

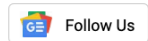
In Mumbai for two concerts, Zubin Mehta on his enduring ties with the city he grew up in

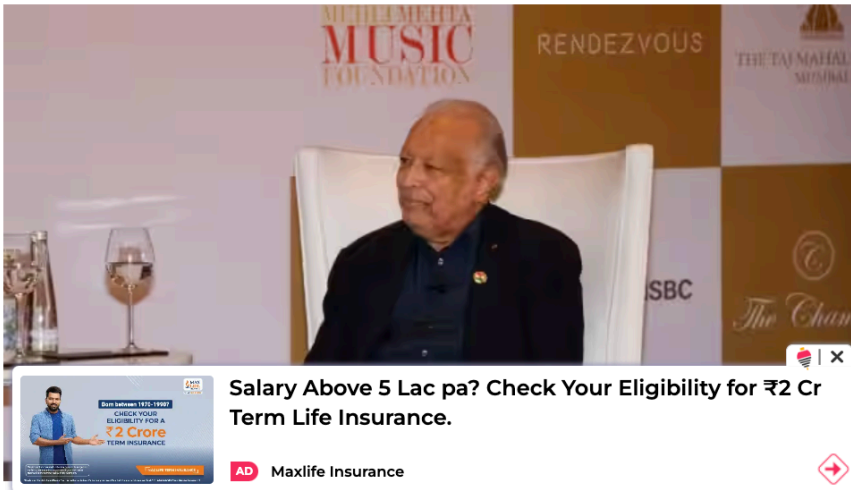
The music director emeritus of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra also hoped that the "ultra conservative" government of Israel would change soon.

Written by **Alaka Sahani**

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 NewsGuard

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Zubin Mehta (Express File Photo)

SOME things have remained unchanged for Zubin Mehta, 87, over the years even as he has achieved global acclaim as a music conductor par excellence. He still considers himself to be a “Bombay boy”; holds an Indian passport; and follows cricket passionately. “I consider myself to be an Indian citizen and never gave up my Indian passport,” said Mehta on Thursday evening during a conversation with veteran journalist Karan Thapar as part of the Rendezvous series, hosted by the Indian Hotels’ Company Limited (IHCL) at Taj Mahal Palace hotel.

The globetrotting maestro, who has been dividing his time between Los Angeles, Vienna, Berlin and Israel for years now, however, touched upon some changes that the Indian society has undergone in the recent years. While speaking about it, he cited the interview he gave to a leading publication a couple of weeks ago from his Los Angeles home. “The interview was published verbatim but the last line was struck out.

There I had said: ‘I hope our Muslim friends can live in peace in India’,” he recalled. Hoping for change, he mentioned reading about the burning of churches in Pakistan. “We have to get over this madness, this religious persecution,” he said.

The music director emeritus of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra also hoped that the “ultra conservative” government of Israel would change soon.

Mehta’s [Mumbai](#) visits are often marked by soaking in nostalgia and meeting old friends. One of the fixtures in his itinerary when in Mumbai is to visit his Cuffe Parade neighbourhood and take a photo outside his old home, where he lived for 18 years. During these visits, he is often accompanied by his old friend and neighbour, Yusuf Hamied, chairman of Cipla, with whom he used to play cricket at the Oval Maidan.

This time around, however, he was accompanied by his classmate Khushroo N. Suntook, chairman, National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA). This trip to his childhood home ended up being “one of the depressing afternoons” of his life as the driver, who was following GPS went “round and round” before they could finally locate the building.

“The house looks dilapidated. The people, who live there, are not proud of the ownership of that wonderful house. The fishing village which was nearby is gone,” he said.

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