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Max moment in maximum city

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Mumbai: Dayanand Jadhav's office is located above a public toilet in Santa Cruz. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's offices in Berlin are certainly more salubrious. On Thursday morning at Mumbai University's vaulted Convocation Hall, before an audience that included governor S M Krishna and many suited German dignitaries, the two shook hands. Architect Rahul Mehrotra summed it up as "a maximum moment in a maximum city".

Merkel was presiding over the inauguration of the Urban Age Conference, a high-profile seminar organised by the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society. It opened with the announcement of the \$100,1000 Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award meant for a public service project. An international jury had decided that two of the 74 ap-



WHAT A FRONT: The Bandra promenade

plicants tied for the award—Dayanand Jadhav's Triratana Prerena Mandal which works with slum-dwellers in Santa Cruz and the much-toasted Mumbai Waterfront Development Centre, which has transformed Bandra's ragged promenades into curving walkways fringed with greenery.

Merkel, who spoke in German, said the need of the hour was to focus on villages to check migration. "Fast-growing cities need attention but to help cities we must not stop developing

the countryside," she said. "This is the policy followed in Germany." Merkel added that the integration of migrants was vital, otherwise there could be conflagrations like the Paris riots.

Each of the award winners was given a cheque of Rs 20 lakh. There was a special word of praise for the Urban Development Research Institute, which has been instrumental in preserving old precincts like the Oval Maidan and Kala Ghoda.

Maximum City author Suketu Mehta, who was on the award jury, said the two groups represented both the small project and the big project. "These local self-help groups are the only solution for big cities. It can't just be the World Bank flying in to change things," he said. Shabana Azmi added that the Mandal's example could be replicated "even in the slums of Sao Paulo and Lagos".