



Hi Guest, [Sign Up](#) | [Sign In](#) | [Saved Article\(s\)](#)

[Advanced Search](#)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Deep Focus

- [Home](#)
 - [Cities](#)
 - [India](#)
 - [World](#)
 - [Business](#)
 - [Cricket](#)
 - [Sports](#)
 - [Health & Science](#)
 - [Infotech](#)
 - [Education](#)
 - [Entertainment](#)
 - [Lifestyle](#)
 - [Opinion](#)
- Life **Deep Focus** Book Mark | All That Matters | View From Venus | Wide Angle | Open Space | Special Report

Breaking News » [vana Bhavan owner Rajagopal gets life](#)

Slum tours are about reality

18 Jan 2009, 0121 hrs IST, Chris Way

- Print
- Email
-
- Share
- Save
- Comment
- Text:

Mumbai is a pretty tough city to live in. Getting around is a nightmare. Something simple like going for a run takes major planning. People are often rude. And all this from an expat living in the queen of suburbs, Bandra. However, with Mumbai, nothing is ever simple - and that is definitely true of the city's appeal.

In the Mercer Index 2008 of best cities to live in the world, Mumbai comes in at 142 out of 215 (Baghdad is last). I always get asked by friends and family back home in the UK why I live here (for nearly four years now). It fails the obvious tests - housing, transport, open spaces and pollution. So why is it that fellow expats and I live in this city? Is it just for work reasons, in both the profit and non-profit sectors?

The weather is one reason I am here. The UK has the largest number of

weather "grumblers" in the world, me included. When I tell people back home of 'zero rain' from mid-October to mid-June, and how I've only once worn a sweater (this time last year), the ears prick up. And, of course, who in the UK wouldn't want to employ somebody to clean your house, wash your clothes and cook your food for little more than a round of drinks in a London pub?

But there is something else less artificial. Much has been made of the spirit of Mumbai since the 26/11 attacks - how the terrorists won't defeat us, etc. Sometimes it's difficult to understand what this spirit is - you certainly don't see it while waiting in a queue, or when opening a door for somebody, or when trying to get onto a train in rush hour. "What is wrong with everybody?" I ask myself all the time.

But this Mumbai spirit does exist and you see it in places like Dharavi. Here you have people with materially very little, living in poor conditions - open drains, poor toilets, small homes - working many hours, but meeting these challenges and getting on with life. People are chatting, smiling, enjoying each other's company.

There is a sense of community, which doesn't exist in the UK, and dare I say it, in the more affluent parts of Mumbai too.

Our company takes groups of tourists around Dharavi, including its many fascinating small-scale industries (no cameras, groups of six maximum, money from the tours gets invested in our community centre) and the smiles and happiness are what tourists comment about. Yes, there is poverty but this only increases their admiration for the people that live there. There is no pity.

More Deep Focus

- [There's something about Mumbai](#)
- [Star appeal for a social cause](#)
- [We too can make a Slumdog](#)

[More >>](#)

Other News

- [An artificial heart for Rs 1 lakh, courtesy IIT-Kgp](#)
- [Airhostess kills self after tiff with lover over smoking](#)
- [Michelle Obama's new avatar: Comic book superhero](#)
- [EC says Varun violated poll code, issues fresh notice](#)

Videos Picture



[More Videos](#)

My Times, My Voice

- [Should LMC revive the citizen's charter?](#)
- [Is the city losing its safe tag?](#)

[More >>](#)

[Li](#)
[N](#)
[L](#)
[A](#)

And that is the aim of the tour - to help dispel the negative image that many have about slumdweller. There is a lot to admire in their spirit.

[Click here to comment on this story.](#)

[Print](#) [Email](#) [Discuss](#) [Share](#) [Save](#) [Comment](#) Text: [☐](#) [+](#)

Related Stories

- Rahman, Anil Kapoor sued for calling Indians names
- Slumdog Millionaire isn't poverty porn, says author
- There's something about Mumbai
- Star appeal for a social cause
- We too can make a Slumdog
- COUNTERVIEW | He makes a valid point
- TIMES VIEW | Let's please grow up
- Golden boy Rahman given a rousing welcome
- Humility remains Rehman's theme song
- 'Slumdog' leads field for British Academy awards
- Big B slams 'Slumdog Millionaire' on blog
- SUBVERSE | Slumdog solution
- Jai ho! Rahman rules the globe
- Mumbai kids in Slumdog Millionaire cast
- Whats and whys of a film shot in Mumbai

Comments to the Editor

Be the first to write to the Editor.



Do you know Your Credit Score?

Excellent	750 - 840
Good	660 - 749
Fair	620 - 659
Poor	340 - 619
I Don't Know	????

[Find out INSTANTLY!](#)

Do you know Your Credit Score?

Excellent	750 - 840
Good	660 - 749
Fair	620 - 659
Poor	340 - 619
I Don't Know	????

[Find out INSTANTLY!](#)

Hotklix



Obama photos: Love in public
First couple not shy of displaying their love...



Watch Hindi 'Obama song' on air
Two Gujaratis sing a cool Hindi song for US prez.

Top Search: [Obama's secret limousine](#) | [More >>](#)

SEARCH PRODUCTS
FROM MORE THAN 5 LAKH SUPPLIERS
IN 20,000 CATEGORIES

Register your company **FREE**

indiamart.com
Source > Supply > Grow

India's Largest Buyer - Supplier Marketplace

ef
V
M
A
vi
SF
Me
12
Tr
Mu
De
Mu
Me
Sp
Lo
Zi
Ba
Ba
me
XC
Sc
Hc

