

UrbanUpdate

Volume VI, Issue V

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INDIA CONTINUES TO FACE COVID CONUNDRUM

A Government panel has said the number of cases will cross 10 million by February 2021. India saw unprecedented rise in the number of cases in the months of August and September. This number has started to come down but not drastically. Is there a danger that India will leave US behind and become the country with highest number of cases? It is a distinct possibility



Leaderspeak
Pandemic shifts focus on
digital transformation

COVID-19



European Union



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ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

No. 6, F-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, TPS Road-12, Bandra-East, Mumbai-400051, Maharashtra
Tel.No.: +91-22-26571713, 26571714, 61805600, Fax: +91-22-26572115, Email: contact@aiilsg.org



Quality is just one of our strengths

AIILSG has begun skill development programmes in Rajasthan and Jharkhand. The institute with its 90 years of experience in the field of capacity building would impart training to youth living in rural areas of these two states to make them employable in various emerging sectors-

Apparel, Beauty & Wellness, Electronics, Healthcare, IT-ITEs, and Renewable Energy.

As per Mou signed, AIILSG will train 16,000 youngsters.

AIILSG IS COMMITTED TO BUILD EMPOWERED INDIA WITH SKILLED HUMAN WORKFORCE

For Details, email at delhi@aiilsg.org

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Ranjit Chavan
President-AIILSG

Rajiv Agarwal
Editor-In-Chief
Director General-AIILSG

Ashok Wankhade
Managing Editor

Abhishek Pandey
Editor

Ravi Ranjan Guru
Executive Editor

Kumar Dhananjay
Consulting Editor

Ashley Paul
Reporter

Hitesh Nigam
Editorial Assistant

**Meenakshi Rajput
Rajesh Singh**
Senior Graphic Designers

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Address

Urban Update (All India Institute of Local Self-Government)
Sardar Patel Bhavan, 22-23, Institutional Area, D Block
Pankha Road, Janakpuri, Delhi-110058

FOR SUBSCRIPTION AND ADVERTISING RELATED ASSISTANCE, CONTACT

Phone: 011 - 2852 1783/ 5473 (Extn. 37)

E-mail: contacturbanupdate@gmail.com



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COVID-19 & UNEMPLOYMENT



Rajiv Agarwal
Editor-In-Chief
dg@aailsg.org

C OVID-19 and Unemployment – Cause and Effect’ was the subject of a recent webinar organised by AILSG and Urban Update in association with UCLG-ASPAC. There has been a series of these webinars during the last several months which have seen participation from knowledgeable panellists and viewers. The subject of this latest webinar was indeed very relevant and timely given the challenges being faced by the economy with respect to food security, livelihoods, and economic growth. Panellists argued for intervention by the governments by way of various measures including an urban version of NREGA which could put money in the hands of the common man and revive demand and thereby tax revenues too. There is no doubt that livelihoods have been impacted adversely especially given the fact that an overwhelmingly large size of India’s economy comprises the informal sector – over 90 per cent by some estimates. With their incomes drying up and with no social security net, the situation turned grave for a large part of the population. Since the informal sector is likely to dominate the landscape in the foreseeable future, there is need for some ‘safety net’ for its people. A recent press report states that the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is considering a recommendation by its working committee to set up a pandemic risk pool to address the pains caused to the informal and low income sectors in case of another similar crisis in the future, This could cover some 4 crore persons.

In addition to the short term disruptive impact of events such as COVID-19, one also needs to factor in long term impacts upon jobs and livelihoods that could be unleashed by forces of technology and other dynamics. The use of technology can be disruptive, and even damaging in some cases – for example the digital imaging and digital music revolutions. However one general principle finds many agreeing upon – that technology, automation and robotics may replace many routine, unskilled jobs; while at the same time creating new opportunities of jobs with different, higher skills. Given that one has very little control over the march of technology, there is need to undertake large scale skilling and re-skilling of our youth.

This is what the government has been emphasizing and we at AILSG have been working in this area by setting up skill development centres in various locations. Given the COVID-19 pandemic and its spread across state and national borders, and also that the infection could be around for some time, we see an important role for our Sanitary Inspector’s course and other courses in public health. Our courses in fire-fighting and disaster management among others are growing more relevant and are sought after.

While the economy could soon be on its feet with various macroeconomic level interventions, there is need to build in ‘safety nets’ for vulnerable populations. At the same time, skilling and re-skilling must remain on the radar constantly. These are necessary to ensure gainful livelihood for the millions of our youth. ■



“One of the main reasons why we are seeing such a rise in the number of fresh cases is because we are testing aggressively. We have been conducting tests in many places. The scale of testing per day has been quadrupled than what was in June”

Satyendar Jain
Health Minister, Government of Delhi



Human activity is causing long-lasting and, in some cases, irreversible damage to our oceans. It is crucial that we invest in ocean-related sectors in a way that fosters environmental and economic sustainability, specially during COVID-19

Angel Gurría
Secretary-General, OECD



PIN POINT



“A city is not equally polluted in all areas. We believe the most effective way to reduce air pollution in cities is to identify the hotspots... We feel that to identify a hotspot and then disburse funds for solutions in these identified areas would be most effective.”

Dr Prashant Gargava
Member Secretary, Central Pollution Control Board



“In our collective pursuit of a vaccine, UNICEF is leveraging its unique strengths in vaccine supply to make sure that all countries have safe, fast and equitable access to the initial doses when they are available.”

Henrietta H Fore
Executive Director, UNICEF



BUZZ



Antonio Guterres
Secretary General, UN
@antonioguterres

When countries go in different directions, #COVID19 goes in every direction. As we work together to manage our way out of this crisis, it's vital to move ahead in a coordinated way, advancing an inclusive health, social & economic response to the pandemic



Amitabh Kant
CEO, Niti Aayog, GOI
@amitabhk87

From 81st rank in 2015 to 48th rank in 2020 India makes a huge jump to be in the league of innovative nations. WIPO terms India as a leading innovation achiever in the central & southern Asian region, as it has shown consistent improvement in the innovation ranking for last 5 years



Mami Mizutori
Head, UNDRR
@HeadUNDRR

The catastrophic disaster in Beirut underscores the importance of disaster governance, which includes understanding the risk we face and then making and funding plans to tackle it



Melinda Gates
Co-chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
@melindagates

If policymakers use the emergency of #COVID19 as an opportunity to replace old systems with new and better ones, countries can build back more prosperous, more prepared, and more equal

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Coronavirus has taught us a lot of new things. In addition to teaching us the significance of community hygiene, masks and social distancing, the virus has changed the way we go about our daily lives, especially professional lives. Online meetings, seminars, conferences, workshops and even political rallies have become a routine affair. And, even the in-house official meetings are being conducted online to maintain social distancing. The question is: how this digital transformation in our lives is going to impact the cities we live in



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AIILSG & EU LAUNCH THE PROJECT 'GIRL POWER'

All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG) and the European Union today launched the Girl Power project to further support capacity building of civil society organisations working in the area of women empowerment in Jharkhand. The project funded by the European Union, aims to support and empower 5000 marginalized women through skill building trainings and entrepreneurial support including providing networking and market

access opportunities.

Badal Patralekh, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and cooperative, Jharkhand launched the project and addressed the gathering in the presence of Chami Murmu, prominent social worker and secretary of the organisation Sahyogi Mahila, Rajkumar, State Head of Udyogini and Shilpa Mittal Singh, Joint Managing Director of Women on Wings. Social worker Murmu received the Nari Shatki Puraskar award from the President of India Ram Nath Kovind for her work in Jharkhand on women's empowerment. The event was also

graced by Mr. Shouvik Datta, Senior Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Union (EU) to India who thanked the Government of Jharkhand for their support to the Girl Power project, and shared experiences of the EU in promoting women's entrepreneurship.

Rajiv Agarwal, Director General and Ravi Guru, Deputy Director General, AIILSG welcomed the participants to the launch event. Representatives of project partner organisations, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Industrialization (MGIRI), Magan Sanghralaya Samiti (MSS) and Saunta Gaunta Foundation (SGF) spoke on occasion. A host of dignitaries from the European Union, AIILSG, Jharkhand government and civil society organisations attended the event.

About 50% of the working population in Jharkhand are women in the age group of 15-49 years. However, due to low level of literacy and gender inequality, many of the women face discrimination at workplace and inequalities of pay. The Girl Power project will support over 100 civil society organisations (CSOs) directly and indirectly, working on women rights in 10 districts of Jharkhand. These CSOs in turn will support social and economic empowerment of 5000 women.

The initiative also aims to enable

Inaugural girlpower
Capacitating CSOs & Empowering Women

BlueJeans

15 September, 2020
Tuesday

11:00 AM
(Indian Standard Time)

To attend the inauguration please download the Blue Jeans app and enter <https://bluejeans.com/9366840383> link or Scan QR code in your phone Or laptop. For any technical query for attending the webinar, please write to us at girlpower@aiilsg.org

“THE PROJECT SHOULD CONSIDER EXPANDING TO ALL 24 DISTRICTS, BUILD BOTH FORWARD AND MARKET LINKAGES AND ENSURE THAT MAXIMUM SHARE OF BENEFITS REACH WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE STATE”

Badal Patralekh
Minister of the Agriculture
Animal Husbandry
and Cooperative
Government of Jharkhand

“WE ARE FACING A PROBLEM OF DOUBLE BURDEN OF PAID AND UNPAID LABOUR FOR WOMEN DURING THE CURRENT PANDEMIC. WE ARE TRYING TO BRIDGE THE GAP. I SINCERELY HOPE THAT THE PROJECT WILL BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGES IN THE LIVES OF WOMEN”

Rajiv Agrawal, IAS (Retd.), Director General, AILSG

“THERE CAN BE NO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS. WE ARE DELIGHTED TO SUPPORT THE GIRLS POWER PROJECT, WHICH WILL HELP TO ENHANCE THE TECHNICAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF WOMEN LIVING IN RURAL AREAS IN JHARKHAND, THUS POSITIVELY IMPACTING THEIR LIVELIHOOD.”

HE Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union to India

and empower 5000 women to become entrepreneurs and establish their business in the social sector. In addition, the CSOs will assist these entrepreneurs to develop innovative products and connect them to market places providing ready access for their goods and services. The Jharkhand Mahila Social Entrepreneurship Market Connect mechanism to

be established under this project, which will be a single window for women and CSOs to connect with prospective buyers in the market place. This initiative is expected to directly or indirectly benefit over 200,000 women and girls.

The project will engage with state government officials and elected representatives working on women and skill development on policy dialogues and for developing a Gender Network for Social Entrepreneurship.

The implementation of the project in the 10-targeted districts will provide an opportunity for women and girls to have closer engagement with development professionals, researchers and women entrepreneurs for supporting them in their needs and priorities as well as in the development of the state through economic empowerment of women and girls from various marginalized groups. It will also involve partners from within and outside Jharkhand who would share and exchange knowledge on relevant innovative

models and best practices with the participating CSOs. By the end of the project, it is expected that more and more CSOs will be able to support social entrepreneurship of women, especially in rural areas enabling them to make a consequential impact in the local economy.

The Girl Power Project will further enhance the broader development agenda for women’s empowerment of ongoing related skill based training to women activities and initiatives of the Government of India (such as Atma Nirbhar Bharat, NSDC, NULP, NRLP, Vocal for Local and others) and the State Government of Jharkhand. The project will in turn contribute towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as Gender Equality (SDG 5), No Poverty (SDG 1), Decent Work & Economic Growth (SDG 8), Strong Institutions (SDG 16) and Partnerships (SDG 17).

Funded by the European Union, the project will be implemented over a period of 4 years from 2020 to 2024.■



MoRTH working in full capacity to better India's highways

NEW DELHI: Since the time Nitin Gadkari took charge of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in 2014, the Indian highways have seen a wave of development. Not only has the ministry managed to outperform all other ministries in terms of achieving targets, but has also managed to overcome massive financial losses which hit MoRTH in 2019.

MoRTH said in a statement that it surpassed the construction target of 2,771 kilometres (km) and has constructed 3,181 km of national highways (NH) in April-August 2020. This includes 2,104 km of highways designed by state Public Works Department (PWDs), 879 km by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), and 198 km by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).

In addition, 3,300 km of NH work in this year have been awarded till August, which is more than twice of the 1,367km during the same time last year, the ministry said. It added that this involves 2,167 km of NH awarded

by PWDs, 793 km by NHAI, and 341 km by NHIDCL. During the April-August period, sanctions were issued for construction of 2,983 km of NH across the country, which includes 1,265 km by PWDs, 1,183 km by NHAI, and 535 km by NHIDCL. NHAI, earlier this week, had said that despite challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it had awarded projects worth ₹31,000 crore in the first five months of the current fiscal year.

Gadkari inaugurates 45 highway project in MP

Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, on Tuesday, August 25, inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 45 highway projects in Madhya Pradesh through video conferencing. According to a release by MoRTH, the road length of these projects is 1,361 kilometers and their construction costs a total of ₹11,427 crore. These projects will improve connectivity, convenience and economic growth in and around the state and movement of people and goods to and from neighboring

states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, etc. will be eased. The better roads will save both time and fuel and also lower emission of pollutants. These projects will further decongest roads and enroute towns that will contribute to improving road experience.

On the occasion, Gadkari said that in the year 2014, the total length of national highways was barely 5,186 km, but today it is 13,248 km. He added that development works worth ₹1,25,000 crore are underway in Madhya Pradesh. As much as 60 to 70 per cent of the total work has been completed on approximately Rs 30,000 crore worth road works in the State. Several of these roads are important for providing connectivity to the tourist spots and backward areas of the State, he said.

NH length in Maharashtra tripled, claims Gadkari

In a press communique issued by Gadkari's office, he claimed that the length of NH in the state of Maharashtra has more than tripled in the last six years. The NH length increased from a meagre 5,700 km to 17,749 km by the end of August 2020, marking an increase of 211 per cent. The communique added that all the districts in the state are now connected with NH.

So far, NHAI and the state PWD have completed 9,281 km of roads in the state while work on 5,260 km of roads is under progress. The Government of India has spent ₹70,388 crore on national highways in the state so far. Gadkari also sanctioned ₹7,420 through Central Road Fund (CRF) on various projects. Some 166 works worth ₹3,820 crore have been completed. The Government of India provided ₹674 crore to Maharashtra under CRF in 2020-21.



California records 6 of 20 largest forest fires in state's history

SACRAMENTO: The state of California in the United States of America has witnessed record breaking forest fires since the past couple of years. Every year, billions of dollars are lost and thousands, if not millions, of people are affected, causing loss of both property and life. This year, the California wildfires have been the biggest fires in the history of the state, worsening air quality, causing formation of massive smoke clouds and forcing 64,000 people to evacuate. The fires are also adding problems to the already widespread COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the past few years, wild fires have become more and more common and severe in the state of California. In 2018, 10 large fires wreaked havoc across the state, destroying more than 500 acres of land each. Most infamous was the Camp Fire, which left 86 people dead in Paradise and caused more

than \$16.5 billion in losses, according to the German insurance company Munich RE.

Due to the forest fires, this August was the warmest for California and five other neighbouring American states. The intensity of these forest fires can be understood by the fact that six of the 20 largest wildfires in the history of America are currently burning in the state of California. These fires are the August Complex (the largest blaze in state history as of Thursday), the SCU Lightning Complex, the LNU Lightning Complex, the North Complex, and the Bear Complex. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire), these are megafires that gained size and strength when smaller fires combined into unified blazes.

However, according to scientists, this is not an isolated event or caused due

to unexplainable circumstances. The high rate of global warming causes arid, hot winds to blow over the entire state, drying up the trees in the large forests and making them highly susceptible to forest fires. The situation is even more serious in the case of California as the highly volatile weather is likely to bring more droughts as compared to other states and the highly concretised cities with a massive population only adds to the problem.

A paper published in 2019 in the journal *Earth's Future* revealed that California's land area burnt due to forest fires every year has increased more than fivefold since 1972. The authors of the paper attribute this in part to a warming climate.

Climate models show that as temperatures continue to rise, the atmosphere and land in some regions, like California's forests, will grow more arid. There will be more frequent and intense droughts, followed by intense periods of rain — a form of weather whiplash. This prompts the growth of thick underbrush, which then dries out in the subsequent droughts and becomes highly flammable kindling.

A comparatively newer phenomenon that scientists are witnessing is that the wildfires grow dramatically overnight because temperatures are no more dropping at night like they used to. According to Matthew Hurteau, Associate Professor, Department of Biology, University of New Mexico, one of the main reasons for this is directly linked to human induced climate change.

Until a few years ago, as night fell and the Sun's heat subsided, temperatures dropped and the fires considerably reduced, if not extinguished completely. This was usually when a lot of progress was made by the firefighters in completely extinguishing a forest fire as the height of the flames were shorter.

Thus, in addition to bringing peculiar phenomena to light, the California forest fires are a both a life-threatening force caused in part due to climate change, and responsible for huge financial and property losses annually.



Uttarakhand govt to set up six waste to energy plants



The Government of Uttarakhand has now started working on electricity generation from solid waste in order to improve solid waste management. Madan Kaushik, Minister for Urban Development, Government of Uttarakhand, has asked government officials to draw up a comprehensive plan for the establishment of six power plants in the state that produce electricity from solid waste. The plants will be built in Roorkee, Rudrapur, Kashipur, Haldwani, Rishikesh and Kotdwar. As per the pollution control board records, it is possible to produce approximately 300 megawatts of electricity using waste generated in the state.

43% of schools worldwide lack access to water, soap: UN

The United Nations (UN) estimates that 43 per cent schools worldwide do not have access to water for basic hand-washing. According to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), more than one-third of the 818 million children worldwide who had no hand-washing facilities at their schools last year are in sub-Saharan Africa. The report states that while making the decision on opening of schools, the authorities should balance health issues along with economic and social ones and it also notes the detrimental effects of long closures of schools on children.

Delhi government launches new EV policy

NEW DELHI: The Government of Delhi has issued the Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy 2020, to boost the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in the national capital. The Policy has been introduced as the scheme launched by the central government was not successful in achieving its goals. The policy is valid for three years and aims to speed up the pace of EV adoption, primarily in the category of two-wheelers, public and shared transport vehicles and goods carriers. It plans to boost the adoption of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) so that they make up 25 per cent of all new vehicle registrations by the year 2024.

Financial incentives, tax and fee waivers, charging and swapping infrastructure establishment, job creation, battery cycling ecosystem and the creation of a non-lapsable 'State EV Fund' are all part of the new EV Policy of the Delhi government. Further, under the scheme, ₹30,000 would be given as purchase incentives to those buying electric two-wheelers, e-rickshaws, and goods carriers while incentives ranging between ₹10,000 and ₹1,50,000 would be given to people buying electric cars. The vehicles must



adhere to the same performance and efficiency eligibility criteria as specified in the central government's Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II) policy. The policy of the Delhi government also seeks to encourage setting up private charging points at residential and non-residential premises. The state government said it would provide a grant of 100 per cent for the purchase of charging equipment up to ₹6,000 per charging point for the first 30,000 charging points. An open permit will be applicable for e-autos wherein permits will be given on the first-come-first-serve basis. The policy seeks pure electric buses to constitute at least 50 per cent of all new stage carriage buses procured for the city fleet.

DUSIB to provide free education for children residing in its night shelters

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) is planning to provide free education to the children of homeless staying in its shelters. The children will also be enrolled in schools later. DUSIB has 215 shelter homes across Delhi, wherein, 5,000 homeless people reside. Nearly 1,000 children aged up to eight years stay with their parents in these 32 night shelters. Since such families are usually not bothered if their children receive formal education or not, the children can be seen playing around the shelters throughout the day. Without education, these children may end living a life similar to their parents. An official of the DUSIB said that the parents will be counselled to enroll their children to study and also monitor their daily routine. This is especially important for families living in night shelters because in most families, both the parents do odd jobs and spend their day out, leaving their children without supervision or guidance. "To give them a better life, we are planning to engage volunteer teachers who are ready to teach these children at the night shelters. In due course, they will also be enrolled into schools," said DUSIB member Bipin Rai. An official said the parents will be counselled to encourage their kids to study and also to monitor their daily routine. In most of the families living in these night shelters, both the adults do odd jobs and spend their day out leaving their children without any guidance. "The classes may be started in a couple of these shelters this month itself."

Delhi government sets target of meeting water demand-supply gap in 3 years

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Government has set a new target for itself of meeting the demand-supply gap of water in the city in the next three years. According to officials, various water augmentation projects are being expedited keeping this aim in mind. The city needs an average of 1,150 million gallons of water per day (MGD) of which, the Delhi Jal Board is only able to supply 900 MGD on an average. Thus, 22 per cent of the total demand for water in the city is not being met.

“There are several projects on which work is going on. These are expected to meet the water demand-supply deficit in the next three years,” a DJB official said. He added that the city has a total of 15 ranney wells which are capable of providing 20 MGD. However, due to the high concentration of ammonia in the water of these wells, they were rendered inoperable. Now that the Delhi Government has procured the technology to treat this water, these wells will soon become operational. The technology was pilot tested at a non-functional ranney well in east Delhi and implemented at four more such facilities. The DJB will now take up the task of operationalizing the remaining 11 ranney wells using the same technology. Apart from this, the DJB will also start work on rejuvenation of lakes across the city, which can supply upto 30 MGD water.

In addition to this, Satyendra Jain, during the meeting, instructed officials to expedite the work of connecting households to the city’s sewer network. “As soon as the sewer line is laid, the DJB will provide household connections in these areas,” the official said.

NGT directs installation of 175 AQ monitoring system across India

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed installation of 175 air quality monitoring stations across the country within the next six months. NGT directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to monitor the work by holding periodical online meetings with the Chairman/Member Secretaries of state pollution control boards (PCBs) and other relevant authorities. The order by the NGT added that the funds available under the ‘consent mechanism’/environmental compensation’ be used for the purpose of construction of these monitoring centres and that the construction work must begin within one month.



A bench headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, Chairperson, NGT, said that it will be preferable if 25 of the total 175 air quality monitoring systems are set up by CPCB/State PCBs/Pollution Control Councils (PCCs) jointly (with CPCB financing out of its environmental compensation funds).

The Tribunal passed the orders after CPCB submitted a report that 173 stations have already been set up. NGT also directed that Carrying Capacity and Source Apportionment studies may be simultaneously undertaken by the state PCBs. “Work in this regard may commence within one month and completed in six months. State PCBs/PCCs will be at liberty to either undertake the study in-house or by hiring any other agencies,” the bench said. The tribunal also directs authorities to take steps prohibiting/shifting polluting activities which are found unsustainable to other locations, in interest of public health and protecting the environment.

PUC certificate mandatory to renew vehicle insurance: IRDAI

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) has notified the insurance providers in India with a new circular, asking them to obtain a valid pollution under control certificate(PUC) for the vehicle while renewing the policy. The regulatory body has said that the insurance company will not pay any damages if the vehicle’s PUC’s validity expired during the time of the accident, adding that the pollution license is essential for all claims. The Supreme Court of India had previously ordered insurance companies not to ensure unless they have received a valid PUC certificate on the date of insurance policy renewal.

Plasma therapy for COVID-19 treatment still experimental: WHO



The World Health Organization (WHO) said that the use of plasma from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 to treat patients with COVID-19 is still considered as “experimental” therapy and preliminary findings showing that it may work are still “inconclusive”. On Sunday, August 23, emergency authorization of convalescent plasma for COVID-19 patients was approved by Donald Trump, President, United States of America (USA). Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, WHO, said that multiple inflammatory diseases have been treated over the centuries using convalescent plasma therapy with varying levels of success.

India's longest ropeway inaugurated in Guwahati



The longest river ropeway in India, with a length of 1.82 km, connecting Guwahati and North Guwahati over the Brahmaputra River in Assam, was inaugurated on Monday, August 24. It is expected to increase tourism in the region. The ropeway will cross Urvashi Island and the travellers will catch a glimpse of the Umananda Temple on Peacock Island, established by Ahom King Gadadhar Singha. The Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA), which has been responsible for the execution of the project, said that the ropeway comprises two cabins with a capacity of 32 passengers each but as per COVID-19 protocol, will carry only 15 people for the time being.

Kerala tops childcare survey

A report compiled by a non-governmental organisation Mobile Creches, has placed Kerala, Mizoram, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Tripura as the states with best services to ensure well-being of children. The report was launched by M Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India. The Young Child Outcomes Index measures health, nutrition and cognitive growth with the help of indicators such as Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Stunting and Net Attendance at the primary school level. It identified eight states that have scores below the country's average namely Meghalaya, Assam, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Manufacturers can produce unprecedented amounts of COVID-19 vaccine: UNICEF

NEW YORK: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), on September 3, said that 28 drug manufacturers in 10 countries can produce unprecedented amounts of COVID-19 vaccine over the next two years to fight the ongoing pandemic. The United Nations agency announced that it would assist in procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines globally.

The role of UNICEF is part of the COVID-19 vaccine allocation plan, called COVAX, which is co-led by the World Health Organization (WHO), and is aimed at buying and providing equal access to COVID-19 shots. Till date, 76 countries have committed to join the COVAX initiative. UNICEF reported that 28 manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccines had shared their annual production plans through 2023. A market assessment by UNICEF indicated that manufacturers are willing to produce unprecedented amounts of vaccines collectively over the next 1-2 years. However, the drug makers have stated that the projections

are largely dependent upon other factors including the success of clinical trials, advance procurement agreements being put in place, confirmation of funding and streamlining of regulatory and registration processes.

The new role of UNICEF with COVAX originates from its identity as the largest single vaccine buyer in the world. The UN agency reported that it purchases more than 2 billion doses of vaccines on an annual basis for routine immunization and outbreak response on behalf of almost 100 countries. The studies related to COVID-19 are being done on a regular basis and the results show varied impacts of the virus.



Palaniswami announces multiple development projects in Nagapattinam

NAGAPATTINAM: Edappadi K Palaniswami, Chief Minister, Tamil Nadu, has announced that a mega food processing park will be set up at Nagapattinam at a cost of ₹1,000 crore. The announcement was made by Palaniswami while addressing a gathering at the Collectorate after reviewing measures taken to combat the coronavirus pandemic. He said that the state is making major investments in agriculture and healthcare despite the pandemic. "All agricultural activities are now going on without any disruption," he said. About 28 lakh tonnes of paddy has been procured from the farmers in Cauvery delta districts amid the pandemic, which is a historic achievement, he said, adding that it is five lakh tonnes more as compared to the last year. He pointed out that desilting work is meticulously being carried out in delta districts ensuring the free flow of Cauvery water to all tail-end areas. Palaniswami said that government hospitals in the state are providing better service than private hospitals. "Infrastructure facilities have been improved to a great extent. Poor people now get easy access to high-quality healthcare in the state," he said and added that a new medical college with a modern hospital is being constructed at Nagapattinam at a cost of ₹365 crore.

Talking about the mega food processing plant, Palaniswami said that it will also contribute largely in employment generation. In higher education enrolment too, Tamil Nadu has made significant improvements during the past 9 years. Claiming that the government had taken all steps to combat COVID-19 and control its spread, the chief minister pointed out that Tamil Nadu has the highest recovery rate in the country and is conducting more COVID tests per day than any other state.

GREEN PEE PROJECT TO SOLVE PUBLIC URINATION

THE CITY OF AMSTERDAM has come up with a creative solution to deter tourists from urinating on the streets. They have installed unique plant pots that act as urinals across the Red Light District and the other hotspots of

Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein. This latest move will not only stop tourists from urinating on the walls but also the urine collected would be utilized to make fertilizer.

In total, 12 Green Pees have been

installed so far. The urine is obtained for processing and phosphate harvesting from these planters on a regular basis and Richard de Vries, inventor of Green Pee, claimed that it was odorless.



Fair distribution of COVID-19 vaccine a big challenge: WHO Chief Scientist



Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization (WHO), said that being able to scale, distribute and fairly allocate COVID-19 vaccines worldwide, without letting the rich countries corner the limited doses, would be a big challenge. She said that we ought to have some positive news by early 2021 on the development of vaccines for the novel coronavirus. She commented on the situation while addressing the valedictory session of the 16th International Conference on Public Policy and Governance, organized in virtual mode by the Center for Public Policy at the Indian Institute of Management – Bangalore.

Mental health of millions impacted due to COVID-19 pandemic: WHO

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), during a virtual press briefing, said that the mental health of millions of people has been impacted due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, adding that due to the lack of social interaction, the mental health of many has been profoundly affected. The risk of infection is increased for the people living in long-term facilities such as care homes and psychiatric institutions, he said. Tedros noted that the mental health professionals have themselves been infected with the virus, and some mental health facilities have been turned into COVID care centres.

Indian railways aim to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2030: Piyush Goyal

NEW DELHI: Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways, Government of India, said that the Indian Railways aims to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2030. It carries nearly 8 billion passengers and 1.2 billion tons of freight every year and it will be the world's first railways of this scale to go green. As per government data, the Indian rail network is the fourth largest in the world after the US, Russia, and China. It covers 67,368 kilometres of tracks and has 7,300 stations.

In the report, NITI Aayog, the Indian government's think tank, said that Indian Railways' carbon emissions amounted to 6.84 million tons in 2014. Till date, 100 MW of solar plants have been commissioned on roof-tops of various buildings, including 900 stations. Solar plants with a combined capacity of 400 MW are under different stages of execution. Tenders are already awarded for 245 MW and the target for completion is December 2022, the official added.

Goyal said that by December 2023, Indian Railways will have 100 per cent



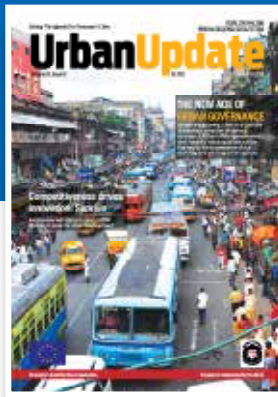
electrified train network, the first railway of this scale in the world which will be diesel-free. He further said that the centre aims to make use of the land along the tracks to produce 20 gigawatts of clean energy and the solar power equipment to be used for this objective will be 'Made in India'.

The centre would shut down old coal plants, Goyal said last year while announcing the railway electrification goal. In this regard, the experts have stated that when there will be 100 per cent electrification of the railway network, the average speed of trains will also increase by 10-15 per cent.

Delhi aims to increase green cover to 25% by 2023

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Government has set an ambitious goal to increase the green cover of the city from 22 per cent to 25 per cent over the next three years. According to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) published in 2019, Delhi's green cover, including forest and tree cover, is currently 324 square kilometers (sq km) or 21.9 per cent of the total area. In 2017, it stood at 305.4 sq km, or 20.6 per cent.

The objective of the National Forest Policy is to ensure that at least one third of India's total geographical area is under green cover. Green cover is expected to be at least 66 per cent of the total area in hilly areas and 20 per cent in the plains. If there is availability of land, this objective can be achieved in the next three years, said Ishwer Singh, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PRCF), Delhi. A request for the creation of "forest land bank" has already been made by the Forest Department to the Delhi Development Authority and the development commissioner, which can be utilized in the future for compensatory plantation by various departments and agencies. The establishment of a land bank would simplify compensatory planting processes and prevent projects delays, Singh said. Every time a project comes up, there will be no need to identify a new piece of land for compensatory afforestation," he said, adding most of the land needed is available on Yamuna floodplains. The PPCF said that no development activity can be undertaken on the floodplains as it is the most suitable area for afforestation activities. However, environmentalists opposed the use of Yamuna floodplains for afforestation purposes, arguing that any compensatory afforestation could lead to an "avoidable alteration in the natural functions of the floodplains."



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1,000 physical education teachers to get 'physical literacy' training online



In order to increase 'physical literacy' amongst physical education teachers in Delhi government schools, the Government of Delhi has mandated that 1,000 teachers will undergo a five-day online training programme on "Physical Literacy". The online training programme which is being conducted in collaboration with noted badminton player Pullela Gopichand's sports foundation. While speaking at the inauguration, Sisodia said, "During these COVID-19 times, your role has become even more crucial because our students are confined to their rooms. This is hampering the physical growth of all the students."

Breakthrough development of HDC by CUSAT Startup

Bluemink Innovations, a Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) startup, has developed a fully automated Hydraulic Disinfectant Chamber (HDC) capable of disinfecting health workers in PPE kits in just 10 seconds. The device uses Benzalkonium Chloride solution as a reagent. Thanks to the device, sanitising doctors and healthcare workers working in COVID facilities will not be an issue anymore. The device is already installed in various major treatment clinics and Bluemink Innovations aims to make it available throughout Kerala.

Indian Railways installs solar power plants at more than 960 stations

NEW DELHI: Indian Railways, in order to achieve its target of being 100% self-sustainable for all its power needs, has solarized more than 960 stations. Orders for 198 MW of solar rooftop capacity for 550 stations which are under execution have been placed. This will contribute to national solar power needs. Some of the solarized stations are Varanasi, New Delhi, Old Delhi, Jaipur, Secunderabad, Kolkata, Guwahati, Hyderabad, and Howrah.

By 2030, the Railways plans to produce 33 billion units, 10 billion more than its current requirement. It also plans to build 20 GW of solar power plants using vacant land by 2030. Indian Railways has been an active contributor in the pollution quota of the country, but with increasing efforts, the number has been improving. A Railway Ministry spokesperson said that the Indian Railways was expected to achieve 100 per cent electrification by 2023 and is committed to using solar energy to fulfil its



traction power requirement and becoming a completely green mode of transport. The official added that this was in line with the recent directive of Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, on the solarisation of railway stations and the use of vacant railway land for renewable energy (RE) projects. Tenders for three solar projects on vacant railways land parcels had been invited by the national transporter and for land parcels along railway tracks bids have already been invited by the Railway Energy Management Company Limited (REMCL), a public sector undertaking of the Indian Railways.

Single vaccine sufficient to treat all strains of SARS-CoV-2: Study

WASHINGTON: Scientists in the United States of America (USA) have assessed the genome sequences of the novel coronavirus from more than 27,000 COVID-19 positive individuals. The findings of the assessment revealed that the virus has mutated minimally since the beginning of the outbreak in China in December 2019, suggesting that the successful development of just one vaccine would be sufficient to combat the pandemic. The study has been published in the journal PNAS and has characterised the diversification of the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 since the beginning of the pandemic by aligning 18,514 independent virus genome sequences sampled from individuals in 84 countries, and scanned them for variations. According to the scientists, including those from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) in the USA, the analyses reveal low estimates of genetic differentiation of the virus following the initial outbreak in Wuhan, China. They added that the SARS-CoV-2 genome has evolved through a mostly random process rather than through adaptation to the human hosts it encounters. Earlier studies had pointed to the domination of a mutant form of the virus in several parts of the world in which a molecule aspartic acid — denoted as D — in the viral spike protein, which it uses to enter host cells, is replaced by another molecule glycine (G). However, the scientists behind the current study said this 'D614G' mutation cannot be seen as evidence of the virus adapting to humans. Scientists said that linking genotypes of different strains to specific traits is a complicated process and requires further detailed studies. Keeping in mind the low level of genetic mutation of the novel coronavirus, a single vaccine would be sufficient to treat people with different strains of the virus.

CSIR-CMERI installs world's largest solar tree in West Bengal

NEW DELHI: The world's largest solar tree has been developed and installed in West Bengal's Durgapur by the Central Mechanical Research Institute (CMERI), under the Centre for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR). Installed at CSIR-CMERI Residential Colony, Durgapur, the solar trees can produce a peak power of over 11.5 kilo watt peak (KWp). Professor Harish Hirani, Director, CSIR-CMERI, while explaining about the technology, said that the power of the installed solar tree is above 11.5 KWp and has the capacity to produce 12,000-14,000 units of Clean and Green Power annually. The design of the Solar tree is such that each solar photovoltaic (PV) panel receives optimal exposure to sunlight and also least amount of shadow area is created beneath. Each tree contains a total of 35 solar PV panels with a capacity of 330 watt peak (Wp) each. Energy generation data can be tracked either in real time or on a regular basis.

The solar tree, in addition to being the world's largest, also has a number of customized features for use in different locations. The solar trees have been built to guarantee a minimum shadow area, thus potentially making these solar trees available for expanded use in agriculture, such as high-capacity pumps, e-Tractors, and e-Power Tillers, said Professor Hirani.

The cost for each solar tree would be ₹7.5 lakh and they will have the capacity to incorporate Internet of Things (IOT)-based features, such as round-the-clock CCTV monitoring in agricultural fields, real-time humidity, wind speed, prediction of rainfall and sensors for soil analysis. In comparison to energy generated through fossil fuels, the solar trees have the ability to save 10-12 tons of carbon dioxide emissions released as greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In addition, the extra power produced can be added into the energy grid.

UN Chief urges for global efforts to address air pollution

NEW DELHI: Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations (UN), emphasized the need for strong global efforts to tackle the problem of air pollution. He also proposed that the production of energy from fossil fuels subsidized by the governments should be shifted to clean energy generation.



In a video message on the first International Day of Clean Air for blue skies, Guterres said that globally, nine out of every ten people breathe unclean air. Air pollution leads to a number of diseases and causes an estimated 7 million premature deaths annually, mostly in low- and middle-income countries. He added that the world should give even greater attention to air pollution as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining that air pollution often threatens the economy, food security, and the environment. Urging for immediate measures to address the deeper threat of climate change, Guterres said that if global warming is limited to 1.5 degrees from pre-industrial levels, it would help to minimize air pollution, mortality, and disease. The lockdowns due to COVID-19 this year have significantly lowered pollution, offering a glimpse of cleaner air in many cities. He warned that emissions are increasing again, exceeding pre-COVID levels in some areas. To reduce the emissions from air pollutants, improved environmental standards, policies and law are required more than ever, Guterres said.

Guterres stated that the countries need to end fossil-fuel subsidies and work globally to support transition to clean technology. To support the transition to healthy and sustainable jobs, he urged all countries to use post-COVID recovery packages.

With launch of GTAM in electricity, Indian power market goes green

Raj Kumar Singh, Minister of State-Independent Charge for Power and New & Renewable Energy, on September 1, launched the pan-India Green Term Ahead Market (GTAM) as a step towards making Indian power market green. Singh said the burden on Renewable Energy (RE)-rich states would be reduced with the launch of GTAM platform. States will also be encouraged to develop RE capacity beyond their Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO). This would support the RE merchant capacity addition and help achieve the country's RE capacity addition goals, he said while speaking at the platform's launch.

'Steroids can positively affect serious COVID patients'



International clinical trials confirmed on Wednesday, September 2, that cheap and widely available steroid drugs can help seriously ill patients suffering from COVID-19. The study includes an analysis which pooled data from seven random clinical trials evaluating three steroids in more than 1700 patients. It showed that each of this drug reduced the mortality rate in patients. The World Health Organisation (WHO) issued treatment guidance, strongly recommending that such steroids be used only for severely ill patients and not for those COVID positive patients with mild symptoms as such patients are unlikely to benefit and may suffer side effects.

Bengaluru artist spreads COVID awareness using murals

Baadal Nanjunda swamy, a Bengaluru based artist, drew paintings on the walls of the city to spread awareness about COVID-19 and preventive measures against it. Through the murals, he depicted the importance of wearing masks, practicing social distancing and using hand sanitizers. He said that he saw people not following the rules and regulations for the prevention of COVID-19 and hence, he used visual representation to convey the message. He added that it was his contribution to the society as it was extremely difficult to paint outdoors with lockdown restrictions in place.

After rising cases of COVID reinfection, Karnataka commissions clinical study



Karnataka has commissioned for the clinical study regarding COVID-19 reinfection, after a 27 year-old COVID-19 survivor was tested positive again. A day before, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) reported four new cases of coronavirus reinfection, including a 60 year-old housewife and three doctors. Dr Keshavareddy Sudhakar, Minister of Medical Education, Karnataka, expressed his concerns over reinfection cases in his meeting with senior officials. He has asked the officials for a report on COVID-19 reinfection which is to be submitted within a week.

India ranks in top 50 in the Global Innovation Index for the first time

NEW DELHI: The recently released Global Innovation Index (GII) has brought India to the list of top 50 countries for the first time. Moving up four places to the 48th rank, India remained at the top position amongst central and south Asian nations. The GII list was released jointly by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), Cornell University and INSEAD Business School on Wednesday, September 2. According to the list, while the top positions have remained stable, the overall rankings show a gradual 'eastward shift in the locus of innovation' as Asian economies like China, India, the Philippines and Vietnam have moved up considerably over the years.

WIPO said in a statement that Switzerland, Sweden, United States of America, United Kingdom and the Netherlands lead the innovation ranking and the top 10 positions are dominated by high-income countries. Regarding

India, the statement said that it has become the third most innovative lower middle-income economy in the world, thanks to the newly available indicators and improvements in various areas of the GII. India ranks in the top 15 in indicators such as ICT (Information and Communication Technology) services exports, government online services, graduates in science and engineering, and R&D-intensive global companies.

"Thanks to universities such as the Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay and Delhi and the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru, and its top scientific publications, India is the lower middle-income economy with the highest innovation quality," the statement said. The GII analysed a total of 131 countries before releasing the rankings. The metrics include institutions, human capital and research, infrastructure, market and business sophistication, knowledge and technology and creative outputs.

Fires raging across Arctic emitted large amounts of CO₂

NEW DELHI: For the second year in a row, the Arctic has witnessed the worst fire season ever, with massive wildfires pouring more than one-third more carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere than last year. According to Europe's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS), fires raging across the Arctic Circle have released 244 million tons of CO₂ for the first six months of the year, compared to 181 million tons for the whole of 2019.

Mark Parrington, senior scientist, CAMS, said that it is known for a long time that at northern latitudes, the rate of change of climate and temperature has been two to three times faster than the global average. He added that the current situation is a symptom of that rapid rate of change. As per the latest data by the Global Carbon Project, in just six months, emissions from Arctic fires, some of which are still burning, were so high that the region emitted the equivalent of what countries like Spain, Malaysia, Egypt or Ukraine emitted in 2018 from burning fossil fuels.

According to CAMS, the majority of fires were in the Sakha, Republic of Russia, while in Northern Canada and Alaska, fires were reduced in comparison to last year. Clouds of smoke from Siberian fires spread across thousands of kilometers, affecting the equivalent of more than a third of Canada. Scientists suspect the



so-called "zombie fires," which emerged last year, may have been smoldering underground during winter months and resurrected when a heatwave struck the area during the spring. Parrington said that once these fires begin in that part of the world, they can continue for a long time and something similar happening next year won't be a sight of surprise for him.

Government of India steps up efforts to meet ‘Housing for All by 2022’ goal

NEW DELHI: As Government of India’s flagship scheme ‘Housing for All by 2022’ is inching closer to its finish line, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that the mass migration of labourers from cities to rural areas was caused by the absence of affordable rental housing complexes (ARHC). This forced the Indian government to shift gears and include affordable rental housing in the ambit of the scheme.

Getting the Cabinet’s nod recently, the ARHC, under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban or the PMAY (U), is clearly an attempt by the government to bridge the shortfall of affordable homes across India. The initiative of the government has received positive responses and aims to make affordable houses available to people living in urban areas. These houses will be close to their office spaces, offer a wide range of high-end civic amenities and still be affordable while reducing dependence on



slums, informal settlements and remote peri-urban areas.

All states will be asked to develop such products and encourage private partnerships. The move will not just regularise the rental housing market across the country but also add another asset class for developers to consider.

To begin with, the central government

plans to use about one lakh unused houses build by them as part of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) and the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) – the previous governments urban rejuvenation scheme – to provide rental housing. The monthly rentals for homes under ARHCs are likely to be fixed between ₹1,000 to ₹3,000. The government is also providing special incentives to attract private partnerships. Some of these incentives include use permission, 50 per cent additional floor area ratio (FAR) and floor space index (FSI), concessional loans at priority sector lending rates and tax reliefs at par with affordable housing to develop AHRCs on their own available vacant land for 25 years. However, low yields may be a major deterrent for private participation. While funding for such projects would be at concessional rates, many developers who have bought land at steep prices in the cities earlier on may find the proposition unattractive. The questions then remains – is the government planning on and willing to introduce more incentives for private stakeholders to encourage them to invest in the AHRCs?

Gujarat government set to announce ARHC scheme for students

In order to make it easier and cheaper for students to study in Gujarat, the state government has decided to announce an ARHC scheme designed specifically for students. Under the scheme, the government will engage in public-private partnerships (PPP) to refurbish and utilize vacant houses build under the Gujarat Housing Board and other schemes. The company which will be awarded the tender will be given vacant houses on a fixed rental model. Consequently, the firms can rent these houses to lower income groups (LIG), people from economically weaker sections (EWS), students and others. As part of another model, private developers can build their own projects according to the given specifications. Here, in order to attract PPP, the government is providing 50 per cent more FSI for free. However, rental rates in these societies will also be fixed by the government at a rate lower than that prevailing in the market. According to Lochan Sehra, Secretary, Urban Development and Urban Housing Department, Gujarat, this scheme will benefit people from EWS and LIG segment, and also be beneficial for students. In turn, this will not only boost the real estate sector but will also increase projects in industrial and educational area like the knowledge corridor in Gandhinagar.



COVID-19

INDIA CONTINUES TO FACE COVID CONUNDRUM

A Government panel has said the number of cases will cross 10 million by February 2021. India saw unprecedented rise in the number of cases in the months of August and September. This number has started to come down but not drastically. Is there a danger that India will leave US behind and become the country with highest number of cases? It is a distinct possibility

Nearly eight months since the first COVID-19 case was reported in Kerala on January 30, the number of confirmed cases of novel coronavirus has crossed the 72 lakh mark. The fatalities have crossed one lakh ten thousand. At present India is at second spot globally behind the United States. But the number of fresh cases everyday is more than seventy thousand. At this rate India will become the country with highest number of cases globally in another two weeks, making it the worst coronavirus-hit nation. Since August there has been an exponential growth in number of infected people in the country. In the last two and half months there have been more than fifty lakh positive cases in India. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5, 50 lakh on September 16 and 60 lakh on September 27. Globally, the total number of cases stands at 37.6 million and number of deaths is 1.8 million. It means that every 6th COVID case is in India and every 10th death is happening here. (see Graphics)

Why is this happening? Are people getting tired and throwing caution to the winds or numbers are going up because there is more aggressive testing now. At the last count, according to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) more than eight crore people have been tested by now. Then the question that comes to mind is why it was not done earlier. In June and early July we were talking about record spike in number of cases when it used to be little over fifteen thousand. That number sounds miniscule if we compare it with numbers that we have now. There are a lot of questions that beg answer but are hardly forthcoming.

IS THERE A PROBLEM IN COMPARISON?

There are many arguments and counter arguments being offered. While some blame the government for its faulty

policies and handling of the pandemic, there are others who argue for looking at things rationally. While there are experts who hold central government of taking decision of lockdown in a haste, they argue that even if the decision was taken that period should have been used to strengthen the health infrastructure and prepare the country to deal with the situation better. But others argue that while we discuss the numbers we must keep the size of Indian population in mind. We should just not look at the overall numbers but look at number of positive cases and fatalities per million. They compare this with United States which has a population of about 36 crores but the number of cases and fatalities per million is much higher. India, the world's second-most populous nation has the lowest number of deaths per 100 confirmed cases -- the observed case-fatality ratio -- among the top 20 worst-affected nations at 1.5 percent, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally. In comparison, the United States, the most infected country, has a death rate of 2.8 per cent. India's number of deaths per 100,000 population is 7.73, compared with 64.74 in the United States. Though the low fatality rate in India has baffled many experts and have even doubted the data that has been coming both in terms of positive cases and fatalities, there are many explanations being given for that. Dr Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS says, "We have been able to keep the curve rise slow, but I do agree that we have not been able to get it to move aggressively down. That's related to our population density, diversity of our country and socioeconomic challenges in our country."

YOUNGER POPULATION AND POSSIBLE IMMUNITY

One of the key reasons being given is the younger population of the country. Older people suffering from conditions such as diabetes and heart disease have become a particular target of the pandemic but India has a young population with a median age of 28.4, according to the UN World Population



KUMAR DHANANJAY
Consulting Editor

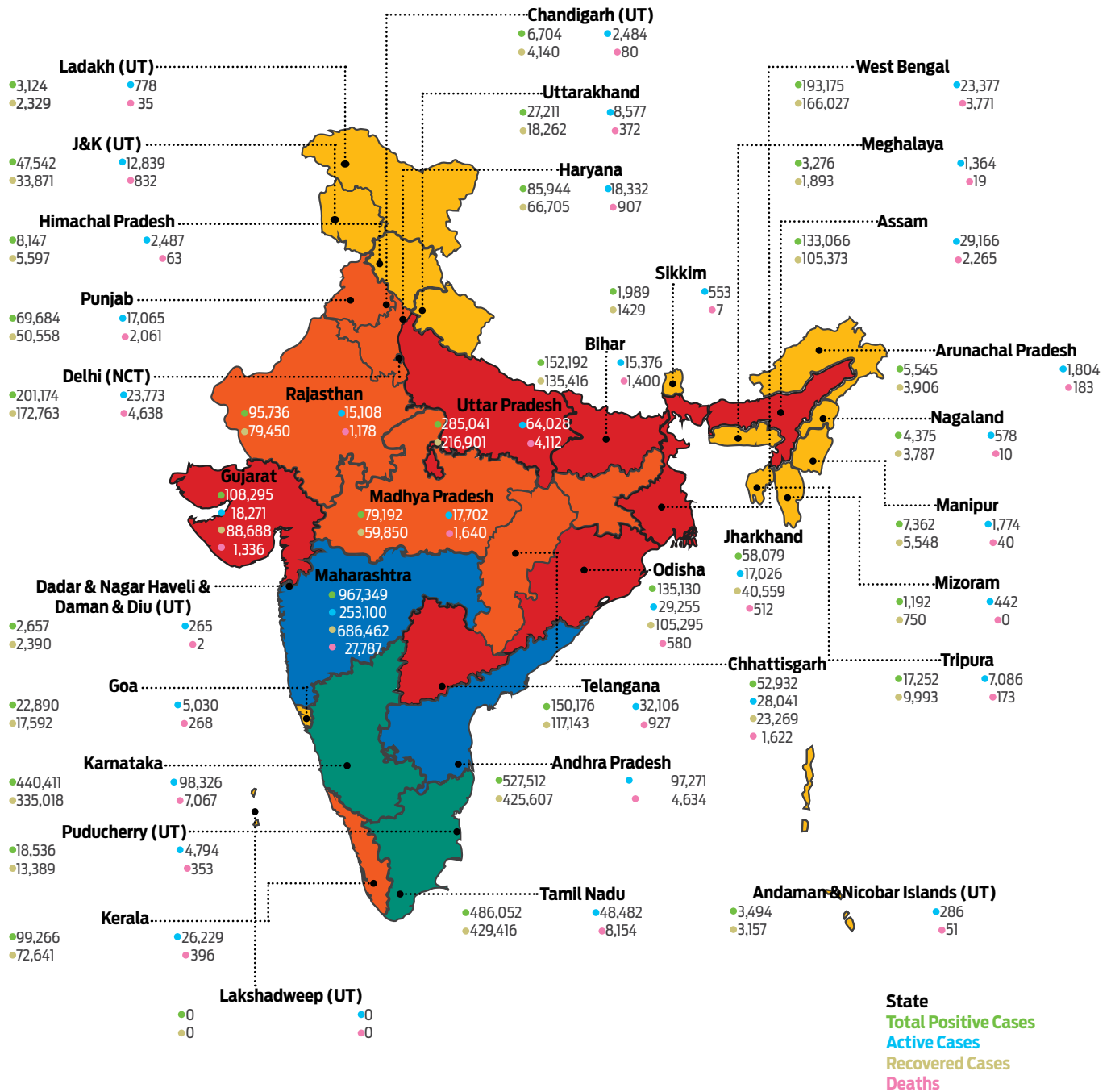
Prospects report. In comparison, France --which has reported almost 700,000 cases and more than 32,000 deaths for a death rate of 4.7 per cent -- has a median age of 42.3. Virologist T Jacob

John says 'it is possible that other viral diseases such as dengue fever, which is endemic in India, may have given the population some antibody protection against the coronavirus'. Others say it

is also plausible that exposure to other milder coronaviruses could give some cross-immunity. But all experts say more research is needed into this line of defence.

COVID-19 CASES IN INDIA: STATE-WISE DISTRIBUTION

As of September 10, 2020



Below 50,000 50,000 - 100,000 100,000 - 300,000 300,000 - 500,000 Above 500,000

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

COMPLACENCY CAN HIT HARD

Experts have been warning of complacency once the process of unlocking began. Dr Mathew Varghese of St Stephens Hospital says, 'A major share of the problem would be addressed if people simply followed basic COVID appropriate behaviours'. He says its important to wear masks properly and maintain social distancing at all times. He adds, "The government should have worked on strengthening the health infrastructure in the country. Not doing that has also led to the death of a number of healthcare workers." There are other health experts who echo his view. Dr SP Kalantri, a hospital director in the village of Sevagram in country's worst-hit Maharashtra state, said that people in his village had stopped wearing masks, maintaining distance or washing their hands regularly. He added that the sick were still being brought in to his hospital.

"If we are able to have good behaviour in terms of physical distancing and masks, maybe by early next year we should be able to come to a new normal. COVID-19 will not finish but it will be under reasonable control with travel and other things becoming much more easier and people relatively safer," said Guleria.

AFTER A RELATIVELY CLEAN AIR BECAUSE OF LOCK DOWN AND EVEN AFTER THAT BECAUSE OF PEOPLE MOSTLY STAYING INDOORS AND WORKING FROM HOME, POOR AIR QUALITY HAS AGAIN HIT THE NATIONAL CAPITAL. IT HAS ALREADY ENTERED INTO 'POOR' CATEGORY. EXPERTS ARE WARNING THAT IT COULD LEAD TO BIG SURGE IN COVID-19 CASES

FESTIVAL SEASON, POLLUTION AND WINTERS

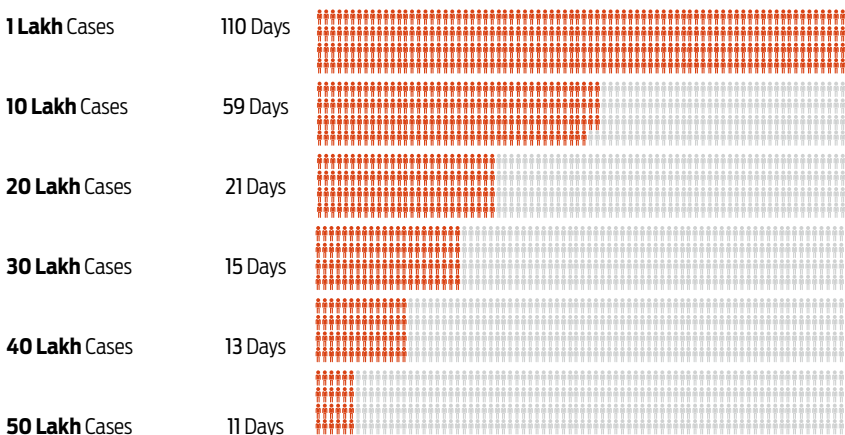
After a relatively clean air because of lock down and even after that because of people mostly staying indoors and working from home, poor air quality has again hit the national capital. It has already entered into 'poor' category. Experts are warning that it could lead to big surge in COVID-19 cases. AIIMS Director, Dr Randeep Guleria has cautioned people and said that coronavirus cases could witness a surge if there were to be even a slight increase in PM 2.5 levels. He said, "Since there is a rise in air pollution, there is data to state through certain modelling studies

from China and Italy (Europe) which show that in areas where there is even a little bit of increase in PM 2.5 levels, it leads to a surge of at least 8-9 per cent in coronavirus cases".

He also warned that winter will make the health crisis worse as it is the season of respiratory viruses. Guleria asserted that during winter, people tend to stay indoors, and hence there could be more crowding leading to a spike in the infection. The biggest worry for health experts at the moment is the festive season approaching. Though state governments have issued Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) and guidelines, the fear is that people will not maintain physical distancing, there will be overcrowding at the places of worship and it could lead to a huge spike in cases. They cite the example of Kerala, where after the festival of Onam there was a spike of four hundred percent in the number of cases. These three factors are a cocktail of worries and that has led NITI Aayog to ask Delhi government to prepare for 15,000 cases per day in coming weeks.

The profound impact of the pandemic is still unravelling across the country and some are warning that as Corona cases begin surging once again, as being feared, the situation may become worse than as it is now. The central government must work together with states to ensure that innovative methods are adopted and keep the fresh infections in check. The safeguards needs to be implemented strictly and an awareness campaign must be undertaken. ■

INDIA'S JOURNEY TO 50 LAKH CASES



Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

PANDEMIC SHIFTS FOCUS ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Coronavirus has taught us a lot of new things. In addition to teaching us the significance of community hygiene, masks and social distancing, the virus has changed the way we go about our daily lives, especially professional lives. Online meetings, seminars, conferences, workshops and even political rallies have become a routine affair. And, even the in-house official meetings are being conducted online to maintain social distancing. The question is: how this digital transformation in our lives is going to impact the cities we live in

Government of India has been promoting e-governance, digital learning, use of online financial transactions, etc. to make administration and governance easily accessible, transparent and accountable. The pandemic has also changed the work culture and many corporate houses encouraged their employees to work from home. Work from Home culture has caught up in cities fast during the pandemic. Many small businesses who could manage their operations online, shut their offices in many locations to cut down their expenditure. Many corporate offices have made their working spaces safe by using some short-time design fixes and reducing the number of workers at a given time.

Many institutions and corporate houses had the experience of using digital tools earlier. They rebound faster after the pandemic struck because they already had capabilities, resources, tools, and systems to swiftly move to remote working, learning, collaborating.

The pandemic and lockdown measures have resulted in cancellation of many international events. Some of them have gone virtual. AIILSG has also started a series of webinars on urban issues. The institute has also gone digital in imparting trainings to

students and other stakeholders. We will continue to host such webinars and workshops for benefitting urban local bodies, city leaders and other stakeholders. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is also working to introduce new projects and programs virtually. The most recent one was Climate Smart Cities Programme.

The world has not come to a standstill. Thanks to technological innovations which have helped us stay hopeful and active in finding a way through this crisis.

The flip side of the story is that if this situation sustains, it is going to affect the real estate business in large cities. Another question is that if virtual meetings and working can completely replace our physical offices. There has been some discussion on this but I don't believe so because human beings yearn for socializing. I am quite sure that our offices and streets will be abuzz like before as soon as the world finds a vaccine. This has happened in the past during the Spanish flu in the early 20th century. This is for sure that people will be more cautious about sanitization going forward.

TECHNOLOGY AND COVID-19

The countries which have been successful in containing the spread of the contagion used digital tools in pandemic management and response effectively. Cities used technology in

planning, surveillance, testing, contact tracing, quarantine, and health care. How did India use digital technology in pandemic management? Most of the telecom operators used their caller tunes to spread awareness on precautions, social distancing, etc. The Government of India also launched Aarogya Setu app for informing people if they have come in contact with infected persons. People can also know how many people in their vicinity are COVID positive or unwell.

Many states in India like Karnataka and Kerala used technology effectively for contact tracing. The WHO has also appreciated the efforts of Karnataka.





RANJIT S CHAVAN
President, AIILSG

THE NEED TO TRACK COVID-19 HAS FUELLED THE INNOVATION OF DATA DASHBOARDS THAT VISUALLY DISPLAY DISEASE BURDEN. UPCODE USES DATA PROVIDED BY THE SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF HEALTH TO DEPICT INFECTION TRENDS ACROSS AGE, SEX, AND LOCATION, AND TO PLOT THE RECOVERY TIME OF INFECTED INDIVIDUALS. THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY (MD, USA) CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD AND THE WEB-BASED PLATFORM HEALTHMAP PROVIDE UP-TO-DATE VISUALS OF COVID-19 CASES AND DEATHS AROUND THE GLOBE

One of its reports says, “The state-of-art control room was set up in record time of 24 hours in Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) corporation body in early March, with facilities like 24/7 control and command centre; virtual training and video conferencing facilities; GIS mapping of cases and contacts; heat mapping technology for containment zone and cluster; immersive technology for large data management of contact tracing and quarantine; real-time tracking of ambulance services and disinfection procedures; production

and dissemination of IEC; and daily media bulletins. While the BBMP war room focused on the response in Bangalore, similar control rooms were established for crisis management throughout the state.”

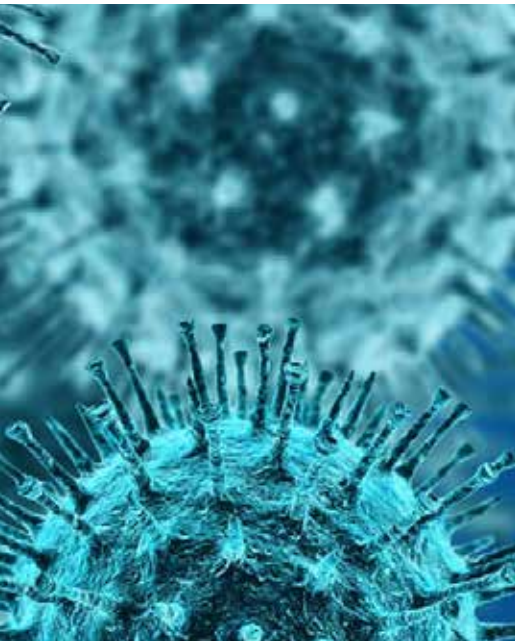
The state, where the software capital of the world Bengaluru is situated, has launched many applications including Seva Sindhu Portal for issuing e-passes, Corona Watch for tracking movement of Corona patients, Apthamitra Helpline for assisting COVID patients and many mobile applications. Similarly, other states have launched many technological tools for effective pandemic management. This is a good start if the municipalities and the state government can come forward in initiative innovative approaches in dealing with crisis situation. This trend shall continue going forward.

Other countries have also used technology for mitigation and response to the contagion. According to a report published in the prestigious medical journal Lancet, Big data and artificial intelligence (AI) have helped facilitate COVID-19 preparedness and the tracking of people, and so the spread of infection, in several countries. Tools such as migration maps, which use mobile phones, mobile payment applications, and social media to collect real-time data on the location of people, allowed Chinese authorities

to track the movement of people who had visited the Wuhan market, the pandemic’s epicentre. In Sweden, authorities have developed a platform for health-care workers to report real-time data on volumes of patients with COVID-19, personal protective equipment, staffing, ventilator usage, and other resource information. This information has been shared nationwide with health-care authorities to track the status of facilities, allocate health-care resources, and increase hospital bed capacity.

The need to track COVID-19 has fuelled the innovation of data dashboards that visually display disease burden. UpCode uses data provided by the Singapore Ministry of Health to depict infection trends across age, sex, and location, and to plot the recovery time of infected individuals. The Johns Hopkins University (MD, USA) coronavirus dashboard and the web-based platform HealthMap provide up-to-date visuals of COVID-19 cases and deaths around the globe. AI algorithms allow the effect of the climate to be incorporated into the projections.

The use of technology in urban systems for community hygiene, social distancing and health care will see a rise. All the cities must be prepared and capacitated to use this occasion to transform their working style for efficiently managing urban spaces. ■



THE LARGEST MUNICIPALITY



DR JAIRAJ PHATAK

Former BMC Commissioner

Mankind has always been fascinated by higher achievements. The motto of the Olympic Games has been 'Citius altius, fortius' that is faster, higher and stronger in Greek! While the winner of the 100 metre sprint in Olympics is called the 'World's fastest man', the weightlifter who lifts the maximum weight is called the world's strongest man! Thus, for those working in the municipal sector, it is always interesting to know as to which is the largest municipality in their country and in the world! The choice is easy within a country. The census figures give a clear idea as to which city has the largest population. A Census within a country uses the same definitions and parameters for giving the populations of municipalities. However, international comparisons are difficult since the pattern of municipalities is different from country to country. In China, the Federal Municipalities, i.e. the largest cities are administered directly by the federal government and they are actually similar to Union territories in India. Chongqing Municipality has an area of 24000 sq km that is comparable to some of the largest districts in India. Beijing Municipality has an area of 16000 sq km, which is similar to Pune district. Thus, the Chinese Municipalities have a large rural area surrounding them and they are not strictly urban units. For the purpose of this article, population (and not the area) of the Municipalities would be considered

as the parameter to determine their largeness and differences in the character of municipalities within different countries would be ignored.

INDIA: MUNICIPALITIES

In India, the National Census is held every ten years in the first year of the new decade and thus the populations of different cities are readily available. The Census figures clearly list the populations of the Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Cantonment Boards and the Village Panchayats. The Census also lists populations of Census towns, which are large villages with urban characteristics, which do not have a municipal body. Thus, there is little scope for an argument as to which Municipal Corporation is larger than the other. Of course, the Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils are created under respective state laws. Some states go in for large Municipal Corporations by merging neighbouring urban areas while some others keep the individual identities. The following table shows the population of the ten largest Municipalities in India as per the 2011 census. It is to be noted that Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has been trifurcated after 2011 and Chennai Municipal Corporation's area has increased making it Greater Chennai Municipal Corporation. The population of the respective urban agglomeration is of course, higher in all cases. Here the 2011 census figures for the Municipal Corporations have been

taken into account.

1. Greater Mumbai (MCGM)

Thus, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), whose boundaries have remained unchanged since 1958, continues to be the largest Municipal Corporation in India. The growth rate of its population is relatively lower as compared to the other cities, mainly because its area is not expanding. In fact, the population in Mumbai City district (the original core) actually declined during the 2001 to 2011 period. This could be because some slum-dwellers and tenants moved out of the city since affordable housing became available in the suburbs and elsewhere. The Corporation is generally considered to have three parts, the Mumbai city, which is a separate revenue district (Mumbai City District), with many leasehold lands; the western suburbs, which are serviced by the suburban trains of the Western Railway and the Eastern Suburbs, which are serviced by the suburban trains of the Central Railway. The suburbs constitute one revenue district called the Mumbai Suburban District (MSD). The following table compares the populations of MCGM and MCD (municipal Corporation of Delhi) as per the last three censuses.

Population in lakhs	MCGM	MCD
Census 1991	99.25	72.06
Census 2001	119.78	98.17
Census 2011	124	110

Sr No	Name of the city	Name of the State/UT	Population in lakhs
1	Greater Mumbai (MCGM)	Maharashtra	124.4
2	Delhi (MCD)	NCT of Delhi	110.3
3	Great Hyderabad (GHMC)	Telangana	69.93
4	Bruhat Bengaluru (BBMP)	Karnataka	68.00
5	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	55.77
6	Chennai	Tamil Nadu	46.46
7	Kolkata	West Bengal	45.80
8	Surat	Gujarat	44.66
9	Pune	Maharashtra	31.20
10	Jaipur	Rajasthan	30.46



2. Delhi (MCD)

MCD is unique in the country since it has both urban and rural areas. The Second Schedule to the MCD Act makes it clear that at the time of formation of MCD, four Municipal Committees, five Notified Area Committees and the Delhi District Board were merged to form the MCD. Thus MCD was both the Municipal Corporation and the Zilla Parishad for Delhi. The 2011 Census shows almost one hundred census towns in Delhi with a combined population of about 50 lakhs.

The largest of these census towns were Kirari Suleman Nagar (2.83 lakhs), Karawal Nagar (2.24 lakhs) and Bhalswa Jahangirpur (1.97 lakhs). These were not part of MCD at the time of 2011 census. It is true that the New Delhi Municipal Council (2.57 lakhs) and the Delhi Cantonment Board (1.10 lakhs) have tiny populations as compared to the MCD's. However, the MCD (Pop: 1.10 cr.) remained much smaller than NCT of Delhi (Population: 1.67 cr.) largely because of the rural areas that are census towns. These were not part of the MCD. Although the District Board was merged in MCD, the Village Panchayats continued to exist.

The last elections to Village Panchayats were held in 1983. During 2012, MCD has been trifurcated into North Delhi, South Delhi and East Delhi Municipal Corporations. However, it appears that the Village Panchayats are not still abolished and merged in the three Municipal Corporations. During May 2017, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Vijendra Gupta urged the Lt. Governor Anil Baijal to bring in a Notification declaring 89 villages in the Capital as urbanized villages (The Hindu, May 12, 2017).

However, this would require an Amendment to the Municipal Act. Unless it is done, even the 2021 Census will show a large number of Census towns out of the three Municipal Corporations.

3. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC)

The Hyderabad and Secunderabad Municipal Corporations were merged in 1955. More recently, the boundaries of the Municipal Corporation were increased during 2007 to include 12 neighbouring municipal councils and 8 village panchayats. With this expansion in area, Greater Hyderabad became the

third largest Municipal body in India.

4. Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagar Palike (BBMP)

Bengaluru also increased its area in 2007 by incorporating 7 municipal councils, one town council and 111 villages, thus becoming the fourth largest urban local body in the country. At some places, the population of Bengaluru is shown more than Hyderabad's since an outgrowth (O. G.) of about 18 lakhs is shown adjacent to BBMP. However, the web-site of the BBMP itself accepts that it is the fourth largest municipal corporation in the country.

5. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)

Ahmedabad is the largest urban body under the old Bombay provincial Municipal Corporations Act. It is the smallest of the seven mega-cities (Cities with a population of 50 lakhs or more) in India and most of its agglomeration growth is included within the municipal corporation.

6. Greater Chennai Municipal Corporation (GCMC)

During 2011, fifteen municipalities were merged in Chennai Municipal Corporations constituting the Greater Chennai Municipal Corporation. Population of Greater Chennai is now comparable to Greater Hyderabad or Bruhat Bengaluru. However, the exact figures would be known only after the 2021 census. Till then we have to go by the Census Report of 2011.

7. Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC)

Kolkata Municipal Corporation remained relatively smaller because the metropolitan area includes three other Municipal Corporations namely Howrah, Bidhannagar, Chandannagar and also 37 municipalities. This is why, although Kolkata Urban Agglomeration is the third largest in the country, the Kolkata city itself remains smaller.

8. Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC)

With incorporation of Hazira township,

Surat has become the third largest Municipal Corporation in western India, after Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

9. Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC)

Pune's major industrial area, Pimpri-Chinchwad was established as a separate Municipal Corporation in 1983. This meant that Pune Metropolitan area has two large corporations, along with smaller Cantonment Boards and Municipal Councils. The combined population of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad is more than Surat's but less than Ahmedabad's.

10. Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC)

The capital of Rajasthan is the tenth largest Municipal Corporation in India by population, ahead of Kanpur and Lucknow.

INTERNATIONAL MUNICIPALITIES

International comparisons are difficult because the way Municipalities are constituted differs from country to country. For example, China's federal municipalities have huge rural areas as part of the municipality. The City Mayors list the following ten Municipalities as the largest in the world.

Karachi and Dhaka appear bigger than Mumbai because the surrounding urban areas have been merged into a single entity. If the urban agglomeration of Mumbai is defined as one super municipality, it would be bigger than Karachi or Dhaka.

THE CENSUS FIGURES GIVE A CLEAR IDEA AS TO WHICH CITY HAS THE LARGEST POPULATION. A CENSUS WITHIN A COUNTRY USES THE SAME DEFINITIONS AND PARAMETERS FOR GIVING THE POPULATIONS OF MUNICIPALITIES. HOWEVER, INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS ARE DIFFICULT SINCE THE PATTERN OF MUNICIPALITIES IS DIFFERENT FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY

INTERNATIONAL: URBAN AGGLOMERATION

Different countries constitute municipalities with somewhat different parameters. This is why the concept of continuous urban agglomeration (UA) assumes importance. The top ten urban agglomerations, according to City Mayors, are listed below. An urban

agglomeration is a continuous urban sprawl without any rural areas in between. China's federal municipalities have vast rural areas surrounding them. This is why none of the Chinese cities figures in the top ten urban agglomerations. Shanghai is at serial number 18 while Beijing figures at serial number 21. Although Municipal Corporation of

World Rank	Urban Agglomeration	Country	Population (Cr) 2020
1	Tokyo	Japan	3.72
2	Mumbai	India	2.59
3	Delhi	India	2.58
4	Dhaka	Bangladesh	2.20
5	Mexico City	Mexico	2.18
6	Sao Paulo	Brazil	2.15
7	Lagos	Nigeria	2.15
8	Jakarta	Indonesia	2.07
9	New York	USA	2.04
10	Karachi	Pakistan	1.89

World Rank	City	Country	City Population (Cr)
1	Greater Mumbai (MCGM)	Maharashtra	124.4
2	Delhi (MCD)	NCT of Delhi	110.3
3	Great Hyderabad (GHMC)	Telangana	69.93
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7	Kolkata	West Bengal	45.80
8	Surat	Gujarat	44.66
9	Pune	Maharashtra	31.20
10	Jaipur	Rajasthan	30.46

Greater Mumbai is ranked tenth in the list of Municipalities, it is at number two among the urban agglomerations since it is surrounded on all sides by municipal corporations of Mira-Bhayandar, Thane, Navi Mumbai etc. Delhi figures at serial number three in the list of urban agglomerations, while Kolkata is at serial number 11. Thus, Kolkata Urban Agglomeration is the third largest in India although Kolkata Municipal Corporation ranks at number 7. ■

PROPERTY TAX REFORMS KOLHAPUR EXPERIENCE



SUDHA KASHELIKAR
Senior Project Officer, AIILSG

Infrastructure is considered to be a key driver for the urban economy. Particularly, property related infrastructure and services are critical for boosting overall development of any urban area. By Provision of the Infrastructure and services cities facilitate efficiency in key economic services, improve the economy's competitiveness, generate high productivity and wealth and also enhance the quality of life of the people in the cities. Urban externalities generated by cities lead them to substantially contribute to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which has constantly been rising.

Primary Revenue Source

Efficiency in provision of the core property related infrastructure and services such as water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage, solid waste, roads and firefighting depend upon own revenue sources of municipal bodies. Property tax is the only own revenue source municipal bodies have to rely upon for the provision of such infrastructure and services. As urban areas expand, properties in their jurisdiction also increase. As the economic activities in the city mature from primary sector to secondary and to the tertiary sector, there is a rise in related demand for more sophisticated, advanced technology-based and efficient infrastructure and services and in turn revenue from property tax. However in practice there is gross mismatch between these two.

Reforms

Followed by Supreme Court Judgments, and to address the issue of resource constraint, many cities have introduced reforms in the procedure for the assessment of properties for property tax. Some of the cities also have simultaneously introduced administrative reforms. Reforms in property tax system were also a part of the mandatory reforms under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM). This was attempted by changes in the base and valuation procedure with the aim of boosting revenue generation potential which are being considered to be the best practices today. Many of the cities through reforms have switched over to alternative value basis so as to use the underutilized potential of the property tax and escape the legal complexities of the Annual Rental Value (ARV) base.

Status in Maharashtra

In the state of Maharashtra, Municipal Acts have provided Capital value as an alternate base. Section 129 (1) of Maharashtra Municipal Corporations Act 1949 (Act No. LIX of 1949) provides for levy of property tax on the basis Capital Value, with Rule 7A.1 prescribing how to determine Capital Value. In consistent with these provisions, Barring Mumbai, a corporation of A+ type megalopolis, only Kolhapur Municipal Corporation has switched over to the Capital value base. All the rest of the municipal corporations continue to use Annual Rental Value (ARV) base for the assessment of the properties.

Kolhapur: Trade & Tourism Hub
Kolhapur, a pilgrim place and trade hub known for the Kolhapuri chappal, handicrafts include hand block printing of textiles; silver, bead and paste jewelry crafting; pottery; wood carving and lacquer ware; brass sheet work and oxidized silver artwork; and lace and

Kolhapur Municipal Corporation, in its efforts towards implementation of development projects has introduced reforms in property tax system, which is exclusive in the state of Maharashtra. Span of refinement of the process caused certain period to exhibit stable results. Yet the reforms are successful when measured in terms of sustained revenue rise and acceptability by the citizens. The reforms have been overviewed and presented for the benefit of rest of the municipal corporations not only from Maharashtra but also from other states

embroidery making. The city is industrial city with approximately 300 foundries with exports of 15 billion rupees per year.

Administration of Property Taxes in KMC

Shift to the Capital value base by KMC was unique decision and bold step towards the revamp of property tax system. Now almost ten years have passed that the system is changed and set also. It would be interesting to know the impact of this change. Kolhapur Municipal Corporation passed a Resolution No.72, dated 18.3.2011, to switch over to the alternative basis of Capital Value for the levy of Property tax.

The System of Assessment prior to the introduction of Reforms

Prior to the introduction of CVS, the assessment was on the basis of ARV. For the owner occupied properties, ARV was calculated on the basis of carpet area and in case of rental properties as specified in the Maharashtra Municipal Corporations Act 1949, 15 per cent would be deducted from the actual annual rent to arrive at

ARV of the property. The reasons for this change as given in the resolution were: firstly, Capital Value System was adopted in accordance with the orders issued by Government of Maharashtra for adopting the Capital Value as an alternative basis for the levy of Property tax. Secondly, for receiving funds under Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT) adoption of Self-Assessment System (SAS) in Property Tax Reforms was mandatory and accordingly KMC had signed MoU with Government of India.

Adoption of this system would have facilitated the SAS. Thirdly, the Project Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee for the approval of the projects related to infrastructure had principally approved to provide substantial funds to Kolhapur Municipal Corporation for the project of ₹392Cr direct water supply through pipeline from Kallamwadi Dam. 50 per cent grant and 50 per cent loan was to be given to KMC. This was also the reason behind introduction of Capital Value system. Fourthly, it was Government policy to give 25 per cent additional funds under 13th Finance Commission to the corporations adopting Capital Value system as a basis for the assessment of PT. Fifthly, Under Maharashtra Nagarot than scheme to develop link road in the city grant of ₹108 Cr. and ₹26 Cr to construct a sewerage treatment plant on Dudhali open drain were sanctioned. In view of all above commitments there was no other way than to introduce CVS. Although the shift to CVS was under compulsion it turned out to be beneficial for the KMC. Determination of the Annual Rental Value was discretion of the Assessor and Collector. There was no transparency in the assessment process. Hence there was need for the standardization of the process. Moreover under the ARV System, the ARV of the properties being subject to 'standard rent' under rent control act, tax rates became exorbitantly high. In certain cases tax rate went as high as 103 per cent.

Assessment Procedure

In accordance with the Rule 7 C of Appendix Chapter VIII – Taxation Rules of the 'Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act, 1949'

KMC made Regulations for the purpose of determining the capital value of the buildings and lands in the jurisdiction of KMC for property taxation. According to RR Capital Value of Land is

Base Value of the Land in accordance with RR X multiple weightage according to user category X Permissible Floor Space Index FSI X Area of Land

Formula for arriving at capital value is as below:

$$CV = BV \times OF \times UC \times FSI \times AL$$

BV = Base value

OF = Occupancy Factor

UC = Weightage According to User Category

FSI = Permissible Floor Space Index

AL = Area of Land

According to RR Capital Value of Building is Related Base Value of the Building in accordance with RR x multiple weightages according to user category x Weightages according to nature and types of Building x Weightages according to age of the building x Weightages according to the floor in a RCC building with Lift x Built up Area

$$CV = BV \times UC \times NBT \times AF \times FF \times BA$$

BV = Base value

UC = Weightage According to User Category

NBT = Nature of Building Type

AF = Age Factor

FF = Floor Factor

BA = Built up Area

Tables of weightages have been developed for each of the factors in the formulae and are being referred. Introduction of the location factor in the formula and Ready Reckoner enabled tap the location specific changes in the value of the properties.

To develop the online system, the existing system has been updated by uploading the database like property number, type, location, and ready reckoner rates. The system generates Short Message Service (SMS) or email to provide the acknowledgement receipt or reference details of payment received. Automatic calculation of the tax amount has eliminated the need for the self-assessment scope for false declaration for reduced tax burden. Publicity for the new system was given through local newspaper, local cable network and advertisement boards and hoardings.

Prior to introduction of CV the PT rates

were same for residential, commercial properties, properties located in prime location in interiors or even for slums. To introduce the equity-horizontal as well as vertical-Ready Reckoner RR was developed at the time of introduction of CV. It is commendable that the planning and implementation of new CVS was done entirely internally. Assessor and collector of taxes, system manager and software engineer who was working for city facilitation centre developed the new system of CV. The new system was developed taking into consideration future expansion of KMC. It had taken into account the provisions of MMC Act 1949, Maharashtra Regional and Town Planning (MRTP) Act 1966, Limitation Act etc. The process of assessment got decentralized in the new system.

Identification and Growth of properties in KMC

Revenue mobilized through PT is determined by total number of properties identified, demand raised and its collection. Initially, at the time of introduction of CV System, the property survey was carried out with the staff of Public Works Department (PWD), who were also having a good academic background. Subsequently the new properties were incorporated on intimations from owners and from building permission department. It is understood that the work of survey has been undertaken in the year 2018-2019. Such surveys should become regular periodic features.

Number of Properties

Year	Total	% increase in total number of properties
2011-12	121721	
2012-13	124400	2.20
2013-14	133148	7.03
2014-15	138145	3.75
2015-16	140206	1.49
2016-17	147276	5.04
2017-18	154346	4.80
2018-19		

Source: Records of the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation

Total number of properties have shown a consistent yearly increase in KMC although the growth rate has been

	Current Demand	% Change in Demand Total	Demand for arrears	Total Demand	% Change in Demand	₹ in Thousand Total Collection
2007-2008				258541		182364 (70.54)
2008-2009	203129 (72.73)		76177 (27.27)	279306 (100.00)	8.03	194039 (69.47)
2009-2010	190602 (69.09)	-6.17	85267 (30.91)	275869 (100.00)	-1.23	210141 (76.17)
2010-2011	212426 (76.37)	11.45	65728 (23.63)	278154 (100.00)	0.83	262568 (94.40)
2011-2012	429463 (96.50)	102.17	15586 (03.50)	445048 (100.00)	60.00	205168 (46.10)
2012-2013	290639 (54.78)	-32.33	239880 (45.22)	530519 (100.00)	19.20	376303 (70.93)
2013-2014	310757 (66.83)	6.92	154216 (33.17)	464973 (100.00)	-12.36	333522 (71.73)
2014-2015	366421 (73.60)	17.91	131451 (26.40)	497872 (100.00)	7.08	385288 (77.39)
2015-2016	381273 (77.20)	4.05	112584 (22.80)	493857 (100.00)	-0.81	353587 (71.60)
2016-2017	457810 (76.55)	20.07	140270 (23.45)	598080 (100.00)	21.10	570610 (95.41)
2017-2018	576514 (95.45)	25.93	27470 (04.55)	603984 (100.00)	0.99	523780 (86.72)
2018-2019	561580 (87.50)	-2.59	80204 (12.50)	641784 (100.00)	6.26	623180 (97.10)

Figures in parenthesis are share of total demand
Source: Records of the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation

volatile. GIS survey of properties is underway. Number of properties will show substantial increase once it is over.

Demand and Collection of the Property Tax in KMC

Total demand is divided into current demand and demand for arrears. A comparative statement of change in Property Tax Demand under Annual Rental Value system (Before Reforms) and under Area- Based Assessment (After Reforms) is presented in the table above.

Two major changes related to PT viz Computerization of records of Property Tax department and online payment of property taxes were introduced by KMC in the year 2011-12, which gave boost to the demand of PT during 2011-12. During 2011-12, the current demand increased upto 102 per cent over previous year. Until 2011-12 use of computers was not widespread in KMC. Computers were not many and the data related to property records would be entered manually, hence the process of data entry and generation and printing of bills was very slow. Consequently, there was not much growth in the demand for PT. In fact, in 2009-10 total demand dropped down by -1.23 per cent and in subsequent

year it did not reach even 1 per cent. The collection reached a high level of 94 per cent of total demand in 2010-2011. In the year 2011-12 new software with online facility was introduced facilitating the acceptance of the property records online. Even CVS of assessment was introduced in the same year which generated the momentum. Both the reforms together raised the current demand for the year 2011-12 by 102 per cent. However, the collection mechanism could not cope up with the sudden jump in the demand.

Thus recovery was poor 46 per cent during that period. Because of the poor recovery during the year 2011-12 the demand for arrears increased in the year 2012-13 which was more than 50 per cent. Similarly, in the year 2013 -14 the growth trend is seen to be low which is again the result of considerable negative figure of growth in current demand for the earlier year i.e. 2012-13. Overall the current demand has been consistently increasing after the introduction of Capital Value System.

Collection was consistently good since 2012-13 except for the year 2015-16. Until 2014-15 collection was from House to House (H to H) and hence was very poor.

About 120 collection clerks would do H to H collection and manual receipt was given. However, during 2014-15 online collection started and practice of H to H was suspended and number of collection clerks also reduced to 20. Citizens were not familiar with the system. This affected the recovery for the year 2015-16. With the awareness drive in the following years, the recovery was very good. Because of good recovery demand for arrears also reduced. In 2012-13, the demand seen increased by 19 per cent.

The overall results of the introduction of the CV system seems better in terms of sustained increased revenue. It could be said to be a pioneering model for the other Municipal Corporations to follow. Government of Maharashtra has already issued directions to follow Kolhapur Model. Perhaps simultaneous application of GIS System, digitization of records would have demonstrated much better results. However the process is underway and will achieve better results. Full-fledged implementation of Self-Assessment System will also further add to the success. Rest of the Municipal Corporations from Maharashtra as well as from other states should follow the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation. ■

WETLANDS IN OUR CLIMATE ACTIONS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NDCs



RANJAN K PANDA

Convenor, Combat Climate Change Network, India

Nations are in the process of submitting their updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Climate Agreement.

In fact, nations have been asked by the UN to submit more ambitious climate plans before the next COP26 that is set to happen in Glasgow in November next year, delayed by almost a year due to the COVID19 pandemic impacts. The current plans, communicated as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), fall short of meeting the existing Paris Agreement goals. This agreement has set a goal to keep global average temperature increase substantially less than 2°C against the pre-industrial value but intends to make all attempts so that this can be kept below 1.5°C deg.

The Paris Agreement was reached at the COP21 Summit in 2015 and therefore the first milestone date for countries to strengthen their NDCs and enhance emission reduction targets falls this year. It is from this year (2020) that the implementation of Paris Agreement begins. They are now asked to submit the plans by December this year or at best February 2021. One of the top priorities of the Glasgow

Summit was to have updated and more ambitious NDCs, that would also include growing numbers of national net zero emission targets alongside plans to finalise the technical rulebook for the Paris Agreement ahead of its entry into full legal force. The new plans are therefore very crucial.

THE CURRENT CRISIS

The NDCs are also aimed at building capacity of communities to adapt to climate change and build resilience. There is a huge challenge for the world as fossil fuel phase out is not happening in the way it should.

Fossil fuels, the predominant contributor to climate change, need to be drastically reduced. However, a 2019 analysis of energy plans has found that there is vast disconnect between climate goals and energy production plans. In fact, it has found that the governments are collectively intending to produce 50 percent more fossil fuels by 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 2°C, and 120 percent more than could be safely burned while keeping warming below 1.5°C. The NDCs at the moment need to triple their pledges to achieve the below 2 degree ambition and increase those by five times in order to be able to meet the 1.5 degree ambition.

There is a growing voice that governments take note of the importance of wetlands in achieving both the mitigation and adaptation targets to meet the Paris Climate goals. A just published report by the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA) and Wetlands International (WI) has called upon policy makers and leaders of the nations to make well-informed decisions by clearly understanding climate-related risks and developing well-defined strategies to mitigate

them. Successful climate actions could be those that have at their core nature-based solutions incorporating ecosystem based approaches. Protection and restoration of wetlands can not only help achieve Paris climate goals but also provide a multitude of co-benefits for the societies, economies and ecosystems themselves.

WETLANDS TO THE RESCUE

This report that emphasises on the importance of integrating wetlands into the NDCs reminds us of the importance of wetlands such as mangroves and peatlands in meeting our ambitious climate goals. In fact the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has already emphasised on the importance of conservation of high-carbon ecosystems such as wetlands, including mangroves and peatlands, as mitigation response options with high impacts.

Sadly, we are losing our wetlands and related ecosystems on a large scale. An estimate by the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands found that the world has lost



64 percent of its wetlands since 1900. Just between 1970 and now the world has lost 35 percent of its wetlands. Urbanisation is among the major causes. Just in a span of three decades, it is estimated, nearly one-third of the natural wetlands in our country have lost their battle of survival to human greed. The loss has been rapid in urban areas. Pollution is another major factor.

An estimate by the Government of India points at degraded health of wetlands. One in every four wetlands studied under this ecosystem health assessment was found to be of low ecosystem health and faced high to very high threat. In fact, healthy and intact wetlands are vital ecosystems that preserve bio diverse natural habitats and help us in both mitigation and adaptation to climate change besides helping the communities in the neighbourhood with many services including food and nutrition security. Healthy wetlands protect communities against floods, droughts, regulate water supply and keep the air clean. These are defined as ecosystem co-benefits.

If the destruction of the wetlands continues at this rapid rate, we will lose our fight against poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, health and above all climate change. Wetlands are vital not only in hosting the local biodiversity but also in providing livelihoods and mitigating climate change. It is estimated that the

ecosystem services provided by natural wetlands make up 43.5 per cent of the monetary value of all natural biomes. More valuable are the critical functions they play in building our defence against disasters and poverty of the communities who regularly face these disasters. Let's take the example of sea rise and mangroves.

ECOSYSTEM BASED MITIGATION IN CLIMATE ACTIONS -

A just published research paper in Nature Scientific Reports, authored by Ebru Kirezci and others, that used global models of tide, storm surge, and wave setup to obtain projections of episodic coastal flooding over the coming century has warned that if governments don't make serious progress in reducing global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, there will be an increase of 48 percent of the world's land area, 52 percent of the global population and 46 percent of global assets at risk of flooding by 2100. This study was conducted with detailed data analysed from thousands of global "hotspots" and has projected significant change in episodic flooding by the end of the century are identified and found to be mostly concentrated in North Western Europe and Asia. Several stretches of the Bay of Bengal are projected to face this devastating increase.

Many stretches in the Bay of Bengal are already facing several challenges owing to both man-made and natural disasters induced by climate change. In my state Odisha alone, estimates put it that about 40 percent of the shoreline is facing different degrees of erosion. Thousands of people are therefore under the constant threat of losing their lands, livelihoods and rights to local natural resources. Coastal ecosystems are highly dynamic areas of interactions between terrestrial and marine processes. The process of erosion and sedimentation, periodic floods and cyclones and sea level changes continuously modify the shoreline and hence needs to be taken

seriously in our planning process especially if we want to reduce the impacts of such changes as well as build our resilience to climate change. It is established beyond doubt that wetlands such as the mangroves can play a big role in building such resilience besides meeting Paris Climate goals.

The AGWA and WI report, citing scientific studies, points out that, strategies that integrate land, water and resource management to promote conservation and sustainable and equitable use – or ecosystems approach – can deliver at least a third of the cost-effective CO₂-equivalent emission mitigation needed through 2030 to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. In fact the IPCC outlines conservation of high-carbon ecosystems such as wetlands, including peatlands and mangroves, as mitigation response options with high impacts. Time, countries incorporated the ecosystem-based mitigation approaches into tangible climate actions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above report says that in spite of their large potential for carbon mitigation, wetlands have not featured prominently within early climate commitments following the Paris Agreement. This needs to change. "Nature-based solutions are gaining more recognition as low-regret, high-impact means by which countries can meet the ambitious targets laid out in their NDCs. Wetlands are found across the globe and yet are often overlooked for their important role in the carbon cycle. Clear guidance and good data will help Parties to the UNFCCC properly value wetlands for their capacity to reduce emissions and store carbon, while simultaneously serving as an integral tool in their climate adaptation strategies," suggests this report as it puts forth a set of recommendations for nations to consider in this regard. Hope wetlands get proper justice in the climate actions. Sooner the better! ■

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[The views expressed are the author's own. They do not purport to reflect the views of Urban Update.]



CITIES SHOULD BE MADE MORE INCLUSIVE IN POST COVID WORLD

The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), in partnership with All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIIJSG), the Indian Institute of Human Settlements (IIHS), and Foundation EMDA Southasia, initiated a series of dialogues on the way forward for district and municipal administration to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. Through the Webinar series, the organisations wish to reach out to municipal officials and the general public to try and understand the problems faced by each of them

URBAN UPDATE TEAM

The first edition of the series focussed on the topic “Urban Labour Rights and State Response in times of COVID-19”.

G Mathivanthanan, Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development, Government of Odisha; Ravi Srivastava, Professor and Director, Centre for Employment Studies, Institute for Human Development (IHD); and Divya Varma, Programme Manager, Centre for Migration and Labour Solutions, Aajeevika Bureau were in the panel. Sanjeev Chopra, Director, LBSNAA, chaired the session and Vidya Bhushan, Coordinator, National Centre for Urban Affairs, LBSNAA, coordinated the discussion.

Chopra in his opening remarks mentioned the need for the central government to learn from the Government of Odisha and work on the development of a fourth tier of governance for improving the living standards of the labour sector. He said that the combined efforts of Slum Development Associations

(SDAs) and Self Health Groups (SHGs) will uplift the urban space for them.

He also informed that in the model that the Government of Odisha implemented, the SHGs worked as the implementing partner for the program and were paid almost 7.5 per cent of the project cost. This amount was paid to the workers using the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) method.

This initiative consisted of only labour-intensive work which created maximum vacancy. It also included different types of projects such as open space development, micro activity centres, rainwater harvesting, plantations, storm water drainage and beautification of walls with awareness messages.

The estimated project cost is ₹140 crore and it will work as the blue print of the future pan-India Urban MNREGA Program.

The next speaker was Srivastava who addressed the issue of migrant workers and the challenges that they face. He addressed the inter connection between rural and urban areas via migration. He said,

“The policies should work towards decreasing the inequalities but the existing policies are doing the opposite of this.” He added that state-level programs should address the issue of precarity among people. These are the people who live in the outskirts of a city and have weak citizenship rights. He said that these people suffer exclusion on the basis



of Identity, eligibility and location.

He also addressed the issue of unemployment in both rural and urban areas and insisted on the need of Urban MNREGA while suggesting various actions that governments can take at the centre, state and urban levels. For centre, he suggested that it should address growing inequality, precarity and portability of social protection entitlements. At the state level, reduction of exclusionary barriers and creation of a framework for inclusive urban-regional planning may be the way forward. He added that at the urban level, it should create more inclusive cities and have an urban employment guarantee program.

ALTERNATE EMPLOYMENT IS NOT A SOLUTION OF THE COUNTRY'S LARGE SCALE UNEMPLOYMENT; RATHER WE SHOULD FOCUS ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT SO THAT THERE IS A GREATER PROPORTION OF SKILLED, QUALITY WORKFORCE. THERE SHOULD BE A DIGITAL PLATFORM TO RECORD DETAILS OF THE MIGRANTS SO THAT EMPLOYING THEM IN DIFFERENT SECTORS/TRADES BECOMES EASIER FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND ADDS TO THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PROGRAM



G Mathivathanan brought forth the issue of reverse migration and gave detailed information of Odisha government's project for providing employment to the poor in the time of crisis. He said that alternate employment is not a solution of the issue; rather we should focus on skill development so that there is a greater proportion of skilled, quality workforce. He suggested that there should be a digital platform to record details of the migrants so that employing them in different sectors/trades becomes easier for the government.

Divya Varma spoke on gender impact of COVID-19 on female migrant workers. She said that around 85 per cent of domestic workers were not paid during the pandemic period. She said, "People have started using more technology for household chores which significantly decreased demand. Thus, in order to look for work, they had to relocate very frequently, making the lockdown even more difficult for them." There is a prevalence of sexual harassment of female workers by their employers. She suggested that the Rain Basairas (night shelters) should be made more gender neutral so that women get a safe place to live. ■



ARHC HAS POTENTIAL TO BE A GAME CHANGER IN HOUSING

The second edition of the series was based on the topic “Affordable Rental Housing for the Urban Poor - Demand, Supply and Management Dynamics”. Amrit Abhijat, Joint Secretary (Housing for All), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA); Mukta Naik, Fellow Researcher, Centre for Policy Research; Darshini Mahadevia, Professor, Faculty of Planning, Ahmedabad University; and Pankaj Kapoor, Founder & MD, Liasis Foras Real Estate Rating and Research Pvt Ltd. The webinar was moderated by Dr Gautam Bhan, Senior Lead, IIHS; Vidya Bhushan, Deputy Director, LBSNAA and Swastik Harish, Senior Lead, IIHS.

The webinar began with an opening statement by Vidya Bhushan who welcomed the panelists and introduced the topic of discussion. He mentioned that the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) Scheme was launched by the MoHUA under the

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) to provide affordable living spaces for the working class in India. Swastik Harish spoke next and described the webinar as a space created “to debate and discuss all the dynamics that go into rental housing.” He mentioned that the webinar aims to put into the picture the aspects of rental housing future like nature of supply, public provision and management of rental housing.

The first speaker was Amrit Abhijat who briefly explained the scheme and mentioned how the COVID-19 pandemic was a “push factor” for this scheme to be implemented. He addressed the reality where people do not always have income disposable for ownership of housing projects and how the PMAY is meant for such people, including those from economically weaker sections, low and middle-income groups. Economics and web can make it possible for ARHC owners to market what they have to offer with transparency. There will be need to establish contact between

the two segments in the system, that is, provider and the one seeking, which cannot always be web-based and therefore he suggested that civil society organisations and urban local bodies will have to play a crucial role in the interaction process. He believed that the ARHC scheme furthers the spirit of PMAY. He also referred to the necessity of involving civil society for mobilisation of people under the project. He said, “Urban local bodies will have to conceive committees at the local level where interaction can be established between ARHC owners, aggregators and the urban local body of a particular area.”

Mukta Naik addressed the issue of diverse demand landscape and how that needs to be analysed to understand where these rental housing projects might come up. She raised the issue of exclusion of migrant workers arising in the scheme and she believed that to plug this gap, the administration can make sure what kind of organisations would confer to aggregate demands

of rickshaw pullers, daily wage workers or domestic workers. She said, “COVID-19 has shown us that we do need to prioritize adequate housing quality.” Informal market is already aggregated enough to have intermediaries placed and these owners already have the idea of demand and supply in the market which they can pick and apply to formal market when included. The informal rental housing has grown, establishing understanding between renters and lenders about late payments or oral agreements. These things come in handy for the migrant labourers who move to places from time to time or do not have a constant source of income. It will take time for such renters to adjust to the formal housing system. The scheme right now only invites people who are ready to set up 40 rental units. However, the small scale landowners are the ones who will be able to match the demands based on their understanding and high share in the rental market.

Kapoor said, “I don’t see that the

scheme has economic viabilities to draw many people.” The scheme predicts that it will be able to get 90 per cent occupancy, which he believed was too much optimism. He said that the government needs to introduce this as a welfare scheme rather than a source of profit. Dr Bhan added to his address and described how certain interventions in the scheme, after recognising the bridging of gaps, is central. He referred to a programme where cess is collected by the State governments and Union territories and utilized for the welfare of building and other construction workers by respective State Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Boards. He said that the same cess fund can be used to build workers’ housing with different logic to dormitories and ARHC.

Darshini reiterated on Mukta’s address and on the fact how the demand and supply in the rental housing market are extremely diversified because the country is diversified in many aspects. The conundrum is that the government is trying to formalise rental housing but taxation and many other costs jack up the prices which ultimately dissuades renters from partaking in the scheme, regardless of how ‘formalised’ or safer it maybe be. She added, “Civil society organisation, in the context of trust and social network, cannot be built overnight.”

Harish concluded with an emphasis on the concern of financial viability of the scheme and introduction to the idea of adopting a hybridised model for the diversified demand and supply. He mentioned the example of a voucher system for tenants in the USA, functioning in buildings and projects built by the subsidised rental developer. He added, “This attempt of ARHC in no way tries to address the problem in its entirety.” The scheme currently looks like an attempt to address limited clientele who are productively employed in industries. It does not cater to anybody or everybody, be it a businessman interested in investing or a person seeking rental houses. ■

MUKTA NAIK RAISED THE ISSUE OF EXCLUSION OF MIGRANT WORKERS ARISING IN THE SCHEME AND SHE BELIEVED THAT TO PLUG THIS GAP, THE ADMINISTRATION CAN MAKE SURE WHAT KIND OF ORGANISATIONS WOULD CONFER TO AGGREGATE DEMANDS OF RICKSHAW PULLERS, DAILY WAGE WORKERS OR DOMESTIC WORKERS. SHE SAID, “COVID-19 HAS SHOWN US THAT WE DO NEED TO PRIORITIZE ADEQUATE HOUSING QUALITY.” INFORMAL MARKET IS ALREADY AGGREGATED ENOUGH TO HAVE INTERMEDIARIES PLACED AND THESE OWNERS ALREADY HAVE THE IDEA OF DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN THE MARKET WHICH THEY CAN PICK AND APPLY TO FORMAL MARKET WHEN INCLUDED

BETTER METROPOLIS MANAGEMENT ROAD TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Webinar-11
URBANISATION IN INDEPENDENT INDIA
Learnings and way forward

August 13, 2020
Thursday

11:00 AM
(Indian Standard Time)

Organisers
UCLG
UNIC
UrbanUpdate

SPEAKERS
Dr. Kulwant Singh
Prof. Tathagata Chatterji
Shubhagato Dasgupta
Kumar Dhananjay

MODERATOR
Abhishek Pandey

All are most welcome to attend the webinar. For registration, please visit <https://bit.ly/2XjPue15> or scan QR code.

For any technical query for attending the webinar, please write to us at contact@urbanupdate.in or call Anshu Paul at +91 9999999999.

capita income.” Dr Singh addressed the issue of urban environment as well and said that the ever-changing weather is an important environmental challenge in India which adversely affects urban planning. Moreover, a large population and a large number of cars also cause deadly air pollution levels in Indian cities.

The discussion was taken up by Dr Tathgata Chatterji. He talked about the two trends that have led urbanisation in India in the post economic liberalisation period. Firstly, metropolitan cities have guided the growth process with an emphasis on market led growth. He said, “Ten cities of India have contributed about 15 per cent of the GDP growth.” Despite this, the major problem lies in the management of these metropolises. We need to have a dedicated policy for management of metropolises and focus on the global trend of economic growth guided by them. The second trend that Dr Chatterji talked about is that of growth of census towns. “In some states, there are a large of number of these towns. This is reflective of changes in rural India and shows the problem of rural distress and change of Indian economy from agrarian to service-based.

Shubhagato Dasgupta continued the discussion by addressing the two phases of India’s urban policy. During the 1980s, the first phase focused mainly on industrialisation and economic growth. “It was only in the second phase that the government focussed on urbanisation and development of small cities across India. With liberalisation on its way, cities did not have sufficient resources to implement developmental policies and this is one of the major reasons for most urban centres in India to still be

E-Dialogue – 11.0 | Urbanisation in Independent India – Learnings and the Way Forward Urbanisation

The eleventh edition of ‘E-Dialogues’ was based on the topic “Urbanisation in Independent India – Learnings and the Way Forward”. Since independence, India had witnessed a slow rate of urbanisation in the latter half of the 20th century. This was mainly due to the central government’s focus on the agrarian economy of India. It was only in the early 2000s that Indian cities started getting the much needed attention. In order to discuss how cities in India were developed since independence, Urban Update invited Dr Kulwant Singh, Former Asia Advisor, UN Habitat; Prof Tathagata Chatterji, Professor, Urban Management and Governance, Xavier School of Human Settlement; Shubhagato Dasgupta, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy and Research and Kumar Dhananjay, Consulting Editor, Urban Update. The session was moderated by Abhishek

Pandey, Editor, Urban Update.

Abhishek began by introducing the topic of the Webinar and saying that in India, there is a need to trace urbanisation trends post-independence India and figure out how we can improve our urban governance and design. He said, “While India has faced a population burst since Independence, its cities have witnessed uncontrolled rural to urban migration. This has resulted in cities becoming overcrowded and villages being mostly left vacant. It is high time now to try and understand how these changes have affected urban governance”

Dr Kulwant Singh informed that his focus is on the history of urbanisation. After independence, when more and more people moved to cities, there was a steep increase in urban settlement. “Larger cities are growing at a faster rate”, he said. He also showed the relation between urbanisation and economic growth and said, “More urbanised the state, higher is the per

underdeveloped,” claimed Dasgupta. Connecting global trends with that of India, he said, “This decade is that of development driven by Asian countries.” Due to the colonial influence in India’s early development, we have a very specific core structure of cities, with infrastructural policies that are embedded in city administration. Decentralisation is a critical process and governments should consider the freedom of urban local bodies (ULBs).

Dhananjay introduced the importance of financial balance in urban development. He stressed upon the shortfall of execution of the policies, due to lack of freedom and coordination between the state, central government and the ULBs. He said, “There is a problem with the vision of the authorities. Lack of resources and freedom is the centre of this mess.” He also addressed the issue of limitations in the data on which the policies are formed. “Available statistics and data do not represent the reality of the nation.”

Answering Abhishek’s question regarding the reason of better working Cantonment Boards in comparison to urban bodies, Dr Singh presented the following points. First, the size of the Cantonment Boards (CB) is significantly smaller than that of most ULBs. Secondly, CBs are not elected bodies. And thirdly, they have enough resources provided by the central government. Chatterji answered a question from the audience regarding the failure of ULBs. “Funds and the master plan are not well balanced and distributed. We need to rethink the concept of decentralisation. What we need now is more of graded decentralisation, where power should be divided according to the capability,” said Chatterji. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and New Urban Agenda (NUA) provided the best framework for further developments. Answering a question about empowering ULBs, Dasgupta said that the political focus on the development of cities is insufficient and needs attention.

EIA NEEDS TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE

Webinar-12
EIA: CITIZENRY AND ENVIRONMENT

Organized by UCLG, ESPAC, Urban Update

August 20, 2020 Thursday
 11:00 AM (Indian Standard Time)

SPEAKERS

MODERATOR
 Mr. Kumar Shastri
 Consulting Editor, Urban Update

All are most welcome to attend the webinar. For registration, please visit <https://bit.ly/3g4KCDY> or scan QR code.

For any technical query or attending the webinar, please write to us at contact@urbanupdate.in or call 84469 74444. We're here to help!

E-Dialogue – 12.0 | EIA: Citizenry and Environment New India and Environment Policies

The twelfth edition of E-Dialogues was based on Government of India’s Environment Impact Assessment draft proposal (EIA). Although policymakers claimed that the proposal was aimed at strengthening environmental laws and safeguarding the country’s greenery, a number of activists, scholars, experts and even the common people think otherwise. Paving the way for a number of controversial by laws, activists argue, the EIA not only weakens the country’s regulatory system on environmental issues but also allows private stakeholders to misuse these common, essential resources to their advantage and profit. In order to know more about what exactly the EIA is, Urban Update invited an illustrious panel for the Webinar. The panel consisted of Vimlendu Jha, Founder, Swecchha India; Bhavesh Singh, Environmental Coordinator, Aakhvi Consultants, Abhilasha Shrivastava, Former Research Biologist, Wildlife Institute of India (WII); Stalin Dayanand, Project Director, Vanashakti NGO; and Colonel CP Muthanna, President, Coorg Wildlife Society (CWS). The session was moderated by Kumar Dhananjay, Consulting Editor,

Urban Update.

Dhananjay introduced the theme of the Webinar saying, “Activists have been arguing for a stronger environmental policy in India since decades. However, the EIA proposal sheds light on the willingness of the government to leave the fate of the country’s natural environment and wildlife in the hands of industrialists.” Stating that this will not only have a devastating effect in the near future on forests and wildlife in India, Dhananjay said that it will act as a catalyst for global climate change. To talk about this in detail, Dhananjay invited Vimlendu Jha to speak first.

Jha began by saying that the EIA 2020 is, in every possible way, detrimental to our environment, the people and their health. “India was placed 168th in the biennial Environment Performance Index 2020 released by Yale University. Since the past 7-8 years, India has also been experiencing a situation which calls for an ‘environment emergency’, particularly in its metropolises. Thus, the need of the hour was a policy that strengthens the environment governance model. But the EIA 2020 proposal does the exact opposite of that.” The EIA places ease of doing business as a more important factor for policies than conservation of the

environment and can be seen as a compendium of violations, a book titled “How to kill the environment” instead.

Bhavesh Singh spoke next and called the EIA proposal a regressive departure from the need of the hour. Stating that the government has now exempted highway projects from getting an environment clearance as an example, Singh claimed that we are actually moving backwards in our march towards a strong environmental governance model. “This will give a free hand to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the National Highway and Infrastructure Development Corporation (NHIDC) to build highways through forests in the name

of development and urbanisation. This will not only have devastating effects on the ecosystems around cities but will also affect the people residing in these places of development.”

Abhilasha, a former research biologist at WII, said that working with the institute gave her a chance to work in forests across India. “The EIA 2020 proposal violates the constitutional right of Indian citizens to clean air, water and environment. The proposal also allows industries that may be detrimental to both the environment and the citizenry, to operate without clearances and continue to harm the environment.” She went on to talk about how harming the environment not only harms us and causes global warming but also affects the economy, not just in cities but also

in small towns and villages. Thus, we need to look at the EIA not just as a danger to us but also to the world and its economy. Stalin Dayanand supplemented Abhilasha’s stance by stating that the Articles 48 (A) and 51-A (g) of the Indian Constitution put the responsibility of conserving the environment on the state and the duty on the citizens.

The EIA 2020 proposal removes people from the entire governance model and limits their right to protest against environmentally degrading activities even though India is a participatory democracy. Although India is a signatory to the 1992 Rio Convention on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification, it does not uphold the basic requirement of the convention to use a precautionary approach in matters of the environment. “The EIA 2020 proposal does the exact opposite of that and is sanctioning and encouraging environmental violation in return for a meagre amount to be paid by industrialists as fines. “We should not just look at the EIA 2020 draft proposal, we should look through it and around it,” said Col Muthana. He said that the EIA proposal points to the fact that the country is heading towards a complete authoritarian rule in terms of environmental governance.

This has, he suspects, largely been a result of the actions of vested interest groups. Along with this, there is also a systematic effort to dilute the democratic process and norms, he feels. Earlier, only projects related to strengthening India’s armed forces were kept out of the purview of EIA and the Right to Information. However, the EIA 2020 proposal has now given a free hand to the government to term any activity as being ‘strategically important’ and push it out of people’s right to question and protest against such projects/activities.

Dhananjay concluded the topic by stating the importance of continuing to question such potentially destructive and detrimental laws and working towards safeguarding the environment for our future generations.

“INDIA WAS PLACED 168TH IN THE BIENNIAL ENVIRONMENT PERFORMANCE INDEX 2020 RELEASED BY YALE UNIVERSITY. SINCE THE PAST 7-8 YEARS, INDIA HAS ALSO BEEN EXPERIENCING A SITUATION WHICH CALLS FOR AN ‘ENVIRONMENT EMERGENCY’, PARTICULARLY IN ITS METROPOLISES. THUS, THE NEED OF THE HOUR WAS A POLICY THAT STRENGTHENS THE ENVIRONMENT GOVERNANCE MODEL. BUT THE EIA 2020 PROPOSAL DOES THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF THAT”

Vimlendu Jha, Founder, Swecchha India



PLANNED CITIES RESILIENT TO DISASTERS

The poster for Webinar-13, titled "Disaster and Cities: Mitigation & Resilience", is set against a red background. At the top left, it lists organizers: UCLG, UNFPA, and UrbanUpdate. The date is August 27, 2020, Thursday, at 11:00 AM Indian Standard Time. The E-Dialogues logo is at the top right. The central image shows a scene of destruction with rubble and people. Below the title, there are sections for "SPEAKERS" and "MODERATOR" with circular portraits of each participant. At the bottom, there are contact details for registration, a QR code, and technical support information.

E-Dialogue- 13.0 | Disasters and Cities: Mitigation and Resilience Urban planning and disaster management

The thirteenth edition of the E-Dialogues series was based on the topic “Disasters and Cities: Mitigation and Resilience”. Through the Webinar, Urban Update tried to understand the urban preparedness, available resources, gaps in capacity building, and knowledge sharing among governments. All tiers of governments in different countries are taking measures to lessen the impacts of natural disasters and avoid man-made disasters altogether. As part of the Webinar, Urban Update invited Dr Animesh Kumar, Deputy Head (Asia Pacific), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR); Dr Prabodh Dhar Chakrabarti, Lead International Consultant, UNDP, UNESCAP&World Bank; Dr Birupakshya Dixit, India Coordinator, Practical Action & Mihir R Bhatt, Director, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute. The session was moderated by Kumar Dhananjay, Consulting Editor, Urban Update.

Dhananjay introduced the topic and said that every city in India and for that matter across the world is facing the question today that how to make themselves more resilient and mitigate the suffering in the face of a disaster.

The point is, there are things that science can predict but what it can't predict are natural hazards that have increasingly imposed risks to human life and the wellbeing of communities. Therefore, it becomes imperative that for disaster risk management and climate change globally, urban planning is a major factor that needs to be reconsidered. He questioned the preparedness of Indian cities, how resilient they are, to mitigate the effects in case of a disaster. The first to speak was Dr Animesh, who began by saying that in most countries as we move forward, we know already that a greater number of people now live in the urban areas in the world than in the rural areas and this figure will only increase to two-third by 2050. He added that it is known that unplanned urbanization, the growth, and spurt of infrastructure in the cities puts the inhabitant of these cities at very high risk of mortality and economic losses. He talked about the increasing frequency of floods among other disasters and of urban floods and that cyclones are becoming increasingly tropical. Dr Animesh, pointed out to the rising levels of air pollution and said that pollution is itself becoming an issue in most of the urban parts of the country and due to COVID-19 there is some positive news actually. The emission of

carbon dioxide has declined by around 10 per cent from 2019 to 2020. He concluded by saying that this is a slight opportunity that we need to harness and see to it that the air pollution elements can be tackled as much as possible.

The next speaker, Dr Chakrabarti, pointed out the exposure factor, which he said had two dimensions, exposure of the population and exposure of the economy. Cities as we know have a very highly dense population, particularly in the developing countries. He gave the example of Dharavi slum area in Mumbai and said that about two lakh seventy thousand people living in one square kilometre area so that means, when there will be a disaster then too many people will be exposed to it. Then he talked about the economic factor and said because the cities as we know are producing almost 75 per cent of the wealth of the countries. So if there is a disaster in the cities, the level of damages would be enormous. One important way how this can be mitigated is that we have to make sure that our economy and people are protected. These are very serious challenges when one talks about exposure; it is the vulnerable people and the vulnerable assets in the urban areas that are getting exposed. He took the example of Chennai Airport which went unoperational for seven days during flood situation. So, the infrastructure in the city is highly vulnerable and not resilient. He mentioned his study on measuring the risks and resilience of the states of India, which includes cities as well. He concluded with results of the study and said that we have done quite a lot in disaster preparedness, but a lot more work still needs to be done in the field of disaster prevention and disaster mitigation.

Dr Dixit, who was invited next, pointed out the issues of floods increasing in the cities, and cities in most part of India and even globally can be seen struggling with this flooding. Mostly the cities are vulnerable due to many factors like rapid growth and inadequate planning,

then the population density in most of the cities and the unplanned growth of the city along with the population are presenting more challenges. Then we see why city residents are more vulnerable because they have more dependency on infrastructure and service provider. He gave the example of his city, Bhubaneswar that had no issue of flooding or water logging, he said that but this is man-made actually. Because now the outskirts of the city has been encroached, the rivers have been encroached and the water bodies and wetlands have been encroached and there is no proper drainage. This is making the urban poor, the low income group people in the city the most vulnerable because their density is higher; their settlements are informal which are located in environmentally vulnerable areas. In his opinion, governments at all levels are giving very less attention towards city flooding and water logging. He concluded by saying that this can be controlled if proper steps are taken. Bhatt while talking about what happens to the victims of these disasters in the longer term and how much time the recovery takes, said that he thinks that we leave after a maximum year and a half. That is when the real recovery starts and that is when the real struggle for both, the citizens, as well as the city, and the authorities starts. One area where there is a lot of struggle is that most of our understanding of our cities is very limited to the cities as they are and as they were in the past.

But cities are changing very rapidly. So there is dynamic and quantum change in the cities which we haven't grasped. Second major change that we see is that we look at disasters in terms of the hazards that we know but there are new hazards which are coming up such as COVID-19 pandemic, heatwaves, and pollution. So, these are the areas where the impact unfolds much slower. He summed up by saying that urban resilience is very much based on what we think is going to get you back to the previous situation of the city but this is not what is required; rather requirement is of a transformation.

SWM IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

E-Dialogue- 14.0 | Sustainable Solid Waste Management during COVID-19 and Solid waste

Urbans Update organised the fourteenth edition of the E-Dialogues series as a pre-event of UNCRD's 3R and Circular Economy Forum 2020. The topic for this Webinar was 'Sustainable Solid Waste Management during COVID-19'. The panel for the Webinar consisted of Aditi Ramola, Technical Director, International Solid Waste Association; Dr Roshan Miranda, Co-Founder and Director, Waste Ventures, Hyderabad; Sonia Duhan, Waste Management Expert, Municipal Corporation Gurugram and Francesca Calisesi, Associate Officer, Solid Waste Management Team, Urban Basic Services Section, UN-Habitat. Dr Kulwant Singh, Former Asia Advisor, UN-Habitat, moderated the session.

Dr Singh introduced the theme of the webinar by pointing to the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the issue of health and sanitation workers' safety to the forefront, revealing the unsafe and unsanitary conditions that they work in. "Thus, this edition of E-Dialogues aims to bring their plight before the eyes of the common people and find solutions to tackle this problem. Moreover, by

talking to experts and people who have worked at the grassroots level, we also wish to popularize efforts of local governments and municipalities in safeguarding sanitary workers' right to a healthy working environment," said Dr Singh.

Dr Singh invited Aditi Ramola as the first speaker. "With an ever-growing urban population, the ever-expanding volume and complexity of solid waste and the changing household consumption patterns, particularly during COVID-19, have quickly made solid waste management a nightmare for numerous governments," said Ramola. She added that the pandemic has also caused an increase in some waste streams and a decrease in others. For example, city administrations have seen a massive rise in the number of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like gloves and masks coming from households. This has been accompanied with a rise in the volume of single use plastics as well. Thus, municipal corporations around the world are now facing an unprecedented crisis in waste collection, segregation and disposal. Ramola concluded by saying that she believes in the post-COVID world, waste management services will move aggressively towards automation, an extensive use of technology, while governments

will move towards adopting circular economies to drastically reduce the total waste generated and resources wasted.

Dr Roshan Miranda began by stating that solid waste is the world's second biggest producer of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. Although, waste management experts expected that due to COVID-19, people will learn the importance of sustainable waste management. Although the realization came, it wasn't as effective as was expected. Moreover, dumping yards now not only have hazardous plastic waste but also PPE kits acting as a major health hazard for sanitation workers and those living around them. Additionally, improper waste collection turns the waste pickers into disease carriers, putting not only their own lives at risk but also increasing the possibility of transmitting the disease from one house/locality to the other. "The absence of a uniform waste management method, especially in the case of bio hazards like gloves and masks is also a huge risk that India faces. Thus, we must work together

with the government and municipal corporations to import advanced and innovative waste management equipment in India and make it a safe activity for all," said Dr Miranda while concluding his argument.

Sonia Duhan was invited next to present the viewpoint of a corporation in handling the increased and more complex volumes of waste during COVID-19. She verified the claims of the other panellists and said that during the pandemic, the corporation was burdened with numerous additional services. These included a larger inflow of different types of waste (dry, waste and biomedical hazardous), a greater requirement for better waste segregation at source and regular and uninterrupted waste collection services in all COVID and non-COVID houses and hospitals. In order to fulfil these requirements, the Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG) undertook various measures like labelling houses with COVID-19 positive patients as a 'quarantine household', spreading awareness amongst the societies on the need

to maintain social distancing and disposing of waste from quarantine households separately and spreading awareness among the waste collectors/pickers on the dangers of coming in direct contact with bio hazardous waste coming from households and the methods of handling it safely. All in all, despite a gigantic rise in the city's population over the years and an uncontrolled rise in COVID cases, the MCG was able to successfully and safely handle all waste generated by the city's residents during and after the lockdown.

Francesca Calisesi, representing UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities Program (WWCP), was the last to present her organisation's role in helping municipal corporations tackle COVID waste responsibly globally. She began by explaining what the WWCP is and how COVID-19 has only intensified the problem of solid waste management (SWM) in cities around the world. "UN-Habitat, through the WWCP, has also issued strategy guidelines for better SWM. This guideline includes a 10 point strategy and includes measures like experience and knowledge sharing between different cities, interconnectivity of different stakeholders responsible for SWM within a city and continuous expansion and technological advancement of SWM services," she said. Thus, UN-Habitat has tried to maintain a constant flow of research data on SWM, particularly due to its changing role during the pandemic, and helped cities cope with the ongoing crisis.

Dr Kulwant Singh concluded the fruitful and enlightening webinar by saying that the pandemic has increased importance of knowledge sharing, sharing of best practices and coordination between different cities to manage solid waste responsibly. It has also shown that municipal corporations and local governments around the world are fully capable of handling a crisis as big as this one and proven to the world that their role in the lives of the citizens is indispensable. ■

ADITI RAMOLA ADDED THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS ALSO CAUSED AN INCREASE IN SOME WASTE STREAMS AND A DECREASE IN OTHERS. FOR EXAMPLE, CITY ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE SEEN A MASSIVE RISE IN THE NUMBER OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) LIKE GLOVES AND MASKS COMING FROM HOUSEHOLDS. THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED WITH A RISE IN THE VOLUME OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS AS WELL. THUS, MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AROUND THE WORLD ARE NOW FACING AN UNPRECEDENTED CRISIS IN WASTE COLLECTION, SEGREGATION AND DISPOSAL

Migrant workers must find apt place in urban policies



ASHOK WANKHADE

Managing Editor

Migrant workers of urban India, whether engaged in construction activities or other economic activities of cities, are the builders of our cities. The available data suggests that there are about 500 million informal workers in the country. The pandemic provides us a window to take a sneak peek into their living standards, social security and find solutions within our urban planning, design, and governance mechanism

Six months on, the pandemic is not over yet. It is getting worsened by the day, in terms of the number of cases and death being reported in India. The nation that has managed to control the pandemic in the initial phase with phased wise lockdown is struggling to cope up with the evolving challenges of opening up of the economy. When the lockdown was announced, none of us can forget the scenes flashed on our TV screen where hundreds of migrant workers gathered at railway stations and bus stops to leave the city for their respective homes in far-flung villages. This indicates that Indian cities have to be made inclusive in real terms to ensure inclusivity at all fronts.

When the lockdown was announced, it also came to surface that people working in informal sectors were living in poor living conditions and had a greater risk of getting infected. The problem of equitable access to housing facilities and adequate civic services is of major concern. Now the unlocking of economic activities has begun, we should not forget the lessons learned during the lockdown and continuously work on making cities inclusive. The idea of the government to start the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) must be explored further to ensure its wider reach and financial suitability. And, this cannot be done until private players find it rewarding.

ECONOMIC MELTDOWN AND URBAN POOR

As per economic theories, if the GDP of a nation registers negative growth in two financial quarters then it is considered a recession. The government data

suggest that the Indian economy is in the recession phase. This is because of nationwide lockdown and a sudden halt in economic activities. People are staying away from discretionary buying and it has resulted in low demand in the market. Workers in the informal sector are the worst affected because of job-loss and pay cuts. The unemployment rate is gradually coming back to the pre-COVID time but the demand for discretionary products is going to remain low hence would affect the income of the informal workforce for some more time. The migrant workers are the backbone of industrial activities in the cities and the vulnerabilities of informal jobs must be addressed to make sure cities are inclusive.

This calls for a discussion on initiating an urban employment guarantee scheme that can benefit the people in need of a job. There are a host of good examples available as a few state governments have taken some initiatives at their level to employ the needy. The Odisha government announced a Rs 100-crore Urban Wage Employment Initiative for the urban poor in 114 urban local bodies. Himachal Pradesh and Kerala have initiated employment schemes for the poor. Odisha had engaged civil society organization through which they gave funding to resident welfare associations in low-income colonies to build community centers, repairing of civic infrastructure such as stormwater drains, etc. Most of these works were labour intensive and the result of this is visible in the unemployment rate of different states during the last six months period. There is a need for more discussion on finding out the fitting solutions for addressing economic vulnerabilities of the urban poor in cities and also ensuring adequate access to civic services and infrastructure. ■



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WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

Urban Update is a leading magazine on sustainable development of cities brought out by All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG). Bringing together the experience of the multilateral sector with that of the private sector and the local governments themselves, the magazine focuses on the challenges and solutions for city leaders and local governments.

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की सफाई मेरी जिम्मेदारी है

