replica of the Ranjangaon mandir with 30-odd pillars. The 48-year-old mandal has replaced the silver 'mooshak' that was placed before the deity with a golden elephant crafted by a jeweller from Pune. The Raja also wears two new 'kadas' or bangles gifted by Sudhakar Pujari from Hong Kong. Pujari's prayer for a son was granted in January this year.

Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar arrived just in time for the 12.30pm aarti and joined in with cheer. Little child volunteers were unrelenting about security even as they kept a perfect beat on the cymbals.



### KHETWADI 12TH LANE SARVAJANIK GANESHOTSAV MANDAL

LOCATION | Khetwadi, Girgaum

USP | An artist's dream of a Jaipur Rajmahal or royal palace has transformed this dusty neighbourhood. The 12th Lane pandal often wins prizes for its regal 14-ft idol that is carved from the same mould each year but whose charm does not diminish. The techno-savvy mandal already had a web site and has now unveiled a mobile app that allows for live darshan and aarti. Participating in the judging for the UMS awards, MP Milind Deora, who has had the good fortune to visit this site in earlier years as well, could not help marvel at the setting.

### GSB SEVA MANDAL

LOCATION | King's Circle  
USP | The richest mandal in the city does everything on a grand scale, whether it be adorning its deity with crores of rupees worth of gold ornaments or seeking insurance to the tune of Rs 223 crore. Hundreds of saffron-clad volunteers have been joining police personnel to chaperone thousands of visitors who arrive even on weekdays. Young Rupa Bhat was performing 'seva' by regulating the crowds since 3am without food. Special counters are set up to book pujas, offer prasad and keep devotees' belongings. This year, a special makeshift skywalk has been constructed for people seeking quick darshan. Those who enter usually opt to join lunch prasad and offer puja. The mandal is a regular A-lister on the UMS scroll, and on Thursday, actor Amrita Rao arrived to pay respects to the deity.

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## Citizens map noise levels to raise awareness, bring change

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Every time there is a loud sound, Vashi's Ajay Marathe cringes. An animal lover, he cannot bear to see his pets—six cats and one dog—traumatized by noise.

For the past six years, Marathe has been working hard to create a less noisy environment for them and has succeeded to an extent. "It is my pets' suffering that prodded me to complain to the authorities against noise pollution in my area." With his regular follow-ups, he has managed to even get a school in the vicinity to stop the use of loudspeakers.

Marathe, who works as an animal welfare officer, said,

"I have collected all Supreme Court and high court judgments on noise pollution as well as affidavits filed by the state government in court. I have used them judiciously in my fight against noise pollution."

Three years ago, he started recording sound levels with a noise meter. He, along with his wife, would go around Vashi measuring decibels. Today, he has downloaded an app on his mobile with which he records the decibels.

Elsewhere, Anand Pendharkar runs an NGO called Sprouts in Andheri East, which works to create environmental awareness and ecological documentation. The team has inspired several col-

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## She has sculpted 2.5L idols, some blindfolded

Sharmila Ganesan-Ram | TNN

As a child, Rama Shah used to roll out close to 60 chapatis within an hour. This, she didn't know at the time, was a preordained rehearsal for her calling that would come years later.

Then, one night in March 2000, the Sion resident saw a vision of her favourite God, Lord Ganesha, reclining majestically on a cushion. Desperate to immortalize this dream, the Jain housewife



decided to create a Ganesha idol during her handicraft class. Today, within the span of those 60 chapatis of her childhood, her deft hands churn out over 180 idols, even

when her eyes are shut. In the past 13 years, she has created over 2.5 lakh Ganesha idols. Every night since her dream, the 52-year-old homemaker has been locking herself up in her bedroom, preparing idols while listening to Navkar mantra and chanting to herself. "It is a form of meditation for me," adds Shah who uses only her fingers, an empty ball pen refill and her imagination to shape the idols. She paints on the details the next day.

Over the years, her medita-

tive hobby has spawned several national and international records such as the one she received for preparing 9,999 idols in 99 days in 2000 to her recent attempt at creating 999 idols in 24 hours. Shah also holds shows where people watch her create idols blindfolded. Comments such as "I could feel the positive vibrations in your house" adorn the 20-odd guestbooks in the living room of Shah, whose album boasts everyone from Raj Thackeray to Shah Rukh Khan receiving an idol.

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## METRO DIGEST

### IRCTC launches Windows app

IRCTC has launched a new app for Windows phones and Windows 8 devices that allows access to services, including booking e-tickets, through ways other than the existing portal.

### Deadline for univ Oct exam form is Sept 20

Due to technical problems in uploading forms for TVBCom, BA and BSc semester V exams in October, submission date is now September 20.

### Bar girl, kin booked for abetting suicide

The Dahisar police booked a bar girl and her relative for abetting the suicide of a man (25). They were reportedly pressuring him to get back her gold that he sold off.

### Man held after wife's suicide