



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Individual liberty under threat as brain is out, brawn is in: Gopalkrishna Gandhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Bengaluru:** Subtle humour, incisive comment and insightful observations marked former diplomat Gopalkrishna Gandhi's address during the first U R Ananthamurthy Memorial Lecture on Thursday.

Gandhi described the legendary Kannada writer and critic who died in 2014 as a fond householder, a passionate institution-builder, and a fully involved

### URA MEMORIAL LECTURE

member of society known for his originality. "The fact is that today, individuality is out, uniformity is in. Non-conformity is out, conformity is in. Argument is out, demagoguery is in. And overarching these, tolerance is out, intolerance is in. If this was to be shown in physical terms, then we could say brain is out, brawn is in; mind is out, muscle is in," he said.



Syed Asif

**ALL EARS:** Writer Girish Karnad and historian Ramachandra Guha listen to Gopalkrishna Gandhi (inset) at the first U R Ananthamurthy Memorial Lecture

The grandson of Mahatma Gandhi delivered a 30-minute talk on 'Individual Liberty - A Fragile Strength' to a packed audience that included writer and director Girish Karnad, filmmaker Girish Kasaravalli, author Vivek Shanbhag and Anan-

thamurthy's wife Esther Ananthamurthy. The lecture series was organized by Rujuvathu Trust and Jain University.

Touching upon the need to set up Lok Pal, the former governor said, "Everyday lost in the installing of Lok Pal is a day gai-

ned by authoritarianism, by arbitrariness, in short, by what may be called democratic autocracy." Gandhi talked about the need for the voice of dissent and said independent MPs and independent-minded MPs are "a rarity" now.

"There was a time when independent MPs were a factor. Independent MPs are most unfairly seen as an 'ayyo, pavam' (ineffectual) now," he said. Gandhi gave examples of how independent MPs like Acharya Kripalani, who tabled the first no-confidence motion against the government, made a difference in Parliament in the past.

Individual liberty and personal freedom as the sites of free thought and expression are in distress, he said. "There is fear of ostracism, of harassment, of hassle, of violence, of the faceless, nameless nobody with a gun," he said, hinting at the recent murders of vocal free-thinkers and rationalists.