

A monumental wonder

The Global Vipassana Pagoda in Gorai is attracting large numbers of visitors



A meditation session in progress.

By Kaptan Mali

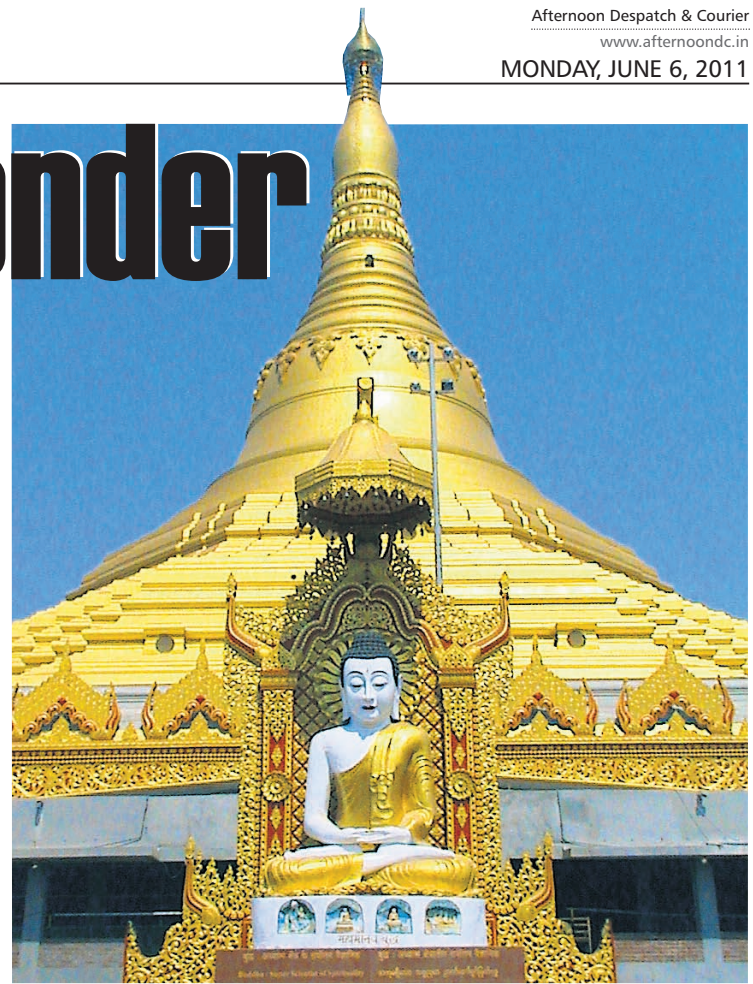
The Global Vipassana Pagoda (GVP) at Gorai, which was opened for the public in February 2009 by the President of India, has been receiving a tremendous response from visitors. On an average, 500 tourists daily and around 4,000-5,000 on weekends have been visiting GVP. Constructed as an expression of gratitude towards the country and for preserving the practice of vipas-

sana, GVP was recently declared as one of the seven wonders of Mumbai in a survey conducted by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC). Since then, the number of tourists has been increasing by the day.

Rekha Rohira, Principal, MLRT Gala Primary English School, Malad, who has visited the place, said, "After visiting the pagoda and getting to know about the vipassana meditation, we understand that the purpose of life is happiness."

Haresh Ahirwal, a businessman, added, "I had heard a lot about pagoda, but after going there I experienced real happiness in that atmosphere. I feel that students and the younger generation must be made aware of this meditation technique and our ancient history."

According to Vishal Tambe, Assistant Manager, GVP, the popularity of the pagoda touched its peak after MTDC declared it among the seven wonders of the city. "Seven thousand visitors came during that



This structure contains the world's largest stone dome, built without supporting pillars.

weekend," Tambe revealed. To help them handle such high numbers, the GVP authorities have asked its old students to provide volunteering service, acting as guides for visitors, to which they are happily agreed. Explained Tambe, "The visitors have several questions in their mind regarding Buddha and pagodas. The premise of the pagoda is too vast so they cannot get their queries solved. Thus, those who have previously done vipassana meditation over here are happily volunteering. These

guides are trained to give the answers of the visitors."

Further, taking into consideration the augmenting number of tourists, the Mira Bhayandar Municipal Transport (MBMT) has started running buses from Bhayandar to Gorai.



The art gallery at the pagoda.

About GVP

- Situated at Gorai near Essel World, GVP is one of the biggest pagodas in the world where, at a time, around 8,000 people can meditate
- The centre of the GVP contains the world's largest stone dome built without any supporting pillars
- The height of the dome is approximately 29 metres, while the height of the building is 96.12 meters, which is twice the size of the previous largest hollow stone monument in the world, the Gol Gumbaz dome in Bijapur
- In the centre of the pagoda relics of Buddha are enshrined
- An art museum has also been created, which has paintings depicting the life stories of Buddha
- The GVP's designing and gold painting works have been done by Burmese artists as they are experts in it

How to reach GVP

- Ferry services from Borivli, Gorai
- Ferry services from Malad, Marve
- MBMT buses from Bhayandar station

MUMBAI

VIKAS SABNIS



Will you please go away and do your business elsewhere for the time being?

« OPINIONS »

Should Dy CM Ajit Pawar apologise for his criticism of Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray?

Y **N**



Kushal Ariya
Accountant

It is simply one individual's view against another. The political parties are using it to get media mileage.

Y **N**



Mohit Lala
Bank employee

The criticisms came from both Sena as well as NCP and should continue without becoming apologetic. Either that or both men should apologise to each other.

Y **N**



Neeti Govila
PR consultant

No one can point fingers at others just to besmirch their image and come into limelight. Pawar's remarks were just to elicit the media's attention.

Y **N**



Mitul Jasani
Businessman

Both parties verbal criticised each other. The Sena's protest is just to show their strength.

Y **N**



Shivshankar Dey
MBA student

With elections coming close, both parties are trying to increase presence in the mind of the voters. The public should be wise and ignore their tactics.