

THE ASIAN AGE

22 January, 2018

Mumbai runs, with all its heart

The 15th edition of the TATA Mumbai marathon saw a mix of causes, fancy dresses and warm smiles.



A runner professes the cause of saving languages.

Eighty-one-year-old Major General Ian Cardozo participates in the TATA Mumbai marathon every year. For the last 15 years, the war veteran, who has served nearly four decades in the Indian Army, positions himself at the start line of the Dream Run, investing the same confidence in his prosthetic limb year after year.

"I run this marathon every year. And while new things come and go with each passing year, one thing doesn't change — the spirit of the marathon," he says, eyes gleaming with the anticipation of the run that is about to start in the next two minutes.

Meera Mehta is one such individual. The 18-year-old first year medical student has raised over Rs 60 lakh for the non-profit organisation she is associated with, Love and Care. The young philanthropist and runner has been raising money ever since she was 13 years old and hasn't given it a break since. Holding a placard for the organisation high, Meera takes a break from shouting slogans and tells us, "This year, we are running to raise both funds and awareness to build a 250-bed brand new multi-speciality charity hospital for the less privileged in South Gujarat. This multi-speciality facility will make a difference to millions of lives in the tribal areas of South Gujarat, which ranks amongst the poorest in the state." She adds that the hospital strives to equip these tribal with superior quality medical care at a heavily subsidised rate or absolutely free of charge.

Dr A.L. Sharda doesn't miss the run for anything. This year, she ran with a troupe of 100 volunteers, apart from her own team, to advocate for gender sensitive reporting in the media, sanitation and malnutrition. "Our aim is to empower women through all ways possible," she says. One of their projects concentrates on teaching women the importance of vermicomposting for manure.

"The marathon gives us an opportunity to not just spread awareness about our concerns but also raise money for the cause. And that is why we consistently keep coming back to run," she says.

And even as the run came to an end, the intermingling of causes, fancy dresses and a harmonious gathering of religion, culture, ideas and peace stayed on for hours later, basking in the Mumbai sun.