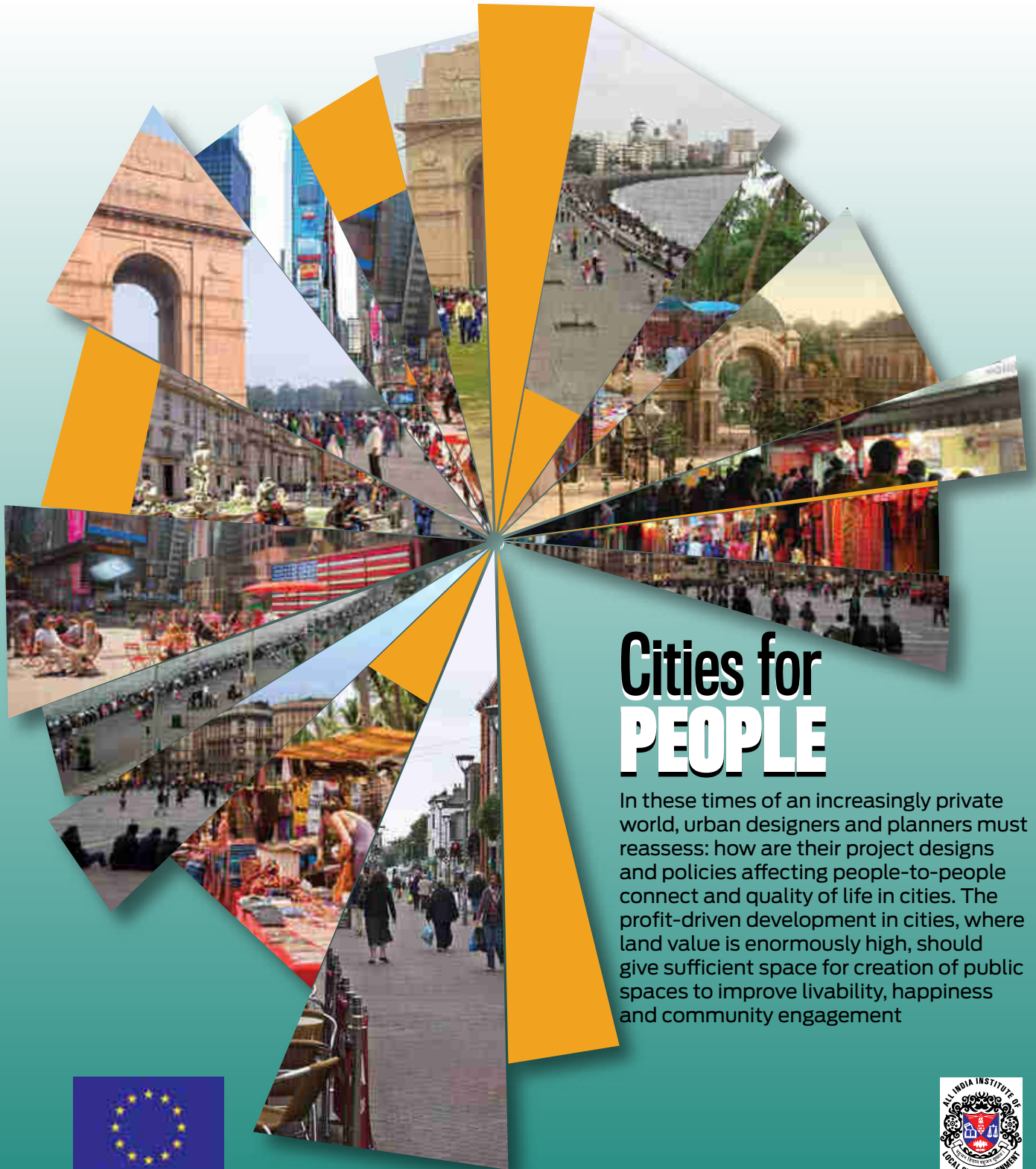


# Urban Update

Volume VI, Issue III

JULY 2019



## Cities for PEOPLE

In these times of an increasingly private world, urban designers and planners must reassess: how are their project designs and policies affecting people-to-people connect and quality of life in cities. The profit-driven development in cities, where land value is enormously high, should give sufficient space for creation of public spaces to improve livability, happiness and community engagement



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# SAFE SMART CITIES CONFERENCE

## THE OPPORTUNITY

SAFETY IN A RAPIDLY URBANISING SMART WORLD

19 JULY 2019

HOTEL THE LALIT, NEW DELHI

## COVERAGE

Cyber Security & Privacy, Command & Control Center Operations, Analytics, Critical Infrastructure, Video Analytics AI, Blockchain, IOT, Cloud, Big Data

## WHO IS ATTENDING

Government Ministry, Policy Makers, Project Consultants, Master System Integrators, Project Management Companies, IOT Companies, Telecom, AI Analytics, Cyber Security Firms, Physical Security Firms, Corporate Security Services, Asset Management Companies.

## SPEAKERS

<i>Chief Guest</i> <b>Durga Shankar Mishra*</b> Secretary MOHUA	<b>Rahul Kapoor</b> Director Smart Cities MOHUA	<b>Sunita Kangra</b> Mayor SDMC	<b>Avtar Singh</b> Mayor NDMC	<b>Manisha Saxena</b> Secretary Urban Development
<b>Mahip Tejasvi</b> CEO Gwalior Smart City Ltd.	<b>Avinash Singh*</b> CEO Kanpur Smart City Limited	<b>KS Tanvar</b> Vice - Chairman NDMC	<b>Ajit Pai*</b> OSD NITI Aayog	<b>Arun Prakash*</b> Commissioner Agra Municipal Corporation
<b>Nidhi Srivastava*</b> CEO NDMC	<b>Ashutosh Dwivedi*</b> Municipal Commissioner Varanasi Municipal Corporation	<b>Santosh Khadsare</b> Scientist E CERT-IN	<b>Samrendra Kumar</b> MD MitKat Advisory	<b>Vikas Aggarwal</b> Partner, Advisory Services EY
<b>Jitendra Hiramani</b> Cluster Head LNT	<b>Ajay Gupta</b> Global Head - Smart Cities, IOT Tech Mahindra	<b>Jasbir Singh Solanki</b> Chief Operating Officer Mahindra Defence Systems	<b>Ajay Gupta</b> Head Enterprise Security Siemens	<b>Hemal Vora</b> Group Function Head, IoT Adani

\* Invited, Confirmation Awaited

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# UrbanUpdate

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# Building vibrant, inclusive public spaces

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

“Streets and their sidewalks, the main public spaces of a city, are its most vital organs”, said

Jane Jacobs, the noted urbanist-author, outlining their central role in sustainable urbanisation. Other examples of public spaces are squares, parks, gardens and beaches which offer unrestricted access to all. Some may consider spaces such as playgrounds, stadia, railway stations, libraries, and theatres which offer paid access, as public spaces too since they provide access and gathering opportunity to large number of people.

Public spaces must be crafted with people in mind. Public spaces facilitate citizens and therefore citizens must be kept at the centre of any public space. Take for example roads. A road is more than just a mechanism of connecting two different points of a city; a road enables people travel across the city. Thus roads should be designed with people in mind – people in vehicles, on bicycles and on foot. Roads will then be designed with adequate sidewalks, signaling systems for safety, dropped kerbs for wheelchair access, pedestrian crossings with signals, seating arrangements, and so on.

Public spaces such as parks and gardens provide leisure spaces and promote interaction among people in groups. Such spaces must be designed with the intent of supporting such activity and therefore may include small eateries, seating spaces, washrooms, and above all security to prevent misuse and undesirable activity. Needless to say, efficient public spaces can go a long way in promoting happiness and quality of life of citizens and therefore this could be a focus area for urban local bodies. In our view, some factors are essential


in building such public spaces. Access is one. Such public space assets need to be made well accessible by various modes of transport, notably public transport. Availability of adequate, organized parking also adds to the appeal of such places. Upkeep and maintenance of public spaces such as parks and beaches is not always impressive. This is crucial in order to ensure good quality of leisure time for visitors. At the same time upkeep becomes difficult due the unrestricted access and absence of entry gate revenue. In addition, public spaces must be inclusive, i.e., provide access to all sections of the population. These spaces which provide physical and psychological well-being are necessary for all and thus cannot be denied to any section, even inadvertently.

Public spaces can serve as showpieces of sustainable urbanization setting examples for visitors to learn and replicate elsewhere. These must incorporate principles of green buildings, must promote efficient and low energy lighting, as also showcase water conservation and waste reduction, reuse and recycling. Public spaces also provide the opportunity to convey other social messages, as has been done by painting Swachh Bharat Mission messages on public walls. These will enable achieve larger objectives. Street art and events like Happy Streets have become popular in recent times and have added vibrancy to our public spaces. These must be encouraged. Therefore efficient public spaces will enable urban local bodies meet citizens' aspirations while also engaging with them to build more livable cities. This issue of Urban Update looks at various dimensions of this subject of public spaces, which we hope will enable generate new ideas and approaches. ■



Women empowerment, issues related to digitalisation and artificial intelligence, and progress in achieving 'SDGs' and in our common efforts to address major global challenges such as terrorism and climate change form the rich agenda of the G-20 summit

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister of India



Over 70% of the greenhouse emission was due to the developed countries while India's contribution is just 3%. India will also work towards creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide through tree cover by 2030

**Prakash Javadekar**  
Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

## PIN POINT



India would have installed 175GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022 without taking into account large hydro project and 225GW including large hydro project. By 2030, India plans to establish 500GW of renewable energy capacity

**Anand Kumar, Secretary**  
Ministry of New and Renewable Energy



Only rain can save Chennai from this situation. The acute water shortage has forced the city to scramble for urgent solutions and residents have to stand in line for hours to get water from government tanks

**Leonardo DiCaprio**  
Hollywood actor & environmentalist

## BUZZ



**WRI India**  
@WRIIndia

As #India makes progress towards a #renewableenergy future, #airpollution from thermal power plants must be addressed directly for the country to achieve its global #climate targets



**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**  
DG, World Health Organization  
@DrTedros

Proud to be part of the @g20org family. Our message is simple: health is a political choice. We call on #G20 countries to invest in health, a driver of jobs & growth, and in preparing for and preventing emergencies, rather than just responding to them. #HealthForAll



**Amina J Mohammed**  
Deputy Secretary General, UN  
@AminaJMohammed

Gender inequality in family relationships means that women often have to bargain for their fair share. It's on all of us to ensure that #FamiliesOfToday enable women & girls to realize their full potential #WomensProgress2019 #GlobalGoals



**LaToya Cantrell**  
Mayor of New Orleans  
@mayorcantrelli

For New Orleans, climate change is not a future scenario, but a current reality. By transitioning our city fleets and busses to electric vehicles, we are ensuring that our taxpayers' dollars are being invested in protecting and improving their quality of life

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July 2019

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If cities have only factories, mills, houses, hospitals, godowns, schools and big hotels, I don't think any city will survive in its real sense. Unfortunately, in the name of development, huge structures have been erected all over at all times in the past five decades leading to warmer climate in cities

### 34 **Some fine public spaces**

Efficient public spaces are vital to ensure livability of a city. These need to be crafted and nurtured in various ways to promote well-being of its citizens in an inclusive and sustainable manner

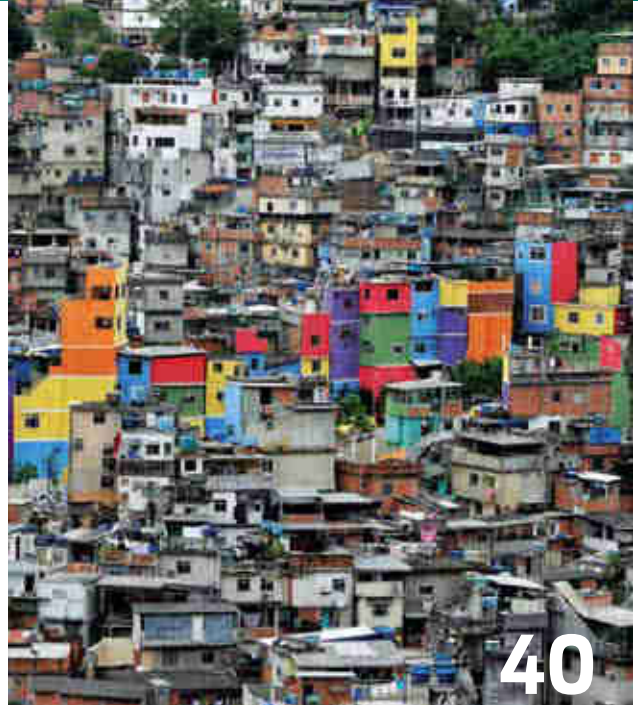
### 36 **Let's redefine public spaces, let's bring back urban forests**

### 38 **Delhi's public gyms: Integrating public spaces with fitness**

In a bid to improve the fitness level of Delhiites, the local authorities, taking note of China's National Fitness campaign of 2008, initiated the 'Open Public Gyms' project in 2012. Integrating public spaces with health and fitness, the project has proven to be a hit amongst people and several other cities of India are planning to or already have installed such gyms in their urban spaces as well

### 40 **The key to resilient housing lies in the fine print**

### 42 **Nagpur installs first water ATM that yields no wastewater**



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### 26 **Cities for People**

In these times of an increasingly private world, urban designers and planners must reassess: how are their project designs and policies affecting people-to-people connect and quality of life in cities. The profit-driven development in cities, where land value is enormously high, should give sufficient space for creation of public spaces to improve livability, happiness and community engagement

## LEADERSPEAK

### 30 **A major component of citizens' well being'**

Public spaces have a far-reaching positive impact on the health of people. A host of studies have suggested that the postal code of a person can tell more about their health condition than their genetic code. Now, doctors can also relate diseases of a person from his/her life places, where the person had lived or is still living. This revelation is one more reason for city managers to focus on building and maintaining quality public open spaces and improving urban ecosystem

# Equi-City to develop mobile app for monitoring of municipal services

## Team Equi-City

It is estimated that one-third of Nagpur city's population lives in slums spread across the city and form more than 300 slum pockets. In terms of addressing citizen's grievances, there is no monitoring or evaluation system to track the status of the key services or to track the status of complaints. Hence, complaints are not answered within the prescribed time.

This Municipal Rating System will enhance citizen participation and effectiveness in local decision making and policy making while at the same time improves citizens' knowledge of local administration (LA). It is expected that communities and citizens are interested in engaging with the LA and readily take up the citizens rating system to promote efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

As a part of the Municipal Rating

System, a community scorecard and citizen scorecard will be developed which will capture some of the questions that seek to answer a) citizens' views and experiences of service delivery, b) variations in service delivery and provision, c) efficiency in service delivery, d) relationship between consumer satisfaction and perceptions of local governance, and e) remedial measures to improve service delivery and local governance. IT based feedback systems (Equi-City Mobile App) will feed into strengthening the monitoring and evaluation tools.

## Objective of the Equi-City Mobile App

A Mobile app with web based backend that will enable to capture real time survey data. It will provide a platform to citizens to feed the real-time data of different questionnaire based on the options.

The proposed app will ramp up time for fast data collection which will help Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) to get accurate data with reports to

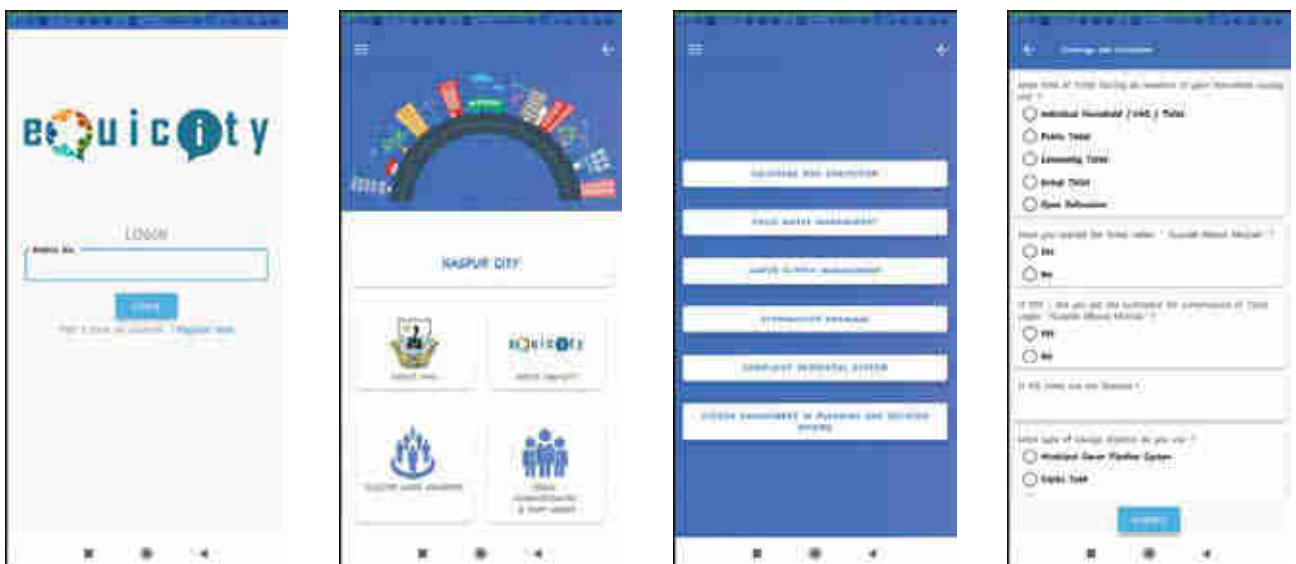
analyze citizen's perception based on service quality.

The purpose of developing this app is to capture real-time data across city area from citizens for effective monitoring and evaluation of shortcomings in service delivery and promote effective decision making. The app will also act as a bridge to pass the information in real time from citizens to NMC authorities. The app will be highly effective and should reduce the reporting time and improve the quality of reports being generated.

Some of the envisioned outcomes are:

- ◆ Improvement in real-time monitoring process of various services
- ◆ Centralised dashboard at Ward and Zone Level
- ◆ Ensuring accountability of real data
- ◆ Transparency in record keeping.
- ◆ Creation of digital database of works done as per the requirement of the project

The best performing Zones and Wards will be further encouraged through Urban Awards Ceremony.





# Empowering youth through IEC activities on water & sanitation in Nagpur

THE NATURE OF IEC activities of Equi-City Project on water & sanitation awareness in schools and universities is to directly expose youth to problems that the underserved populations are facing, and the role of authorities. These educational campaign programmes can help promote serious reflection and discussion on issues such as water depletion, wastage and pollution, degradation, water related conflicts, and sanitation. For example, watershed monitoring, connecting schools upstream and downstream and information sharing and networking each other, is a great way to observe the impact of their settlement at a bioregional perspective. Community youth programmes often like to get involved in cleaning and protecting of the communities' water source through different collective eco-restoration actions.

Hence, empowering young people as promoters in the field of water and sanitation is a way of assuring that a project or programme has a greater effect and more long lasting impact on the communities. When trying to find solutions to water contamination and ways to improve access to water and sanitation in any given community, it is essential that youth become involved, so they themselves can work together in an organized fashion to identify appropriate solutions to the problems, and then take ownership" of the measures to apply those solutions.

The prevalence of stunting in India (38.4 per cent) is among the highest in the world, and diarrhea is a major killer of children below 5 years of age. Both these conditions closely relate to unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), India's flagship and the world's largest sanitation programme, aims to accelerate universal access to sanitation in rural and urban India. Since its launch in 2014, SBM reports building close to 100 million toilets by providing financial incentives to needy

families, involving local governments and communities in construction and in monitoring progress, and by conducting mass awareness campaigns. In 2015, India was 60 per cent open-defecation free (ODF), lagging behind her neighbors Bangladesh at 99 per cent, Sri Lanka at 97 per cent, Pakistan at 88 per cent, and Nepal at 70 per cent ODF. Today, India is at an important juncture, with SBM data showing more than 98 per cent sanitation coverage and sample studies reporting good progress but lower coverage in terms of latrine ownership (71 per cent) and sanitation coverage (93.1 per cent) in rural India.

Environmental programmes should try to involve young people as promoters basically because they are enthusiastic and energetic. In this media age, young people have access to huge amounts of information that can sometimes be overwhelming.

Young people are prepared to take risks in confronting conventional structures. They are a sector of society that will be able to assure sustainability. Indeed, youth are often more sensitive and intuitive than many adults, which gives them an edge in decision making on what will work and where a program should be directed.

To prepare youth for advocacy requires awareness building, training, and skills transfer from specialists in a number of key areas including:

- ◆ Internet-based social networks
- ◆ Policy aspects of the right to water and the right to sanitation
- ◆ Social justice and equity
- ◆ Rhetoric and debating skills
- ◆ Decision-making and group facilitation tools
- ◆ Marketing skills
- ◆ Environmental health
- ◆ Problems related to water and sanitation

Important tools used by youth to promote water-related issues include: door-to-door campaigns, water forums and brigades, school environmental

groups, art contests, online and printed publications, educational radio and theatre shows, concerts, amongst others. This includes how they choose to generate their messages, and allowing them to be protagonists of change amongst school and community authorities.

Young people are empowered by knowing that they have the capacity to influence change, i.e., if they can see what they achieve. In the case of water quality, by measuring the water quality or researching improvements in health or biodiversity. Therefore, any action plan to deal with the prioritised and analysed issue should be geared towards attaining small, reachable goals. An attitude of not pointing out errors, but rather finding more about the goals they set in their action plan, is a way of promoting the change they want to see.

By forming or joining existing youth networks, as well as maintaining contact, young people are also empowered. But when at a teenage stage, and if coming from needy or poor communities, they may have a responsibility to contribute to fulfill financial requirements of the family. Committed youth groups can begin to break down under external life pressures, including both economic and family demands. This is why it is important to think through and put in place strategies for maintaining the involvement of motivated youth over the long haul. For example, considering small stipends for the more mature and experienced youth, as a transition from purely voluntary work; access to training, stimulus attached to internet and media, and certification can also be important incentives.

Through these IEC activities of Equi-City Project, youth can gain awareness about the growing urgency of issues related to water both locally and globally. So not only can environmental educational programmes help highlight the magnitude of the problem, but also bring all stakeholders together to implement probable solutions. Today's young people are those that take tomorrow's decisions - their involvement in today's problems are thus crucial! ■



AIIILSG successfully organised a workshop for newly recruited officials under City Level Technical Cell in Bihar



Ranjit S Chavan, President, AIIILSG; Rajiv Agarwal, (IAS, Retd), Director General, AIIILSG launched the training calendar for FY 19-20 at Head Office



AIIILSG organised a workshop on Government Process Re-engineering project at its Bhopal centre in august presence of Rahul Jain, IAS, Director T & C P

## Chennai to restore its 210 water bodies

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has decided to improve the water storage capacity of the city by restoring its water bodies. This decision comes when Chennai is suffering from severe water crisis. As per the reports, the city corporation will work on a total 210 water bodies to address water problem in the city. This work will include eco-restoration, plugging the sewage flow in water bodies and removing the encroachments nearby the water bodies. Residents and corporates also pitched in to undertake eco-restoration work in their localities.

## LMC imposes ₹50 lakh challans on 4 officials for Gomti river pollution



After NGT's verdict which penalised Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC) for garbage dumping and littering around Gomti river in Lucknow with ₹2 crore, the corporation has incriminated four officers for the deteriorating state of the river, fining ₹50 lakh each. The four officials are S P Singh, Chief Engineer (civil), Ram Nagina Tripathi, Chief Engineer (electromechanical), Rajesh Gupta, Zonal In-charge (3) and Ambi Bisht, Zonal In-charge (6). Indramani Tripathi, Commissioner, LMC, said, "Notices have been sent to the four officers. The monitory committee has recommended the NGT Delhi for realising the fine. If the NGT will confirm that the ₹2 crore fine should be collected from the officials, we will collect the amount."



## State government to bring Jaipur back in 'World Heritage list 2019'

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan Government will soon declare Jaipur heritage sites area a 'no construction zone'. As per the building by laws, no construction will be allowed till a certain distance from the heritage or ancient walls in the walled city, said a senior official. The government instructed the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) to issue notification under the Building by laws 1970, for the same.

The move comes after releasing a report on illegal construction and encroachments in the city. A team from 'International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)' that evaluates cities visited Jaipur last year in September 2018. ICOMOS warned about the concern in its report. After this Jaipur was removed from the World Heritage List.

A meeting was organised to discuss ways for the inclusion of Jaipur back in the World Heritage list 2019. The state-level heritage committee meeting was chaired by DB Gupta, Chief Secretary.

Officials from the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA), traffic and tourism department and JMC were present in the meeting. One of the corporation's senior official said, "JMC will follow guidelines of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to stop the illegal constructions in the city. Such constructions will be mapped, studied and a report will be made for action." In case, a building requires necessary repair work, a sanction will be required from a high-power committee of experts and officials. The JMC will issue architectural control guidelines, he added. The ICOMOS report was delivered to world heritage committee but the final decision will be taken in a meeting scheduled for mid July, at the Baku city of Azerbaijan. The government is preparing draft rules where the original architecture of the walled city cannot be tampered; a heritage cell in the JMC will ensure the same and monitor the illegal construction via CCTV cameras.

## India to be most populous country by 2027: UN

NEW YORK: A recent report of the United Nations (UN) has projected that, given the current scenario, India is likely to overtake China as the most populous country by 2027. The report, named "The World Population Prospects 2019", launched by the UN on June 17, highlights the trends of the world population and projects it to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, which is 2 billion more than the previously estimated 7.7 billion, making it the peak of global human population in history. Half of this population growth would come from 9 countries only: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Indonesia, Egypt and the United States of America.

The global fertility rate, which fell from 3.2 births per woman in 1990 to 2.5 in 2019, will decline further to 2.2 in 2050. India's current total fertility rate stands at 2.2 births per woman. Also, the life expectancy of people of developing countries is also seven years less than the global average. According to the report, "In 2019, life expectancy at birth in the least developed countries lags 7.4 years behind the global average, largely due to persistently high levels of child and maternal mortality, as well as violence, conflict and the continuing impact of the HIV epidemic."

## Delhi to get 1.4 lakh CCTV cameras for surveillance

Delhi government has planned to install a total of 1.4 lakh cameras in the city to ensure better surveillance in the national capital. Slum areas would also be included under the scheme. Manish Sisodia, Deputy CM of Delhi, inaugurated the scheme on June 22, in Patparganj, where 2,000 cameras are to be fixed. Sisodia said, "This is one of the biggest projects for women's security in New Delhi. The national capital will be the third city in the world to have such a massive network of CCTV cameras." The cameras will provide the RWA members, Station House Officers (SHOs) and PWD headquarters with live feed of the area and the feed would be shared by incorporating a wireless system.

## Smart classes to come up in Prayagraj for minorities



In an attempt to raise literacy and job oriented, technical education among the minorities of Uttar Pradesh, the district minority welfare department has been assigned the task of operation of smart classes for minorities at schools and madarsas of five villages and in different blocks of Prayagraj. This step is being taken under the PM's Janvikas Kalyan Yojna. ITI and Sadbhavna Bhawan would also be constructed. S P Tiwari, district minority welfare officer, said that the administration has issued orders to identify the villages and check the requirements. The administration has asked to carry out a survey and verification in the blocks for providing benefits under the scheme.

# NGT directs CPCB to strictly ban import of plastic waste

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to implement strict ban on import of plastic waste in India as it is very harmful for the environment.

A bench headed by Adarsh Kumar Goel, chairperson, NGT, said, "local bodies to encourage the use of plastic waste for road construction or waste to energy etc." The bench said, "Every producer or brand owner is required to make application for registration or for renewal of registration and such registration is done as per checklist issued by the CPCB. Extended producer responsibility is applicable and is required to be followed by producers, importers and brand owners as per applicable guidelines." The panel also directed CPCB to take action ensuring that the recommendations are completely implemented as per the plastic waste management rules. "The CPCB may furnish a further action taken report in the matter to this tribunal within two months by e-mail," the bench said while hearing a plea. The plea was filed by Amit Jain alleging that cheap waste paper and road sweep waste is imported to this country from US, Europe, etc. and it is being burnt which is causing land and air pollution. CPCB informed the tribunal that plastic waste import needs to be restricted as the hazardous waste generated in the country is to the extent of 26,000 tons a day and the same is not being properly managed.



# GLZ supports Odisha for sustainable urban development

BHUBANESWAR: To implement sustainable urban development – Smart Cities, Climate Smart Cities and adoption for climate change in cities, the Odisha government signed a note of technical cooperation with the Government of Germany. The note was signed in the presence of Pratap Jena, Housing and Urban Development Minister. Prem Kumar, Housing and Urban Development special secretary, Surath Chandra Mallick, Additional Commissioner, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, Saroj Kumar Swain, General Manager, Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited, and Tanja Feldmann, Project Director, Sustainable Urban Development Cluster, GIZ India, signed the note of technical cooperation. The aforementioned project aims to improvise the process of planning and implementing sustainable and

integrated urban development solutions, develop programs and policies for climate resilient urban systems and develop ICT based solutions for ease of governance.

The project, all over, will include development and application of concepts for sustainable urban development regarding the provisioning of urban basic services and housing in three selected smart cities which is Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Kochi (Kerala) and Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu). The German projects are expected to run until December 2021 and contribution through all the three projects combined is €16.4 million (INR 127 crore approximately). Under the Indo-German Development Cooperation, the projects aim to support 'mission Jaga' and 'mission Basudha' in capacity building of various stakeholders within December 2019. Furthermore, one of the projects aims to develop ICT based tool for adaptation to urban flooding scenario in Bhubaneswar by January 2020.



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## SDMC to create 'Bharat Darshan' park

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) is planning to create another waste to wonder park in Punjabi Bagh. It is looking for funds for the construction of the theme park. The park will be named as 'Bharat Darshan' park. In this park, replicas of famous monuments from all across the country like Charminar, Gateway of India, Sanchi Stupa, Victoria Memorial, and others made out of metallic waste will be placed. The scrap metal from municipal stores will be used for the project. Sunita Kangra, Mayor, SDMC said, "To continue the project, we are in contact with some private companies to grant us money under their corporate social responsibility heads and various other possible resources."

## Maharashtra govt to raze 54,000 trees for bullet train project

The execution of Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet train project will see the authorities raze approximately 54K mangrove trees in the region, said the Maharashtra state government on June 24. Diwakar Raote, State Transport Minister, has assured the state's legislative council that the government would be planting 5 trees in place of one tree. "The project will run on high pillars, to ensure the damage to mangroves and the environment is minimum. The floodwater will not enter Navi Mumbai, as no mangroves are being cut in the area," said Raote. The proposed land required for the construction of the bullet train project is 1,379 hectares, out of which approximately 275 hectares is privately owned in Maharashtra.

# World Bank approves \$147 million loan to improve civic services in Jharkhand

NEW DELHI: The Government of India, the Government of Jharkhand and the World Bank signed a \$147 million loan agreement on June 24, to provide basic urban services to the people of Jharkhand and help improve the management capacity of the urban local bodies (ULBs) in the state. The Jharkhand Municipal Development Project will focus on improving the municipal sector's capacity to provide basic urban services. It will focus on services such as water supply, sewage, drainage, and urban roads; and strengthen the capacity of the Jharkhand Urban Infrastructure Development Company (JUIDCO).

This is in keeping with the needs of a rapidly urbanising state where about 31 million people reside in urban areas and urban population growth in nine of 24 districts in Jharkhand is above India's overall urbanisation pace of 2.7 per cent.

The loan agreement was signed by Sameer Kumar Khare on behalf of the Government of India; Ameet Kumar,

Director, State Urban Development Agency, Urban Development & Housing Department, on behalf of the Government of Jharkhand; and Shanker Lal, Acting Country Director, World Bank India, on behalf of the World Bank

"Over the past decade, Jharkhand has been focusing on strengthening capacity of ULBs to deliver municipal services such as water supply and urban roads. However, there is a huge unfinished reforms and investment agenda for the state," said Junaid Kamal Ahmad, Country Director, World Bank India.

Most of the project components will be open to all 43 ULBs in the state who may wish to participate within an agreed framework under the project. Over 350,000 urban residents of the participating ULBs are expected to benefit, of which at least 45 per cent will be women. Work on two subprojects – Khunti water supply subproject and the Dhanbad roads subproject is expected to commence shortly.

## SDMC removes 120 MT debris from Yamuna belt

NEW DELHI: The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) removed 120 metric tons (MT) of garbage and debris from the Yamuna belt, areas adjacent to Zakir Nagar, Batla House and Delhi Noida Direct flyway. The SDMC in its weeklong plan had arranged five vehicles that undertook 26 trips to lift debris along the riverbanks.

Removed debris and garbage have been taken to ILFS C&D waste processing site at Shastri Park and some of the waste to landfill sites. Approximately 5,000 trucks carrying garbage are currently lying at the site, which includes 90-95 per cent mix garbage, four to eight per cent municipal solid waste, and one to three per cent plastic waste, which has to be transported to the waste to energy/designated site of SDMC. However, the civic body noted that they lack sufficient resources owing to which the desired pace of cleaning will be difficult to achieve. "As per an estimate, 10 tipper trucks...shall have to be engaged per day along with backhoe loader for which an amount of Rs 2,54,18,600 will be required for an exercise to be continued in 365 days," it said in a statement. As per another decision of the STF, an action against unauthorised construction will be required. "Since the area comes under the jurisdiction of DDA and UP irrigation department, the action will involve DDA and UP irrigation department, SDMC being part of this. The action once finalised may be taken up at an appropriate time," an official stated.

# 'Heaven on earth for cyclists'

LIMBURG, BELGIUM is home to an interesting architectural innovation. A 2-km cycling track is completed with a 212-meter track built across a pond, giving cyclists an opportunity to cycle at eye level with the water. 'Cycling through water', with its pleasing aesthetics, has become heaven on earth for cyclists from around the world.



## UD, Bihar expedites STP works at Beur, Karmalichak

Chaitanya Prasad, Principal Secretary, Urban Development and Housing Department (UDHD) asked the state Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation to complete the pending works of sewage treatment plant at Beur and Karmalichak by July end. The instructions came after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) made a critical observation over the delayed progress in construction of STPs in Bihar under Namami Gange Programme. Under the programme, Patna has been divided into six zones. Prasad said, strict actions would be taken against officials in case of further delay in completion of the project.

## BMC collects ₹3 cr fine under plastic ban



In an official release Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on June 26, said that the civic body has seized over 60,000 kg of plastic waste and collected a fine of over ₹3 crore under the single use plastic ban initiative during the period of a year from June 23, 2018, till June 25, 2019. Under the year-long plastic ban, the civic body conducted around 10,35,207 raids and seized 61,851,429 kg of plastic. Last year, on June 23, the state government of Maharashtra banned the use of all types of single-use plastic and ensured to take strict action against violators.

## BBMP to build raised crosswalks

BENGALURU: The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in order to ensure safety of roadside pedestrians and to keep check on speeding vehicles, decided to build more than 500 raised crosswalks (15 cm in height) and humps in different parts of the city roads.

S Somashekhar, Chief Engineer, Major Road Infrastructure, BBMP said, "Raised pedestrian crossings help in two ways – they control vehicle speed and ensure walkers' safely."

The initiative taken by the BBMP seeks to provide better road crossing facilities along Sarjapur Road, Magadi Road and Outer Ring Roads and other places in Bengaluru. Somashekhar said that the issue has been discussed with the Chief Secretary after the traffic police department made a request to build raised pedestrian crossings. "Traffic police had a requirement of 206 such crossings and several humps. But we had already invited tenders for more than 500 crossings, work orders for which will be issued shortly to the contractors. These



crossings will come up at important locations and the work will be taken up under the state government grants", he added.

The traffic police department also made a request to build pedestrian underpass at different locations in Bengaluru for citizen road crossings, but the request was turned down by officials saying that pedestrian underpass is not feasible for the city; even the ones already built are not in good condition. BBMP have identified 86 locations for foot over bridges to build in city and tender for the same have been floated for 32 locations.

## Park your vehicle in parking lots or pay fine: BMC

MUMBAI: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has passed a new order to encourage use of public transport and municipal parking lots. As per the new order, BMC decided to impose a fine of up to Rs 10,000 for unauthorised parking from July 7, of two-wheelers, three-wheelers and four-wheelers including trucks and buses.

The BMC has decided to impose the penalty not only on no parking zones but areas within one-kilometer radius of municipal parking lots and at junctions where two major roads meet, under the civic authority's jurisdiction. To make citizens aware of this rule BMC will put



hoardings and signages in public areas. According to BMC, it has a total of 146 municipal parking lots across the city and they can accommodate around 30,000 four wheelers and 4,000 two wheelers.

Praveen Pardeshi, BMC chief, has ordered all the wards under it to appoint contractors for collecting fines, he suggested to appoint ex-servicemen for the job for strict implementation of the rule. Speaking about the resistance by citizens regarding the imposed fines and penalties, Pardeshi said, "Parking vehicles in unauthorised areas is encroachment. The penalty is not only for unauthorised parking but also for encroachment and using public land. If BMC could demolish poor people's huts as encroachment for widening nullahs, can we not tow vehicles and fine them for traffic management?" Vijay Singhal, Additional Municipal Commissioner, BMC said, "People can use their private vehicles but should park them in parking lots provided by the BMC."



# GiDMC addresses urgent need of disaster preparedness

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Global Inclusive Disaster Management Conference (GiDMC) was organised at Delhi's Le Méridien Hotel on July 1-2. The theme of the event was "Visioning Sustainable Future – Resilience, Preparedness, Mitigation." An esteemed panel of speakers weighed in on how to make cities of today more disaster ready by prioritising disaster risk reduction. A total of four technical sessions were organised during the conference in which a range of issues were discussed on various innovative methodologies to tackle disasters, making cities more resilient and the implementation of the same

GiDMC 2019 witnessed participation from PSUs, corporates, NGOs and major associations involved in addressing the cause from all across the globe and witnessed 500+ global attendees, 80+ speakers and participation from more than 10 countries.

Technical session-1 of the conference saw participation of AIILSG's Technical Director, PashimTewari; Ranjan Panda, Convener, Water Initiatives Odisha; & Combat Climate Change Network, India; Digvijaysinh Chudasama, Director, Deloitte India and Manish Mohandas, Programme Officer (Resilience) at UNDP Strengthening City Resilience. The session was convened by Divya Sharma, Portfolio Leader-Urban Planning and Policy, Economic Policy Program, Oxford Policy Management, who briefed the attendees on the various projects which aim to make cities more disaster ready.

In the opening address of the session, PashimTewari talked about various methodologies that are currently being employed to develop the capacity of a city to reduce disaster risk. "People think of it (capacity building) as a training plan but it's much more than that. Even to serve is relevant to capacity, especially at ULB level. AIILSG looks at it that way. Every level of society- community, academy, industry and government- has some capacity to battle disasters. But, for efficient reduction of disasters, we need to define risks first," Tewari said. He also highlighted National Urban Learning Platform (NULP), an initiative of the Government of India, which aims to enhance the capacities of cities. Right now, the scheme is in its developmental phase and being tested out in two cities—Visakhapatnam and Pimpri-Chinchwad. In conclusion, he

pointed out that the capacity should be looked upon as a dynamic partnership between the various parties of a society in order to efficiently reduce disaster risks in cities. UNDP's Manish Mohandas highlighted UNDP's project to make 6 cities of India more disaster ready. Ranjan Panda expressed concern over the growing severity of climate change and the ignorance of the general public towards it. "Climate change must be recognised as a disaster and hence we should act accordingly," he said. He also encouraged people to not look at cities as stand-alone concepts and make villages more resilient with urban spaces as well.

Other than the sessions, the exhibition showcased exceptional products and services. The event also organised a recognition award ceremony for the exceptional achievers in the regime and 70 stakeholders which included sponsors, partners, supporters, exhibitors and media partners who were awarded.

The conference culminated with a valedictory session addressed by Ray Kancharla, Head of Child Centered Resilience and Adaptation (CCRA), Save the Children, Ruchi Saxena, Director, India Flying Labs, VP Mahawar, Ex-Director Onshore, ONGC, Anil Tyagi, Ex-Executive Director Indian Oil Corporation, AK Tiwari, Executive Director- Operations, Indian Oil Corporation Limited and JC Sekar, CEO & Co-Funder, AcuiZen Technologies Singapore.



## Leh gets one of a kind meditation center on International Yoga Day



Leh gets its first meditation hall, named 'Shangrila Pyramid Meditation Hall' on International Yoga Day. The center is first of its kind to be installed in India's Himalayan region and was inaugurated on June 21. The meditation hall at Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC), Leh and is built in the shape of a pyramid. The center has been developed by Pyramid Societies Social Movement in collaboration with MIMC and aims to promote wellness, health, harmony and non-violence in the region. The pyramid meditation method is being promoted largely in India's rural areas by spiritual master Brahmharishi Pitamaha Patriji, founder of the Worldwide Spiritual Societies Movement, India.

## Illegally parked vehicles' rear to be painted fluorescent in Haryana

In a bid to reduce the number of accidents on highways, the Haryana Police has come up with a solution of painting the rears of slow moving, stranded or illegally parked vehicles with fluorescent colors. The new measure is to be implemented from Karnal to Sonipat stretch. The Additional Director General of Police (law and order) said on June 20, "the state police is also planning to initiate a special drive to drill safety triangle reflectors on the rear of similar vehicles in Panipat and Karnal districts to curb the number of fatal accidents on the highways.

## GHMC to use drones for GIS mapping

HYDERABAD: The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has planned to carry out the Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping survey using drones or by camera mounted on aircraft for the first time. This new technology will be used for mapping urban properties and other utilities in the city.



The proposed drone-mapping project is estimated to make a major impact on unauthorised constructions, and illegal encroachments. These drones will also keep an eye on city roads, drains, bin mapping, and streetlights and will act against the people who are trying to evade taxes, by under-assessing their properties.

GHMC officials said that the corporation has decided to have a complete base map for the city. "The drone survey would take a few months, whereas aerial mapping through camera mounted aircraft would just take a few days. However, using aircraft for capturing data, requires a series of security permissions from various government agencies, from both Central and State governments, including Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Civil Aviation," GHMC officials said.

According to the officials, drone survey would be able to get high-resolution images within 5 cm, whereas aircraft will get images with accuracy within 10 cm. The survey will capture data with high-resolution cameras and will convert the captured data into AutoCAD drawings with the help of a software. The latest survey instruments on site will capture the carpet areas of each property and the same will be geo-tagged to prepare base map of the entire city.

## Ozone pollution causes health issues in NCR

NEW DELHI: The analysis report of Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), Delhi, claimed that ozone pollution has increased in Delhi-NCR in comparison to the last year. Ozone is formed when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants, and other sources react chemically in the presence of sunlight. An official at the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting said, "When temperature increases, the rate of production of ozone also increases. It can cause fatigue, breathlessness, and asthma." The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) releases the ozone levels tracked report for Delhi-NCR from April 1 – June 15, 2019, to find the actual condition. The report said, "The Delhi-NCR region had more days with average ozone levels more than the national air quality limits than the last summer." Surface ozone is not a primary pollutant,

but it is when produced due to chemical reactions of nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide in the presence of sunlight.

Anumita Roy Chowdhury, Executive Director (research and advocacy) of CSE who led the analysis project, said, "As the air quality index is also beginning to show ozone as a dominant pollutant, it will require strong action to cut down gaseous emissions from combustion sources – vehicles and industry."

Ozone can be harmful for our health. People at higher risk are people with asthma, children, adults, and people who are active outdoors, especially outdoor workers. In addition, people with certain genetic characteristics, and people with reduced intake of certain nutrients, such as vitamins C and E, are at greater risk from ozone exposure. Breathing ozone can trigger a variety of health problems including chest pain, cough, throat irritation, and airway inflammation.

# 20 economies agree on marine plastic pollution deal

TOKYO: Group of twenty (G20) major economies came together to agree on a deal on reducing marine plastic waste at a meeting in Japan on June 16.

At the G20 environment and energy members' meeting, Yoshiaki Harada, Environment Minister of Japan, said that Japan proposed a workable framework on marine plastic waste that involves emerging and less developed countries and was welcomed by member countries.

The proposal would be the first-ever framework to reduce plastic pollution in oceans, and is expected to be included in a joint statement by the G20 members.

Plastic pollution has become a global concern, particularly after bans imposed by China and other countries on the import of plastic waste from overseas. Many countries, including Japan, have seen their waste pile up as a consequence. Micro plastics, tiny pieces of degraded waste, have attracted particular attention.

They absorb harmful chemicals, accumulating inside fishes, birds and

other animals, and are difficult to collect once in the water.

Under the expected agreement, G20 members will pledge to undertake the efforts to reduce the amount of plastic waste that ends up polluting oceans and to reporting their progress on a regular basis. The steps would be voluntary and progress would be reported once a year.

"But given the critical situation of ocean pollution with plastics, it is urgently needed to set up legally binding action plans with clear timelines and goals," he added.

The deal would be "the first step" to tackling plastic waste, Hiroaki Odachi of Greenpeace Japan said in a statement. "However, it is insufficient to rely on countries' voluntary actions" to resolve the crisis, he said.

"Legally binding international rules with clear timelines and goals" are needed, similar to those in the Paris Agreement on climate, he added.

The 2015 Paris agreement commits signatories to efforts to cap global

warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius.

It is estimated that only nine per cent of plastics ever-produced is recycled, campaigners say that the only long-term solution to the plastic waste crisis is for companies to make less and consumers to use less. The framework agreed at the meeting in the central mountain resort of Karuizawa would be the first to reduce plastic pollution in the ocean involving not only rich nations but emerging economies as well.

Japan will demand businesses charge for plastic shopping bags next year to help reduce waste, said Japanese Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko.

Hiroshige Seko, who was also co-chairing the discussions with Harada, said that Japan requires aiming businesses to charge for disposable shopping bags by as early as possible to help reduce waste.

Many countries in the world already supported charging for single-use bags or ban them outright. "From a viewpoint of global energy security, it is necessary for the international community to jointly deal with the act," added Seko.

According to the United Nations, at least 800 species worldwide are affected by marine debris, and as much as 80 per cent of that litter is plastic. It is estimated that up to 13 million metric tons of plastic ends up in the ocean each year—the equivalent of a rubbish or garbage truck load's worth every minute. Humans are not immune to this threat: While plastics are estimated to take up to hundreds of years to fully decompose, some of them break down much quicker into tiny particles, which in turn end up in the seafood that is being consumed.



## BMC officials to get walkie-talkies for better communication

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is planning to equip its officials with walkie-talkies to improve interconnectivity within the department and enhance readiness to tackle emergencies at dumping grounds in the city. The department will be getting 27 walkie-talkie sets. Deonar dumping ground has seen several fire incidents in the past and the walkie-talkies would be utilised to tackle the problem, said the official. The civic body dumps around 450 metric tonnes of waste every day at the Deonar dumping ground. BMC had later decided to convert the dumping ground into an energy plant.

## NGOs, societies to maintain parks in Chandigarh



Chandigarh Municipal Corporation's Finance and Contract Committee (F&CC) assigned the maintenance of the parks/gardens of the city to the NGOs/societies, by calling expression of interest. The decision was taken in a meeting of the F&CC chaired by Rajesh Kumar, Mayor, held on June 27. The meeting also saw the approval of the transfer of sanitation and enforcement of vegetable markets in the city, primarily the market of Sec-26. Sanitation wing of the MC would take charge of the cleaning of the mandi. The committee also accorded approval for the installation of a mini-hot mix movable plant for bitumen mix by using plastic waste in the industrial area, phase 1, Chandigarh.

## UNDP team visits Amritsar to assess air pollution

AMRITSAR: A team of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on June 26, visited Amritsar for assembling ground report for the execution of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in association with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC).

The UNDP has started inculcating this mission on air pollution in three cities- Amritsar (Punjab), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Gurugram (National Capital Region). The objective of this mission is to develop a strategy paper on combating air pollution in India with practical inputs for implementation of the NCAP at the national and sub-national levels to present a roadmap for United Nation's engagement in the state/city and at the national level in India. Xiaofang Zhou, Mission Leader and Director, Montreal Protocol and Chemicals Unit, New York (UNDP), along with 14 members, held a meeting with the district administration officials and the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB),

academic and civil society institutions. The PPCB and Department of Science, Technology and Environment, under the leadership of S S Marwaha, Chairperson-Professor and Rakesh Verma, Principal Secretary, have confirmed the clean air action plan for nine non-attainment cities and Amritsar is one among them.

Krunesh Garg, Member Secretary of the Board, presented the noticeable features of clean air action plan of the city notifying about the air quality of Amritsar. The air quality index of Amritsar has decreased from 132 to 115 for 2017 and 2018, respectively.

Additionally, the monthly average value of AQI from January 2019 to May 2019 is recorded as 100, which is almost satisfactory. Shivdular Singh Dhillon, Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, came out strongly with a proposal of introduction of metro rail project in Amritsar, which can be operative for abolition of movements of vehicles carrying tourists in the city thereby dropping the vehicular emissions.

## DPCC issues closure notices to illegal industrial units in Mayapuri

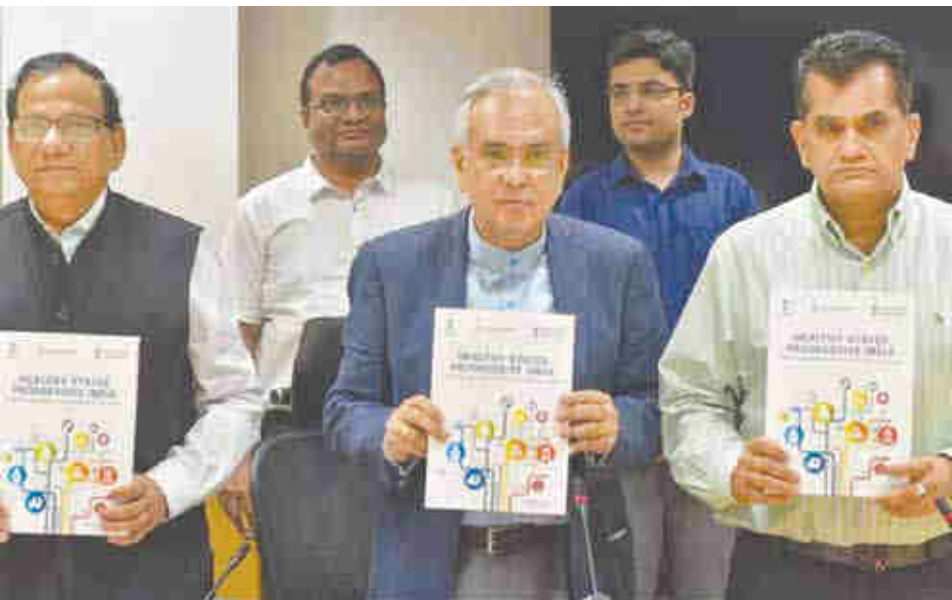
NEW DELHI: The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has issued a closure notice to 41 industrial units of Mayapuri, West Delhi. In its notice DPCC ordered closure of all the industrial units operating illegally within 24 hours. DPCC notice claimed that 41 units were allegedly running without any authorisation.

A senior DPCC official said, "During a survey last month, 41 units were found operating without DPCC's permission. They didn't obtain the consent to operate which is mandatory under the Air and Water Act." The units also didn't have the authorisation required under the hazardous waste management rules, he added.

The owners of the units went to the Delhi High Court on June 20, 2019, to file against DPCC's notice. Delhi HC is likely to hear on the matter on June 21, 2019. Earlier, in April, authorities sealed few of the polluting units. Ramesh Kumar Gupta, General Secretary of the Mayapuri Industrial Welfare Association, said, "How can an industrial unit, where dozens of employees work every day, be shut within 24 hours?"



Some of the units, which have been asked to close down, have already applied to the DPCC for obtaining the consent certificate." According to senior DPCC officials, no one has paid penalty till date. The units applied for the certificates only after DPCC charged penalties of ₹2 lakh to ₹6 lakh on them. The DPCC has also fined 81 other polluting units ₹2 lakh each.



# NITI Aayog health index rates Kerala at top, UP at bottom

NEW DELHI: NitiAayog's state-wise healthcare rankings demonstrate Kerala as the healthiest state with an overall score of 74.01, whereas, Uttar Pradesh stood at the bottom.

The health index examines complete performance and incremental improvement in the States and the Union Territories for the period with 2015-16 as the base year and 2017-18 as the reference year. Releasing the report, Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman of NitiAayog, said that they are committed to establish the Health Index as an annual systematic tool to propel states towards undertaking multi-pronged interventions to bring better health outcomes.

"The country needs to spend at least 2.5 per cent of its gross domestic product on health. The state governments should also scale up their health spends from an average of 4.7 per cent to 8 per cent of their budget," said Vinod Kumar Paul, member, NITI Aayog.

Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

have shown no improvement in health status, though some states have shown some improvement such as Haryana, Rajasthan and Jharkhand. Health outcomes from base to reference year in indicators such as neonatal mortality rate (NMR), under-five mortality rate (U5MR), proportion of low birth weight among newborns, proportion of community health centers and public health centers with quality accreditation certificates, full immunisation coverage, institutional deliveries, and proportion of specialist positions vacant at district hospitals.

As per the report, "In Bihar, the deterioration between, base year of 2015-16 and reference year of 2017-18 was primarily due to the performance related to total fertility rate, low birth weight, sex ratio at birth, tuberculosis (TB) treatment success rate, quality accreditation of public health facilities, and time-taken for National Health Mission fund transfer." Only 56 per cent of mothers deliver babies in health facilities in Bihar, which is poorer than the national average. In addition, Bihar

is in red because more low weight babies are being born as compared to 2015-16.

Odisha's Health Index worsened due to the immunisation rate and success rate of TB treatment.

TamilNadu dropped from third position to ninth position while Punjab dropped from second position to the fifth. Andhra Pradesh stood second and Maharashtra third.

In the health index, Andhra secured 65.13 points, with an increase of 4.97 points from base year (2015-16) to the reference year (2017-18). Earlier in 2015-16, the State stood at eighth place in the overall performance with 60.16 points.

Among the smaller states, Mizoram ranked first in overall performance, while Tripura and Manipur were the top two states in terms of incremental performance. Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh had the biggest decrease in overall health index scores. Among the UTs, Chandigarh ranked first in overall performance, while Dadra and Nagar Haveli improved the most.

The report also compared health results of Kerala to that of Argentina or Brazil, with neo-natal mortality rate (NMR) which is the probability of a baby dying in first 28 days of birth, being as low as six per 1,000 live births. NMR in Odisha, which stands at as high as 32 per 1,000 live births is close to that of Sierra Leone.

According to the report there was a general positive correlation between the Health Index scores and the economic development levels of states and UTs as measured by per-capita Net State Domestic Product (NSDP).

The report also stated that several states have made good progress towards achieving sustainable development goals included in the index. Kerala and Tamil Nadu have already reached the 2030 SDG target for neonatal mortality rate (NMR), which is 12 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births, it said.

NITI Aayog, has developed the health index with technical assistance from the World Bank, in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

# SLB to improve civic services in cities

AIIILSG working with Jharkhand urban local bodies to achieve greater efficiency and better performance management



**Ameet Kumar**

Director, State Urban Development Agency

To develop standardized Service Level Benchmarks (SLBs) with respect to the basic services provided by the municipalities as defined by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, Jharkhand has adopted the benchmarks as per the basic municipal services related to water supply, sewage, solid waste management and storm water drainage. These benchmarks help the local decision-makers to identify the gaps, plan and prioritise the improvement measures as per the targets set by the urban local bodies (ULBs), enhance service delivery and provide a platform to the external stakeholders to know about the service delivery levels. After adoption of this performance monitoring framework, the state government and ULBs are able to improve the quality of decision making process in the identified sectors.

Considering these outcomes, the state has signed an MoU with CEPT University to enter the data in the PAS portal in order to have an updated database and thus to receive the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Performance Grant, as it is mandatory for the cities claiming the grant to notify the service

level benchmarks. As SLBs are integral parts of city development planning processes both for assessment of the current situation and for setting targets under their plans, it is helpful in planning city development as well. Through SLBs the ULBs are able to work on increasing the coverage and water supply connections. In addition the quality of the water supplied is getting examined and improved accordingly. The Non-Revenue Water (NRW) consists of water losses plus unbilled authorised consumption, which can also be examined and the state is accordingly working on it for reducing the NRW of the concerned cities. According to the standard benchmarks, the cities are working towards increased household coverage of Solid Waste Management services, increase in the efficiency of collection of municipal solid waste, segregation of solid wastes, and their scientific disposal. To be able to get the targeted output, the state has appointed AIIILSG through open tender. AIIILSG, Ranchi worked on this assignment in FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19. The team worked for the collection of data, data compilation, assisted the ULBs in data entry in PAS Portal, validation of data entered in the portal and final gazette publication. The team followed up rigorously with the cities and completed the assignment as per timeline. All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIIILSG) has been organising workshops and training programmes on Service level Benchmarking (SLB) for ULB officials of Jharkhand to improve civic service delivery, water supply and sewage,

waste management system, enhance administrative work and to achieve 14<sup>th</sup> FC Performance Grant.

The workshops were organised for ULBs' officials to understand the standard benchmarks and train them in data collection and the methodology of data compilation. The team worked efficiently to come up with the targeted results and the Final Gazette Notification was published on time.

Activities conducted: Collection of information, uploading the data on the PAS portal, proper validation of data from concerned ULB, data correction and final gazette preparation. Jharkhand notified the SLB for the last 3 consecutive years and was qualified for the 14<sup>th</sup> FC Performance Grant for last 2 years and this year the State submitted the claim for the same.

Benefits to public/ULBs/State Government: Proper data maintenance which helps the ULBs/State Government and different stakeholders to access in one go the data relating to the services provided by the State to its citizens. Service level benchmarking is also the performance management of the urban services which ULBs provide to its citizens. This benefits the ULBs/State Government to periodically evaluate the SLBs as an input for its decisions, provide incentives and impose penalties, channelise technical and manpower support, and regulatory considerations among others. ULBs find it useful to institutionalise systems for performance management using SLBs.

Improved access to water supply: The State is able to assess the water supply coverage and connections in a better manner and is able to calculate the per capita supply of water. Also, the State can now find out the extent of non-revenue water.

Proposed outcomes: Increase in coverage of water supply and connections, improved quality of water supplied, efficiency in redressal of customer complaints, increase in per capita supply of water, reduction in NRW, proper data management and eligibility to get performance grants. ■

# Mainstreaming Disaster Risk reduction in changing climate scenario at local level

All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG) organised a 5-day training workshop on “Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in Changing Climate Scenario at Local level” during May 20 – 24, in technical partnership with the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) for the delegation of Government of Bangladesh Officials at The Raintree Hotel, Anna Salai, Chennai

CHENNAI: The Training Workshop was inaugurated on May 20, by Satchitananda Valan Michael, Associate Repatriation Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Dr Anil K Gupta, Head of Division – Environment & Climatic Disaster Risk Management, NIDM, Prof Suresh Mariaselvam & Kamlesh Pathak. Michael spoke on the need for addressing refugee crisis which is being aggravated due to the extreme weather conditions such as super cyclones, droughts, floods and heat waves.

Dr Anil K Gupta termed the 5-day training workshop as a beginning for interaction and exchange of knowledge. He emphasised on the need for peri-urban management as the focus was primarily on cities. He reiterated the need for holistic governance and the need for building resilience in cities to adapt to climate change.

The afternoon session was on Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) wherein Dr AK Gupta, Prof. Suresh Mariaselvam and Karnan from Red Cross Society explained in detail on the need for Mainstreaming DRR to the delegation through a panel discussion.



Prof Suresh highlighted practical difficulties faced by governments and NGOs in the aftermath of disasters. He laid special emphasis on Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction as an effective strategy.

Day two had Dr S Balachandran, Deputy Director General, Indian Meteorology Department, Chennai, presenting an expert talk on Early Warning System which was well received by the delegation. Prof Janakarajan stressed on the need for resilience and strong governance to avert flood and drought. He took the case study of Chennai floods and the drought in the subsequent year to highlight the loopholes in governance. Dr Devendra Jalihal from IIT Madras displayed an innovative communication model in times of disaster and interacted with delegates on issues with communication. Dr Parivelan from Tata Institute of Social Sciences handled a session on long term recovery wherein he detailed out the significance of long term recovery, in addition to the importance of a legal framework. The third day of the program offered a practical session where the delegation from Bangladesh visited Tsunami affected areas in Chennai and interacted with the local community and fishermen over the extent of devastation during Tsunami and flood. The delegation also visited SRM University and had an eventful

discussion on Dead Body Management with Dr O Gambhir Singh.

Dr K Satyagopal, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary & Commissioner - Revenue Administration, Disaster Management and Mitigation Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, held an extensive and detailed lecture on DRR where he highlighted the steps taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu for DRR. He also explained about a mobile app developed which conveys all information to the citizens and communicates warning and evacuation measures for citizens in times of disaster.

Dr S Mohan from IIT Madras explained flood and drought mitigation plan for urban pockets and emphasised on the need for extensive data and advanced technology to find an effective solution. Dr TS Selvavinayagam, Professor & Head – Community Medicine, Madras Medical College detailed on primary health care measures during and after disasters through a case study on Chennai floods. He also interacted with the delegation on mental health after disasters.

Kamlesh Pathak handled a technical session on the importance of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures on day five.

The workshop concluded post-lunch on May 24, with a certificate presentation ceremony for the delegates in the valedictory session. ■

# AIILSG with CEDM, NFA, organizes state level seminar on fire safety

In recent times fire mishaps have taken place in Surat, Delhi and various other cities in the country, pointing fingers on disaster mitigation measures of the city authorities. Especially, the Surat incident which saw more than 20 students' death due to lack of appropriate mitigation measures. To improve the situation for future, AIILSG along with CEDM and NFA organized a seminar on Fire Prevention & Life Safety Measures

**Hansa Patel**

Executive Advisor, AIILSG

After the Surat fire incident, new fire stations are on cards, around 500 volunteers to be hired & trained under AIILSG. The fire training program will be undertaken for the Fire Marshals of Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) by CEDM. Hansa Patel, Executive Advisor, AIILSG, felt it timely to organise the seminar

for creating awareness on various facets of fire and safety management amongst all concerned. She requested the experts to share their knowledge with the participants and answer their queries and clarify their doubts so that it would benefit them to carry out the jobs satisfactorily in their respective organisations.

**A**ll India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG) in collaboration with the Centre for Environment and Disaster Management (CEDM) and National Fire Academy (NFA) organised a state level seminar on Fire Prevention & Life Safety Measures – Perspectives and its Importance to Fire & Safety Management on June 7, 2019, at Vadodara.

The purpose of the seminar was to create awareness amongst the fire fraternity regarding large scale fire incidents and related disasters occurring in various parts of the State. The emphasis was regarding the need of adhering to the fire safety regulations enacted by the Government of Gujarat in 2013 and the proposals emerging out of discussions and deliberations for additional measures to strengthen the Act by providing sufficient reasons and arriving at logical conclusions.



*Prof Parimal Vyas inaugurating the ceremony by lighting the lamp in presence of SK Patel, Dr Jatin Modi, Hansa Patel, and Vivek Buchkey*



In his inaugural speech, Prof Parimal Vyas, vice chancellor of M S University of Baroda, said that disaster management and fire safety must be included in the curriculum of schools and colleges. He further exhorted the need of maintaining a balanced fabric of safe environment with a view to safeguard the present worsening environment scenario and also for creating a sustainable environment for the future generation.

He emphasised the need for adequate fire safety equipments and training to be imparted to the staff and occupants of educational institutions, high rise buildings, shopping malls, cinema halls and other places where public gather in large numbers for social, festival or political meetings. He further said that the periodical fire/safety audit by professionals are required to understand the factual position of fire equipments and its periodical maintenance and working conditions, including the wear and tear of electrical wiring and loading capacity etc.

As regards the civic concern regarding the widespread use of plastic materials in the construction, S K Patel, Deputy Municipal Commissioner of Vadodara, was of the view that such a hazardous situation would go beyond the control of civic

authorities if stringent actions are not taken at the grassroots level. He further added that only installing fire/safety equipment in public places is not enough to curtail fire incidents, but round the clock vigilance and trained manpower and managing it with effective firefighting and fire control mechanisms is the supplementary solution to prevent such incidents.

Dr Jatin V Modi, President Emeritus, AILSG welcomed all the distinguished dignitaries present in the seminar. He talked about the efforts and hard work undertaken by the institute in establishing National Fire Academy to cater the demand of trained personnel in various industries, service sector, civic and semi-government organisations. In the training workshop there were a few other important aspects taken up regarding timely fire safety audits by professionals in all the above establishments to understand the need of wear and tear of electrical equipment and infrastructure needed for the safety of the building and safe passage as and when an emergency occurs unexpectedly. Strict adherence of the fire and safety report prepared by the auditors and implementation of the same by occupants/institutions without fail has to be monitored by

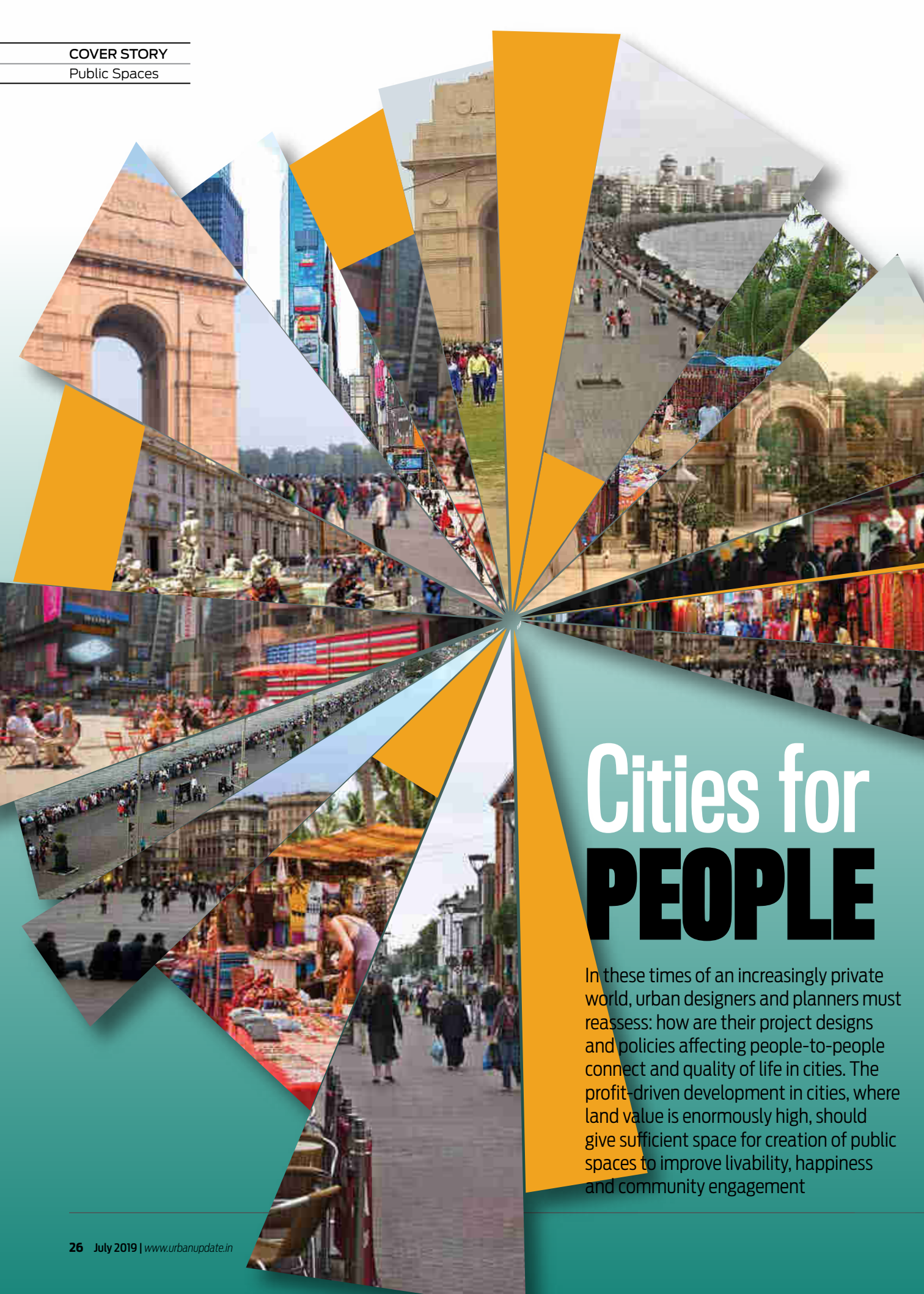
the Fire & Emergency Services.

The recent tragic fire incident in Surat wherein many aspiring young students lost their lives and many were injured due to non-adherence of fire safety norms and lack of supervision on the part of concerned civic officials were also discussed in the seminar and the speakers emphasised for new measures to be added to the existing Act for making stringent provisions so that in future such incidents would not take place in the expanding cities of the State. At present, Surat fire department has 17 fire stations across the city, which has a population of around 60 lakh. There are 962 fire officials against an approved strength of 1056. To increase the strength, the SMC fire department will hire 500 volunteers on the lines of friends of police, Surat, and give them free training in rescue operations.

The training will be given by CEDM under AILSG. The special fire & safety committee formed include Om Prakash Bhagat, former fire advisor, Govt of India, Narendra Pal, ex assistant vice president of fire services, Reliance Industries Ltd., Akhilesh Sadhankar, deputy director, National Fire Service College, Nagpur, B K Pareek, additional chief fire officer, SMC Surat Fire & Emergency Services, Hansa Patel, Executive Advisor, AILSG.

It was felt by the participants and expert speakers that more such seminars/workshops are required to gauge the improvements as well as the number of fire incidents including disasters reported from various parts of the state. More analytical studies and upgradation of the existing technology and training of the concerned officials are essential. Inclusion of the community is also to be pondered over to create awareness and taking up the issues with all seriousness and bringing the lacunae to the notice of concerned officials as their duties were also discussed at the last phase of the seminar. ■

**THE PURPOSE OF THE SEMINAR WAS TO CREATE AWARENESS AMONGST THE FIRE FRATERNITY REGARDING LARGE SCALE FIRE INCIDENTS AND RELATED DISASTERS OCCURRING IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE STATE. THE EMPHASIS WAS REGARDING THE NEED OF ADHERING TO THE FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS ENACTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GUJARAT IN 2013 AND THE PROPOSALS EMERGING OUT OF DISCUSSIONS AND DELIBERATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE ACT BY PROVIDING SUFFICIENT REASONS AND ARRIVING AT LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS**



# Cities for PEOPLE

In these times of an increasingly private world, urban designers and planners must reassess: how are their project designs and policies affecting people-to-people connect and quality of life in cities. The profit-driven development in cities, where land value is enormously high, should give sufficient space for creation of public spaces to improve livability, happiness and community engagement

If cities are our homes, public spaces are our living areas where we enjoy with family, friends, colleagues, relatives and spend quality time. Public spaces are instrumental for building social cohesion in a city and to build belongingness. People gather at these places without any specific purpose, people just sit and relax, engage in a community activity or sometimes even speak to strangers. And, then they disappear in the veins of the city, going about their fast-paced day-to-day lives.

Just think of any famous city, the first thing that comes to mind is its most popular public space. Cities cannot ignore these places for profit-driven development model. Since measuring the direct impact of public spaces on quality of life is difficult, profit-driven approaches to development neglect the significance of public spaces. Uncontrolled and rapid urbanisation is creating unmanageable settlement patterns with extremely low shares of public space. United Nations has also highlighted in its report in 2015 that many cities in developed countries are also experiencing a dramatic reduction of public spaces.

The 'modern cities' of India are no different. And, most of the new development in cities, residential or industrial, have neglected public spaces in their planning and this is reflected in the data released in 2016 on per capita availability of public space in cities worldwide. Indian cities performed very poorly in the index.

A study on public spaces highlights that merely 1.28 sq. m of Mumbai's public space is available per person. Delhi is slightly better at 12 sq. m pp; whereas all major global cities provide healthy public space; for instance, London (31.68 sq. m), New York (26.4), and Chicago (17.6). It is not a surprise that these are among the cities with popular and successful public places, such as the Royal Parks in London and Central Park in New York.

## Global outlook

Community connection is weakening in cities quite fast. The phenomenon,

which had started engulfing metro cities a few decades ago and is spreading everywhere, could be reversed if existing public spaces are maintained well and their importance is not neglected while building new cities.

Adequate availability and access to public spaces is also about shared prosperity and enables citizens to share each other's word in different ways. Amanda Burden, the former New York City Planning Commissioner, gave significant importance to reviving and creating public space as she believed that lively and enjoyable public places are the key to planning a great city. She believes, "public spaces are what that make a city come alive." Her work on the High Line Project in New York is one of the most talked about projects on public spaces. She is not alone. Renowned Indian architect and winner of 2018 Pritzker Prize BV Doshi also believes that the core of a city is its public spaces for citizen participation.

Public spaces as defined by UN-Habitat are "all places, including streets, publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive". The SDG 11 also talks about its significance and one of its objectives reads, "By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities". The importance of public space is highlighted in international agendas, and diverse organizations started piloting the role of urban planning and public spaces in cities.

For instance, UN Women launched the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces report, which enhanced public spaces designs with better lighting and CCTVs to prevent and respond to sexual violence against women. There are more onboard, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on sustainable forestry and the World Health Organization (WHO) on green spaces and health.

Building public spaces is not just an aesthetic issue for a city. These are the places where the diversity of urban



Abhishek Pandey  
Editor



India Gate, New Delhi



Anjuna Flea Market, Goa

Night Market  
IndoreTimes Square  
New York

High Street, Deal, England

populace is reflected and celebrated.

European Cities are known for sidewalk cafes. Why can't our cities have sideway cafes instead of encroachment for parking or extending shops? The instant response to this question will be that Indian climatic conditions are not favourable. Agreed, this cannot be done in most of the cities but what about cities in the hills or what about building extended walkways and allotting some specified space to the food outlets, cafes or street vendors. This will not only save these places from encroachment or illegal parking but it will lead to ensuring that designated spaces for pedestrians are not encroached upon. Businessmen would not like to restrict the flow of customers. The nitty gritty of such plans can be worked out in detail as per climatic and pragmatic requirements of a particular city.

In recent times, India has not built any successful public space that became a rage among people. Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad, open gyms in Delhi and parks constructed by Mayawati government are some of the examples of new public spaces. These are the places which are still fighting for relevance, as desired, among locals. Our new cities are also facing the same problem. Gurgaon is a typical example where town planners did not even bother with footpaths, leave alone open parks and squares. Though all the private townships have such open public spaces those do not allow access to 'outsiders'.

### Successful Public Spaces

Public places are for people to meet and socialise. And for this, the physical environment must be welcoming, accessible, safe and convenient. In the absence of these characteristics, people will refrain from activities in the public sphere or will keep them at a minimum. There can be numerous examples of beautifully designed public spaces which could not attract public and were abandoned because of not having such characteristics.

River ghats are an example. While the ghats of Varanasi are examples of vibrant public spaces, other haven't had

similar success. Varanasi, the ancient Indian city, sprung up and prospered along the River Ganga and is well-known for its series of ghats, which are among the most popular public spaces of the city. People, locals and tourists alike, have been gathering in large number on ghats of Varanasi to perform their routine or religious activities. One can find people doing morning exercise, teaching students, performing religious activities, bathing, sipping tea and having a discussion on socio-political and economic issues. People find a way to relate to the place and own it virtually.

The reason for the success of these public spaces is simple and straight—these places provided people with a sense of belongingness. The ghats of Varanasi provided people with an adequate place to sit, stand, interact, engage or have a tea with people. I assume, apart from being one of the main religious centers for Hindus, such setting gave impetus to the cultural prosperity of Varanasi and attracted people from all over the world.

However, there are many cities along the river Ganga but since they did not have well-maintained ghats could not become popular among the public. People may argue that the ghats of Varanasi became popular because of the religious significance of the river and temples nearby in Varanasi. In that case, the logic should also apply to other cities which are on the bank of river Ganga and have religious significance. Take the example of Prayagraj erstwhile Allahabad. The city is well-known for Kumbh Mela—the largest gathering of people on a specific duration of specific years. Despite such a religious significance, these ghats of Allahabad could not become a popular attraction point for people on the rest of the days; especially among locals.

Steps in Rome, historic neighbourhoods of Paris and Shanghai, rolling landscape of central parks in major metro cities. Public spaces become attractive to people only when these places are welcoming and make people feel safe. If people risk being stabbed or robbed, the chances are

## PUBLIC PLACES ARE FOR PEOPLE TO MEET AND SOCIALISE. AND FOR THIS, THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT MUST BE WELCOMING, ACCESSIBLE, SAFE AND CONVENIENT. IN THE ABSENCE OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS, PEOPLE WILL REFRAIN FROM ACTIVITIES IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE OR WILL KEEP THEM AT A MINIMUM. THERE CAN BE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED PUBLIC SPACES WHICH COULD NOT ATTRACT PUBLIC AND WERE ABANDONED BECAUSE OF NOT HAVING SUCH CHARACTERISTICS

people will not use such a public space. You will surely find many such places in every city in which people may enjoy during the day but avoid going in the evening or at night. Delhi has many such places. Deer Park in the posh Green Park locality of Delhi and Buddha Garden are the two examples.

If conditions are favourable, however—there is a wide sidewalk, the place is well lit and a nice park nearby—the probability is higher that people will go outside just for the fun of it: for a stroll and a bit of fresh air. Making of successful public spaces happen over a period of time but due caution on certain features make them popular among citizens and tourists alike.

### Focus shift

Indian cities have had adequate public spaces as per the requirement of those times. All the rulers whether they were Mughals, Rajputs or Marathas had built public spaces. Even the British had built public spaces such as Company Baghs. But many cities built in independent India ignored this component of urban planning and design.

There is no doubt that commercial interest always battles against community spaces. It is their responsibility of community and citizens to take ownership and not allow any invasion, encroachment, ignorance or any kind of misuse for any vested interest. The new trend in cities is creating private ‘public spaces’ where the poor do not have access. Most high-income colonies are increasingly

becoming gated and the parks/public spaces are controlled by societies which put restrictions on their use. Forget the poor and ‘outsiders’, even the children of the colony are not allowed to use them so that ornamental nature of garden or park is not spoiled. The reason for such control by local Resident Welfare Associations is that they spend money from their pocket for maintenance and the public agencies responsible for it shy away. One specific department or agency should be assigned to look after the issues related to public spaces whether it is about their maintenance or access.

In today’s development regime, a lot of attention is indeed paid to improving the aesthetic appeal of a city through public spaces, but it generally promoted the central and more representative spaces, which can improve the image of the city and attract businesses and tourists. Central Park of Delhi near Connaught Place, Salt Lake Area in Kolkata, Fort Area in Mumbai are some of the examples. Public spaces are not just about aesthetics but their role in an urban setting is much beyond adding visual appeal. There is no arguing that these places are important. But they are isolated oases in an increasingly fragmented urbanity. The effort should be that every citizen of a city should be able to access good quality public spaces and be part of the growing prosperity of a city.

Public spaces are also representative of diversity, community sharing and democratic expression. These places



Tivoli Park, Copenhagen



Piazza del Duomo, Milano, Italy



Piazza Navona  
Rome, Italy



Marine Drive, Mumbai

provide citizens with breathing space and relief from their hectic urban life. The spaces are also associated with the evolution of new ideas, communities and social movements. All the new urban development happening and even the existing ones should reassess the community need for vibrant and lively public spaces and work to plan the development of their cities keeping this in mind. ■

# A major component of citizens' well being

Public spaces have a far-reaching positive impact on the health of people. A host of studies have suggested that the postal code of a person can tell more about their health condition than their genetic code. Now, doctors can also relate diseases of a person from his/her life places, where the person had lived or is still living. This revelation is one more reason for city managers to focus on building and maintaining quality public open spaces and improving urban ecosystem



**Ranjit S Chavan**  
President, AIILSG

**O**ur life places, where we grew up, studied and worked, are never mentioned in our medical records but these are as important as any other medical history. The world has industrialized at a fast pace and every city is known for one or more industries. Industries are good for the economy and prosperity of a city but their operations when go unchecked create a

problem for the urban ecosystem.

All of us have the stories of Agra where the historic Taj Mahal was getting paler by the day because of industries in and around the city. The Apex court had to intervene and many of those polluting industries had to shut down or shift to other places. If these industries can have a negative impact on buildings and monuments, it is evident that their operations affect the environment and in turn human health too. Delhi has

the worst air quality in the country. It requires no mental efforts to guess that people living in Delhi are prone to having Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, Asthma, and lung-related diseases. Many industries along the River Ganga or for that matter any river in the country have significantly contributed to increasing pollution level. People living or dependent on the polluted water are at risk to get water-borne diseases.



This story has also a flip side. Cities with a good ecosystem, controlled industrialization, and with an adequate number of open public spaces have resulted in the good physical and mental health of people. The significance of public spaces is generally underestimated in urban planning and design and these are considered a gift to residents of a particular neighbourhood. However, it is not true. These places play an important role in improving productivity and lowering public expenditure on health. According to a report, making a space into a place is an exercise that should take into consideration a host of principles. The Five Principles of Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods of the United Nations serve the purpose. These are:

- ◆ Adequate space for streets and an efficient street network. The street network should occupy at least 30 per cent of the land and at least 18 km of street length per km<sup>2</sup>.
- ◆ High density. There should be at least 15,000 people per km<sup>2</sup>, that is 150 people/ha or 61 people/acre.
- ◆ Mixed land-use. At least 40 per cent of floor space should be allocated for economic use in any neighbourhood.
- ◆ Social mix. The availability of houses in different price ranges and

tenures in any given neighbourhood to accommodate different incomes; 20 to 50 per cent of the residential floor area should be for low-cost housing and each tenure type should be not more than 50 per cent of the total.

- ◆ Limited land-use specialization. This is to limit single function blocks or neighbourhoods; single function blocks should cover less than 10 per cent of any neighbourhood.

### Quality of life for prosperity

Quality of urban life is essential for cities to flourish, prosper and remain vibrant. Cities that improve the quality of life do that by ensuring adequate street space, green areas, parks, recreation facilities and other public spaces. With huge pressure of providing space for living to people coming to cities and to infrastructure facilities for the increasing population, public spaces—including parks and community squares—are increasing in new development schemes.

According to the Global Public Space Toolkit by UN-Habitat, Public space is where people perform a number of functions that are shared with all: moving from place to place; enjoying public recreational and cultural opportunities; visiting other parts of the city or other private locations;

shopping; meeting others or simply strolling. The definition covers most of the characteristics of public space. However, in a welfare state like India, accessibility to public space should also be free of any charge. Public spaces should serve one and all without any kind of discrimination; particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups because these are the people who are living in the areas where they do not have access to quality public spaces hence it becomes important for city government to take into consideration their requirements and expectation from a public space while designing.

Now comes the question of a sustainable model of maintaining these spaces because if these are free to all then how are we going to ensure their maintenance, safety, etc. The answer to this query is simple. Public spaces can also be places where informal business can be carried out in an orderly and legitimate way, thus providing poorer urban dwellers with precious livelihood opportunities by providing them with some space to operate on the monthly rental scheme.

It is also important to understand that any investment in public spaces development, improvement and maintenance can have a multiplier effect. The investment can generate more revenue too. For example, if we decide to improve facilities around the beaches of Mumbai or in some parks in Bengaluru. I am not referring to any concrete development but green development and improvement of basic services to people. Such green investment can produce higher real estate values and this, in turn, leads to higher tax revenue. The same applies to the expansion of commercial activities due to a variety of public space improvements. All these do look like simple solutions to a complex problem but the main thing required to execute these plans is political will and empowered local body that has access to financial and administrative powers to implement plans for the larger public good. ■

**QUALITY OF URBAN LIFE IS ESSENTIAL FOR CITIES TO FLOURISH, PROSPER AND REMAIN VIBRANT. CITIES THAT IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE DO THAT BY ENSURING ADEQUATE STREET SPACE, GREEN AREAS, PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES AND OTHER PUBLIC SPACES. WITH HUGE PRESSURE OF PROVIDING SPACE FOR LIVING TO PEOPLE COMING TO CITIES AND TO INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES FOR THE INCREASING POPULATION, PUBLIC SPACES—INCLUDING PARKS AND COMMUNITY SQUARES—ARE INCREASING IN NEW DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES**



# Wanted: Open Spaces Preservation Act!

If cities have only factories, mills, houses, hospitals, godowns, schools and big hotels, I don't think any city will survive in its real sense. Unfortunately, in the name of development, huge structures have been erected all over at all times in the past five decades leading to warmer climate in cities

**Abhilash Khandekar**

Sr Journalist

I have always felt that for any policy maker or an urban planner it is perhaps the toughest decision to keep a large chunk of any land in a city, open for posterity. Be it for a garden, community's use or for a playground! Allowing construction of a building or giving permissions for erecting structures such as hospital, college or a community residential building is much easier than maintaining the status quo of an open space in a city for decades together.

Traditional Indian cities and towns have always had green open spaces, adequate number of play grounds, if not large modern stadia, community open space, be it the grazing land, city forest or a big temple premises or some beautiful small gardens in almost every residential colony. The British-time Town Halls invariably had open spaces around the nicely built structures in every city. In most of the schools and colleges-and they were government schools-it was almost mandatory to have a football field, large open play fields,

some of which were dotted by verdant tree cover. My government school, the Bal Vinay Mandir, Indore, had such a luxury then, way back in the 60s and through the 90s. Its open ground has now shrunk but it's still intact, largely. The sight of some of the old trees, including the bottle brush, is quite fresh in my mind. Indore, like many other cities, has grown exponentially! But has the vision also broadened to match our forefathers'? I would say an emphatic no!

Today, sadly, open spaces have become very scarce and thus costly, thanks to faulty urban planning and unprecedented pressure on land. Most of the open grounds are being eyed by 'land sharks'. Given that the urban population is continuously on the rise, the importance of open spaces has grown multi-fold. And hence there is a need for clear cut policy in every state for keeping open spaces reserved. Even after independence, many states had pasture lands kept free as charnoi bhoomi (grazing land) for village cattle to graze on. With growing urbanisation, already more than 52 per cent people are living in cities as villages are getting emptied due to the lop-sided approach

of neglecting rural development over urban development. The burgeoning population of cities is the direct result of lack of various amenities in villages, including health care, education and jobs. A few years ago a former chief minister of Maharashtra had told me that Mumbai got daily three train loads of job-searching crowd from the then BIMARU states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and UP and only one train would take back the unemployed youths. Meaning, Mumbai was receiving an influx of thousands of people daily into the mega city for several years without bothering about its carrying capacity.

Even as I was writing this piece, India's financial capital was under water, yet again. Extra heavy rains not only paralysed public life of Mumbai at once, the deluge also took lives of many citizens. The BMC Commissioner, Pravin Pardeshi, candidly admitted that the storm water drains had been rendered completely ineffective due to encroachments, choking of nullahs when unexpectedly heavy rain fall happened in just three days of June and July. He also admitted that since almost entire Mumbai has been paved off (tar roads,



buildings, cemented roads and squares) no water percolation was possible. Entire water on the Mumbai roads had to be pumped out manually and released into rivers and the Arabian Sea. In effect, he was (importantly) complaining of no open spaces having been left to absorb water during the rainy season. Did that happen overnight? I don't think the readers have forgotten the July 26, 2005 cloud burst and the Mithi River flooding that had killed hundreds of citizens over the next few days. Unfortunately, each year after that tragedy Mumbai drowned again much to the great inconvenience of lakhs of commuters of the sprawling coastal city. If we have to trust what the BMC Commissioner has said in a widely televised interview on June 2, 2019, clearly the last 14 years have not changed much in that city. On the contrary, population, encroachments, and the BMC budget have all grown manifold! Not the open spaces.

But then why blame Mumbai alone? Take the example Bengaluru: In 1925, 80 per cent land of the southern city was open. By 1960, it came down to 17.20 per cent and 23 years later, in 1983 it was just about 10 per cent and by 2020 it would be as less as 7-7.50 per cent. The same is the case with the national capital where in and around the famous Lutyens Bungalow Zone of Central Delhi, there are some green spaces and gardens such as Lodhi Garden and open vistas around the Janpath, India Gate and Vijay Chowk and to some extent the Chanakyapuri area. New areas are completely devoid of the required open spaces. Gurugram and NOIDA, the two counter magnet cities created to reduce pressures on Delhi, have not only proved counterproductive, they too have not much planned for open spaces. In fact, near Gurugram in Haryana, the centuries old Aravalli mountain range is under tremendous pressure from real estate developers and political lot.

Globally speaking, Moscow is one city which has highest 54 per cent open spaces, followed by smaller country-state Singapore at 47 per cent and then Sydney at 46 per cent as per a study conducted a few years ago. But the

Sydney state administration is still not content with it and has undertaken green space expansion programme worth \$150 million. Mumbai, contrastingly has a meagre 2.5 per cent open space which can be seen either at Shivaji Nagar in Dadar or in Worli and Churchgate areas where there are some sports grounds including the Brabourne and Wankhede Stadia and the Race Course. Small colony gardens are of course there besides the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Borivali. Those who have visited Shanghai and Beijing, they would easily tell us the difference. While Beijing has sure greenery, Shanghai has only sky scrapers! So that raises the questions what are open spaces and what is their use in the urban context?

Clearly, in the present times when the world is battling climate change, open spaces, especially green lungs, help in carbon sequestration. World over the open or green spaces have either been developed for recreation or for their ecological importance or for aesthetic value. Any well planned large garden (iconic Hyde Park in London or Central Park in New York or Lodhi Garden in New Delhi) in the world has served one or all of three purposes mentioned above. Problem with India is of ever growing population and hence there is an unprecedented pressure on land. Poverty is another bane. But cities have to be habitable and they can be so only with a fair share of open spaces. A few years ago, different planners had set out different parameters such as 20-40 sq mts per capita open space or something like that. In spite of this if the cities have to be really smart, it would not be possible without giving due importance to environment. I believe more than the aesthetic value, open spaces provide us fresh air and a change from the monotonous life style. With most cities going vertical in its growth and skyscrapers dominating the sky line, there is an urgent need for children, women and elders to go out for games and exercises in the morning and evening. Gardens extend invaluable ecological services for the society, the importance of which is far more

than the built environment. Gardens are also important for societal bonds through human interactions and mutual exchanges-in other words open spaces also have cultural importance attached to them. They cannot be and must not be seen as land parcels with high ticket band attached to it.

If cities have only factories, mills, houses, hospitals, godowns, schools and big hotels, I don't think any city will survive in its real sense. Unfortunately, in the name of development, huge structures have been erected all over at all times in the past five decades leading to warmer climate in cities. I see a nexus of profiteers and politicians in it at most places.

Considering all this I am of the strong opinion that it's time the central government and state governments brought out a clear policy, a Central Act or strict state government rules for preserving clearly earmarked precious open land at a number of places in each city and town, keeping in view needs of water percolation, ecology and societal needs. It's like this: when ground water table started going down, all municipal bodies made stricter rules for roof top rain water harvesting systems for each building. Many years ago, I had gone to Dubai and had experienced the high temperatures at night. Much later I realised that the tiny country had only 2 per cent open land. Of, course they built a golf course after converting salt water from the ocean into potable water two decades ago but the gulf country remains a very hot region.

If we have to save Indian cities in times of climate change challenges, massive efforts are required to create open spaces for various advantages that have been listed above. Mumbai experience also strongly suggests that open spaces can also save lives by allowing water to go away along its natural way. ■

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# Some fine public spaces

Efficient public spaces are vital to ensure livability of a city. These need to be crafted and nurtured in various ways to promote well-being of its citizens in an inclusive and sustainable manner



**V Vijaykumar**  
Senior Advisor, AIILSG

**S**candinavian countries have the best public spaces. According to a survey on people's satisfaction with public spaces published by World Economic Forum on [weforum.org](http://weforum.org), Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland all scored 8 out of 10 or better. Switzerland also scored 8.

Pleasing and efficient public spaces add significantly to people's quality of life and happiness and thus enhance livability of cities in a major way. Public spaces could come in a wide array of settings such as parks and gardens, beaches and water bodies, streets and squares.

One may consider others such as airports and railways stations, playgrounds and stadia, museums and libraries too as public spaces which though offering restricted (paid) access are for all, hence 'public' in character. For public spaces to be preferred and ranked highly they must be built well with good infrastructure (as in the case of stadia, theatres, and libraries); they must be safe (as in the case of parks and beaches); full of activity (as in the case of streets and night markets). In addition, a common thread running across all successful public spaces is accessibility, meaning it can be reached easily by all, and inclusivity, meaning it

is able to meet needs of most sections of society. Some well-known public spaces around the world are shining examples.

## Incheon and other international airports

Rated among the top international airports of the world, Incheon Airport while handling large volume of traffic in terms of flights and passengers, offers a wide array of facilities. It is in fact a centre of cultural and other events. Notable among them are the Cultural shows at the Millennium Hall Permanent Performance (T1), Mini Classical Concerts (T1) which offers semi-classical and pop concerts. The Node Garden offers traditional Korean music and classical music. There are also museums/exhibitions showcasing Korean national treasures, introducing Korean Royal Palaces and the Korean Cultural Street in Terminal T1 which presents traditional Korean homes. Changi Airport in Singapore is noted for its extensive greenery and natural landscapes alongside use of high technology which enable efficient airport procedures and passenger amenities. Narita (Japan) and Hong Kong Airport have remained among the top few for some years now.

China's upcoming new mega airport, the Beijing Daxing International Airport is scheduled to be opened in September this year. Billed the world's largest, it will measure about 1.03 million square metres, about the size of 140 football grounds. It targets to reach annual passenger handling of 72 million (going upto 100 million by 2040) and 2 million tons of cargo by 2025. Located about 45 kilometres from Tiananmen Square in Beijing it will operate at full capacity by 2025 with

four runways functional. The airport would be equipped with various new technologies including face recognition for security and other procedures.

## La Trobe Reading Room Melbourne, Australia

This part of the State Library is a fine piece of architecture. Standing nearly six storeys tall, the octagonal dome shaped structure built in 1913 accommodates about 32,000 books and 320 readers at one time. It provides just the environment of quiet, peace and magnificence for serious readers. There are some permanent exhibitions housed in the library.

## Champs-Élysées

The Avenue De Champs-Élysées is a must see for everyone visiting Paris. The magnificent buildings along this street are part of the awe-inspiring experience of the visit. This two kilometre long avenue is alive at all times, day or night. The place is a shopper's paradise showcasing the luxury brands of the world and affordable fare too; there is something for everyone. For those looking to indulge in some food, there is a wide range to tickle one's taste buds, including the finest French pastries. For those looking for some fine entertainment, there are theatre shows, cinema halls and exhibitions along the avenue.

The Champs-Élysées is clearly a fine example of a great public space with global appeal.

## Olympic stadium, Tokyo

The 1.25 Billion dollar New National Stadium in Tokyo will be ready soon well in time for the opening of the 2020 Olympic Games. Sports stadia are where thousands, tens of thousands and even

more converge with great excitement and expectation for a few hours to witness their favourite sporting events. These events are viewed globally by millions more on their television sets. The stadia to host these sporting events are being increasingly designed for accommodating larger audiences; also to expand the facilities available for athletes, officials and spectators.

The New National Stadium, Tokyo designed by architect Kengo Kuma, with a permanent seating for 60,000 will start with a few events this December to inaugurate the stadium which will host the opening ceremony as also track and field events of the Tokyo Olympics. There are a total of 8 new venues being built for the global event while about 35 other venues are being readied by renovating existing facilities.

The Olympic Village to house about 10,000 athletes and officials is being set up on the outskirts of the city. Such public spaces which come up to host global events become a matter of great pride for the host country; not just that, these structures become lessons for the rest of the world in terms of engineering, technology use, and innovations in various spheres including athlete and spectator facilities, and security. These can make the public spaces and the events more pleasurable and safe for all.

### Night markets

These are vibrant public spaces popular in many South-east Asian countries including in Taiwan. These started as informal markets of vendors and hawkers at street corners and later have grown into more organized and regulated marketplaces that operate on the sidewalks of main streets or the streets itself which are otherwise thoroughfares during the day, sometimes with retractable roofs. Here one can find a wide range of clothing and accessories, gadgets and importantly food and drink.

The shops are illuminated with attractive lighting and loud music in order to attract shoppers. However with passing time and their growing

State Library Victoria, Australia



popularity, larger established brands have marked their presence here. International fast food chains and convenience stores can also be found here. These night markets are particularly popular among tourists wanting to catch a glimpse of the local culture and engage in affordable shopping. As public spaces, many of these such as in Taipei are now landmark destinations and much sought after.

### Happy Streets in India

This is a successful and growing activity in many large cities of India. Usually over the weekend, on Saturday evenings

or Sunday mornings, short stretches of popular streets are converted into non-motorized zones. These areas are then available to citizens to engage in a variety of leisure activity.

Youngsters play cricket and badminton on the roads, children use the street surface for roller-skating, there are magic shows and yoga classes on the sidewalks, and the most popular is the stage where dance and music are organized. Large numbers of spectators participate alongside. It is a fun-filled outing for the family; an attempt to reclaim lost public space for people (not cars and vehicles), even if just for a few hours every week. ■

# Let's redefine public spaces, let's bring back urban forests



**Ranjan K Panda**  
Convenor, Combat Climate  
Change Network, India

**T**he unprecedented heat wave condition and water scarcity situation that Indian cities faced this year has put planners on an emergency action mode. Looking at statements of politicians and government officials, one could guess that everyone wants to do something on a war-footing basis to solve the water and heat crises. That climate change is real and we are in a climate emergency is perhaps being realised by the planners and people alike. There is an opportunity in the crisis and while it is good that planners and

others are now interested to talk more about solutions, I would like to flag one cautionary note for all of them. Solutions to the problems, which we have created for centuries, are not going to come overnight.

We certainly need some knee-jerk measures to tackle heat wave or water-crisis type of problems. We can plan to bring water to Chennai by trains from several hundred kilometres away, we may extend the school shut down period in Delhi or other cities for more number of days due to extended period of heat wave conditions, we can ask employees of IT firms to work from home as the office space does not want to take responsibility of providing water while the entire city is struggling for fetching a few litres, and many such adaptation measures. However, the fact remains, these are immediate responses, not permanent solutions to the problems. To me there are two important ways in which we can bring in lasting change in the way cities develop: forestry and conservation of

water bodies. The more these resources we have in our cities, the more will be our ability to make the cities grow sustainably while fighting with the impacts of climate change.

## The natural public spaces

Cities have become the modern day's symbol of aspirations. They are growing at the cost of India's villages, forests and water bodies. Globally, 2.5 billion people are projected to migrate to urban areas by 2050 and almost 90 per cent of this is happening in Asia and Africa. Cities cover less than two per cent of the earth's surface, but consume 78 per cent of the world's energy. What does this mean? In simple terms, they destroy soil, forests, rivers and water bodies of the rural people and turn into a cramped conglomeration of grey infrastructure which not only produces more than 60 per cent of all carbon emissions but also puts their own inhabitants to severe risks and hazards – caused by development and climate change.



This needs to change. Cities need to decongest, they need to create more green public spaces.

Many modern-day architects and planners suggest cities to adopt green and blue infrastructure. For some, green infrastructure means plantation on roadsides, pavements, remaining open areas, vertical gardens on the high-risers & boundary walls, so on and so forth. All these are good. However, the long-lasting solution to making the cities really green that can fight impacts of climate change such as heat waves and water scarcity requires protection of the remaining forests within the city limits and re-growing forests in open areas available; and if needed, by reclaiming some areas from the grey infrastructure. Some of these actions would need very strong policy reforms, but are worth it. The situation now warrants us as citizens to expect bold policy reforms to fight climate change more than looking for just GDP centric economic reforms, if we are serious about the impacts of climate

change. The Chief Justice of India has, in a recent speech, emphasised on something very similar when he said, “single-minded focus on economic boom post-liberalisation had resulted in several environmental and human rights disasters in India.”

### Investing in Urban Forestry

Some experts believe there is nothing like urban forestry, simply because the urban areas have already demolished the natural forests and have destroyed the character of the ecology that sustained particular types of local species suitable for the soil and climate of the area. It is therefore important to first decide, on an emergency basis, to keep protected all the remaining natural forests that still exist in some of the Indian cities. These could be mangroves or local biological parks or mango orchards. Plantation of hundreds or thousands of trees in any location just does not make it a forest. However, given the reality of our cities, one needs to find out a way. Cities need to invest in researching which combination of local natural species they need to plant and where so that these areas could grow into forests in a few decades. Species selection is very important even in parks, pavements and other places. And what is more important is to involve urban communities, youngsters, children and almost everybody in these protection and plantation actions. After all the green spaces they grow would benefit themselves in multiple ways.

A study from the USA's Baltimore city shows how a consistent effort to increase the canopy cover of the city stands out as a great example as against losing tree cover of many other cities. While the country lost 36 million urban trees – or 175,000 acres per year - between 2009 and 2014, Baltimore's forest is growing by upwards of 5,000 new trees per year, the Popular Science reported. Studies have confirmed that forests help reduce heat, trap pollution and absorb auto emissions. According to the same report, Baltimore's cumulative 14,000 acres of canopy, for instance, ensnares in excess of 550,000

tons of carbon per year—offsetting 54 days' worth of emissions from the city's more than 600,000 residents. Research shows, as the Popular Science reports, that stress levels, muscle tension, asthma rates, etc. decrease if forests are present in your neighbourhood.

### Forests for better mental health

The new green public spaces, very much in reach of urban population that I am trying to pursue with planners, would bring in much more benefits than listed above. A study of European cities that was published in May this year in the International Journal of Environmental Health Research found that exposure to natural spaces during childhood develops an appreciation of nature and a healthy psychological state in adulthood. This becomes very relevant given the fact that almost 75 per cent of Europeans live in urban spaces now, which is expected to grow further in the coming decades. Urban life, including schooling, is getting very stressful and children are fast getting used to indoor lifestyle which is detrimental to their mental health, studies find. Another important study, preliminary findings of which have just been reported in the Independent, comes up with a very interesting observation. Despite staying in urban areas our brains get calm and at peace when exposed to rural environments. “Humans may be hard-wired to feel at peace in the countryside and confused in cities – even if they were born and raised in an urban area,” reported the Independent.

That's not all. Forests hold most of the rainwater for us. We need to integrate them in our urban planning along with restoration and conservation of surface water bodies such as ponds, lakes and other systems; rivers and even floodplains. A combination of these real green and blue infrastructure can help our cities fight impacts of climate change in the long run. ■

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

# DELHI'S PUBLIC GYMS

## Integrating public spaces with fitness

In a bid to improve the fitness level of Delhiites, the local authorities, taking note of China's National Fitness campaign of 2008, initiated the 'Open Public Gyms' project in 2012. Integrating public spaces with health and fitness, the project has proven to be a hit amongst people and several other cities of India are planning to or already have installed such gyms in their urban spaces as well

**Akshit Pushkarna**  
Editorial Intern

**T**he rate of urbanization in India is greater than an ever. People from all over the country are migrating or have migrated to a select few cities in order to gain access

to more opportunities for personal growth and these cities like Delhi and Mumbai have become some of the biggest metropolises in the world. But there are some negative aspects of urban lifestyle. Inadequate attention

to health and fitness levels has deemed India one of the most unfit countries of the world.

According to an estimate by the World Health Organisation (WHO), 1 in 3 Indians is classified as medically unfit, suffering from easily preventable lifestyle diseases like hypertension and diabetes. Another study conducted by Indian Council of Medical Research-India Diabetes - further highlights the severity of the issue. The study was conducted on a sample of people from various parts and showed that approximately 65 per cent of the urban population is physically inactive. Further, the study shows that a large percentage of people in India are inactive as less than 10 per cent Indians engage in regular recreational physical activity. Considering that 65 per cent Indians are younger than 35, inculcation of health and fitness awareness in our lifestyle is a must for better health.

The issue has been identified by authorities of India who are now seeking ways to better the situation. Making exercise more conveniently accessible to people would definitely be a way of improving the health of people. The authorities in Delhi, considering this argument, have implemented a new program which integrates open spaces in residential areas with health and fitness.

The concept of open public gyms was first developed in China, where public gym facilities were installed in open spaces as a part of a national fitness campaign prior to the 2008 Summer Olympics. The Chinese government had assigned over 220,000,000 sqft for the construction of outdoor gymnasiums across China. Currently, a third of the sports lottery is dedicated to funding this concept. According to the Active People Survey, the concept has been successful in China as physical activity of the Chinese people has shown steady improvements since the concept was introduced in China.

Following the success in China, the municipal corporations of Delhi agreed on the installation of free, open gyms in



2012 and installed 40 sets of such gyms in the areas under their jurisdiction. The concept was well received by the public and by 2018, South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has installed 780 open gyms, North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) 251 and East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) 48 open gyms. The success of the initiative can be verified rather easily; you can see people working out on the equipment almost any time of the day.

### Fitness made more accessible

All the gyms are identical in design; more or less nine fitness equipment are installed on a platform made up of cemented tiles. The machines are lined up in three columns. One column has equipment designed for aerobic exercises, one for core exercises and one for strength training. Some of the gyms have also been beautified by planting flower beds in the gym's surroundings. One can access the gym at anytime of the day, making it a hit with school going children as well as adults.

Open gyms successfully replicate the exercising environment of commercial gyms. Exercising in an open environment, in fresh air, makes a valuable addition to the concept. Another pleasant observation that we made during a visit to a public gym in Moti Nagar of West Delhi was the popularity of such gyms with middle aged women. Inactivity is a major problem amongst homemaking women of India. A Pan-India survey conducted in early 2019 by HealthifyMe, a fitness app, shows that 53 per cent of Indian women are "physically inactive" as they burn less than 50 per cent of the calories that a normal person should be burning through physical activity throughout the day.

The initiative has reduced this problem for women of the national capital as these gyms have become a hub of social interaction as well as exercise. Parveen Bhutani, a homemaker from Karampura, says that she really enjoys

THE CONCEPT WAS WELL RECEIVED BY THE PUBLIC AND BY 2018, SOUTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (SDMC) HAS INSTALLED 780 OPEN GYMS, NORTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (NDMC) 251 AND EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (EDMC) 48 OPEN GYMS. THE SUCCESS OF THE INITIATIVE CAN BE VERIFIED RATHER EASILY; YOU CAN SEE PEOPLE WORKING OUT ON THE EQUIPMENT ALMOST ANY TIME OF THE DAY

the contributions the public gyms have made in her and her friends lives as exercising has now become a part of their daily routine. "The intensity of the exercises that we can perform on the gym equipment is just enough for people of our age. Also, we are able to socialise while staying active, which is a win-win," she says.

### Room for improvement

While the initiative is definitely a step in the right direction, it also has some flaws. Most of these gyms are not commissioned with informative plaques or any other descriptive text to instruct the user on how to use the equipment properly. Also, there are no specific instructions regarding the amount of training one should do, leading to over or under training, which are as problematic as inactivity is. "I often observe people exercising in improper form in such gyms. Many children end up overtraining due to no guidance. Hence, the government should see to it that people are well informed about the technique and the amount of training that should be done on the equipment," says Tejinder Singh, a gym owner in Kirti Nagar.

Although the equipment could sufficiently stimulate older people, it is not adequate for younger people with better fitness levels. "I don't really feel that the movement does anything for me physically, that's why it is of no use to me," was the common sentiment of young people. The gyms could use equipment for intense exercise in

addition to the existing equipment. However, the authorities are only planning to add jogging trails to the public gyms.

Also, some environmentalists have come out alleging "concretisation" of green patches at parks and forests to set up open gyms leads to choking of trees.

Verhaen Khanna, founder of the New Delhi Nature Society (NDNS), said outdoor gyms could be set up without cementing the grass and soil. He said concretization would affect the groundwater table. "It is not just the ground but even the base of trees is being cemented. This would choke trees. It is also violation of the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) order. After the matter was highlighted, concrete at the base of trees was removed but the ground is still being concretised, which would affect water percolation into the soil," Khanna told Hindustan Times in June 2019.

### Conclusion

While the Delhi government has proven to be successful in inculcating a healthy lifestyle amongst citizens, other cities are also coming up with innovations to integrate public spaces with healthy lifestyle promotion. Seeing that the benefits of the open gyms far outweigh the cons, authorities of various other cities of India have also come up with similar open gyms for the benefits of their citizens. Dehradun, Coimbatore, Raipur and Chandigarh are some examples of such cities which have taken similar initiatives. ■

# The key to resilient housing lies in the fine print

Luis Triveno and Olivia Caldwell

**F**rom Canada to Kenya, nearly every country struggles to provide housing for all its residents.

It's a goal that has become a moving target: Migration – both rural-to-urban and cross-border – is placing mounting pressure on cities to house their newcomers.

Three million people move to urban areas every week, and by 2030, three billion more people will need quality housing. According to World Migration Report 2015, In many of these cities such as Sydney, London and New York, migrants represent over a third of the

population and, in some cities such as Brussels and Dubai, migrants account for more than half of the population. Other cities have seen a remarkable growth in migration in recent years. For example, the number of foreign residents in Seoul has doubled in the last ten years. In Asia and Africa, rapidly growing small cities are expected to absorb almost all the future urban population growth of the world (UN DESA, 2014) and this mobility pattern to cities and urban areas is characterized by the temporality and circularity of the internal migration process. The growing risks of climate change demand housing strategies that focus not only on affordability, but also on resilience.

As markets change fast, governments must be ever vigilant that policies don't become obsolescent or even harmful because their details have become out of date. Even well-designed housing programs require adjustments.

Take the case of Singapore: its admirable Housing Development Board (HDB) program has built over one million units, housing 80 per cent of the country's population, but until 2013, HDB units could only be sold to married couples. An increase in single house hunters forced the government to extend the program to single people over 35 years old. Now groups are petitioning to remove restrictions on single mothers and divorced parents.

Even providing free or heavily





subsidized homes—as Colombia and Mexico have done—has downsides: Aside from potentially creating a shadow market of resale and sublets, if units are too small or too remote, quality of life decreases as the price of commuting increases. If poor families are not adequately integrated into the urban fabric, new housing will quickly become the new slums.

Fortunately, policymakers can learn from other countries' trials and errors. Here are four lessons for policymakers seeking to design resilient housing programs:

- ◆ Don't overpromise. Big numbers make great headlines for a day and simmering resentment for years. Too often, governments promise to deliver high numbers of housing units in short time frames – ignoring decades of evidence that construction, from large-scale projects to a simple kitchen renovation, too often fall victim to delays, cost overruns, and quality deficiencies. In recent years, leaders of countries as different as Saudi Arabia, Haiti, Cote d'Ivoire or Papua New Guinea have ignored this well-known “planning fallacy,” as behavioral economists call it, launching large-scale housing programs that have either fallen short of their goals or failed to take off. These broken promises inevitably lead to public frustration.
- ◆ Avoid segregation. Housing policies, focused solely on affordability, risk creating social alienation by building new developments in cheap land in isolated areas—with the unintended results of exacerbating urban sprawl and poverty. In 1994, Nelson Mandela's newly elected government in South Africa launched a program delivering nearly four million housing opportunities. But that housing ended up so distant from urban centers and jobs that critics have derided the program as a continuation of the very system of apartheid it was designed to end. In the early 2000s, Mexico spent over \$100 billion on a massive housing program to build complete “new towns” away from city centers – today, thousands of these houses are uninhabited and dilapidated. Governments have refocused their efforts on resilient urban renewal and transit-led development to ensure that housing is connected to jobs and the city's social fabric.
- ◆ Never compromise on quality to reduce costs. Former Soviet countries achieved high rates of home ownership (in Romania, it's 96 per cent), but did it with uniform blocks of cheap concrete. Most of the new units are now decades old, in need of urgent structural repair, and burdened by high utility costs

and low energy efficiency. Similarly, Chile and Colombia have cut their quantitative housing deficits only to face large-scale quality issues. To stand the test of time, and to be affordable over its lifecycle, new housing must be built with high structural integrity and energy efficiency. We need to ensure that today's efforts to address the quantitative housing deficit do not exacerbate tomorrow's qualitative one.

- ◆ Don't neglect the existing housing stock. Around a quarter of the world's population currently lives in self-built homes in dense slums. When natural disasters hit, they cause horrific human and economic losses. Conversely, when informal households are given tools and funding to actively anticipate risk, they make resilient investments: they improve not only their homes, but also their economic and personal lives, thus strengthening the resilience of their cities.

Yes, large-scale programs are required to close the housing deficit. However, keep an eye on the fine print of your housing policy to stay abreast of changing times and avoid unintended consequences. Bigger is not always better; budgeting for quality and energy efficiency will generate dividends over time.

Evidence shows that even the world's poor may not find a free home far from an urban center appealing. This suggests that policymakers should expand their definition of “resilience” beyond a brick and mortar structure's capacity to withstand shocks. As Lawrence Vale, professor of urban studies and planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), has noted, “housing for resilient cities is housing that provides a foundation for vulnerable groups to develop positive social relationships and economic livelihoods while reducing risks.” ■

**TAKE THE CASE OF SINGAPORE: ITS ADMIRABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT BOARD (HDB) PROGRAM HAS BUILT OVER ONE MILLION UNITS, HOUSING 80 PER CENT OF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION, BUT UNTIL 2013, HDB UNITS COULD ONLY BE SOLD TO MARRIED COUPLES. AN INCREASE IN SINGLE HOUSE HUNTERS FORCED THE GOVERNMENT TO EXTEND THE PROGRAM TO SINGLE PEOPLE OVER 35 YEARS OLD. NOW GROUPS ARE PETITIONING TO REMOVE RESTRICTIONS ON SINGLE MOTHERS AND DIVORCED PARENTS**

*[This article was first published on World Bank Blogs as part of Sustainable Cities series.]*

# Nagpur installs first water ATM that yields no wastewater

Among the many water ATMs mushrooming across India, Nagpur Municipal Corporation claims this is the best as it does not cause environmental loss



**Nivedita Khandekar**  
Consulting Editor

**N**agpur (Maharashtra): Raju Baitule is an autorickshaw driver, who often parks his vehicle along with others at one of the autorickshawstands in Nandanvanin East Nagpur. Unlike other summers, he says, one good thing this year was the easy availability of clean and cold water for drinking.

It dispenses water for a very reasonable rate and just ahead of summer, the facility also started giving out chilled water. "This is a very good facility. I regularly fill my water bottle from here," Baitule said as other autorickshaw drivers echoed similar sentiments.

As this correspondent visited the

spot where the ATM has been installed, Vinod Yerawar and Moreshwar Patewar, two students who had come from outside Nagpur to appear for an entrance examination at the KDK College, came to fetch water.

"We are here for the first time. But this is such a good facility ... we can be assured of water quality," Yerawar said.

The Transport Committee of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) has since February installed the water ATM at the spot linked with the bus stop, a few feet away. This is NMC's first water ATM – called ZEO Kiosk – in association with Josab India Pvt Ltd., a company that offers ecological water solutions.

The idea is to make available clean and safe drinking water (and chilled water too, if anyone wants) for commuters. But it is not just the commuters that are benefiting with the facility. Rajendra Gotmare is a resident of the BSNL Colony right behind the water ATM. Their colony, although a government colony, does not get adequate municipal water. That is

when the residents mix dug well water with municipal water or sometimes, borewell water with municipal water. "When mixing happens, we do not drink that water. It is at times like this that we need clean and safe drinking water. And this water ATM is just too good for us," Gotmare said.

B D Kuthe, another resident of the colony said that of the 24 families in the complex, at least 15 used water ATM regularly.

There are several other residential areas within a radius of one kilometre from the water ATM from where people come and take water in 20 litres cans. The KDK College is a huge campus and many of the students live in surrounding areas either in rented apartments or hostels. These students too regularly take water with them while going home after college hours.

Dennis Abraham Thazhomon, Managing Director of Josab India Pvt Ltd. (a subsidiary of Josab International AB, headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden; in India based at Pune), said, this is their own patented product. "Josab's purification is entirely natural - mineral based, hence best drinking water quality is guaranteed without



*Anti-social elements often put in flattened bottle caps instead of coins; it leads to machine stoppage every now and then*

## Rates for for Josab's water ATM at Nagpur

As on June 2019, the rates were as follows:  
Rs 1 for 0.5 litres  
Rs 5 for 10 litres  
Rs 10 for 20 litres

## Water ATMs across India

- ◆ Cities that have installed water ATMs Delhi, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Silchar and of course Nagpur
- ◆ More than 100 railway stations across India have water ATMs
- ◆ Almost all of them use RO set up and thus lead to lot of wastage of water



The ZEO Kiosk as it is known, is the zero-water-wastage water ATM installed near a bus stop in Nandanvan area at Nagpur

loss of minerals, without usage of chemicals or artificial additives, without wastage of water and having low energy consumption. The mineral used in the process is Aqualite,” he said. Subodh Singh of Ecomatrix is the local manufacturer (Nagpur) of the machine that uses Josab’s technology. It is with his company that the NMC and Josab have signed a contract to run the water ATM at Nandanvan. “The machine was bought by the NMC, but we run it. We pay the municipality for water and power that we use through a proper connection,” he said. The current collection is approximately Rs 2,000 per day with 150-200 litres water dispensed on an average basis daily. The company will be maintaining the machine for 10 years even as it gets to keep the revenue generated.

There are often some operational problems such as people putting in flattened bottle caps instead of coins or trying to squeeze in a folded note that leads to stoppage of the machine for

some time. People have also torn the rate chart pasted on the outside.

Asked as to why is there a need of a machine, water ATM or such paraphernalia when the quality of water provided by the NMC is reasonably good and a large number of people drink it without using ROs or other types of filters at home, Jitendra (Bunty) Kukde, Chairman of Nagpur Municipal Corporation’s City Transport Committee, was prompt to point out how people lacked civic sense and “do you give guarantee that there will be no wastage of water? The people will use the municipal tap without any hassles?”

Same was the lament from the company representative. “No one wants to drink water from open taps anymore. But a neat and clean kiosk selling filtered water is always welcomed,” she said. “Providing safe drinking water and sanitation at our bus stands and bus stops is our responsibility. Gone are the days when people drank from pyaau (charitable water kiosks), now-

a-days, they only buy bottled water,” Kukde said, adding, “So, if a common man, who travels by buses, is shelling out Rs 20 for a litre of water, is it not an affordable option? Safe and clean too?”

The feedback from the people is very encouraging and the NMC will now think of getting more water ATMs, the leader said.

There are several other water ATMs across Nagpur, many of them run by Maharashtra government, but almost all of them are RO technology based. The biggest advantage that the company claims is ‘zero water wastage’ as compared to RO plant-based water ATMs and the reduction in one-time use plastic bottles. It reduces the dependence of citizens on packaged drinking water, which otherwise is an expensive option. ■

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# Do we plan for conservation?



**Abhilash Khandekar**

Sr Journalist

**C**onservation has become an oft-used phrase in today's times when most of the natural resources are under severe anthropogenic driven threat. Be it rivers, forests, soil or mountains. Forest conservation, energy conservation, water conservation and so on. Actually, conservation points to a whole movement and not just a word or one-time action.

It is therefore quite relevant to look into how the conservation movement actually began in the industrialised West and how it took so many years to come to India where there are growing worries about all natural things. The book under review is the concluding part of trilogy) taken out in Britain a few years ago. While the first book of the series spoke about rise of modern

urban planning (1880-1914), second one was: Shaping an Urban World-Planning in the 20th Century. I have not had the occasion to read the two earlier books but the third of the series Planning for Conservation-an International Perspective has been with me for some time and when Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently spoke about water conservation, one was reminded of the same.

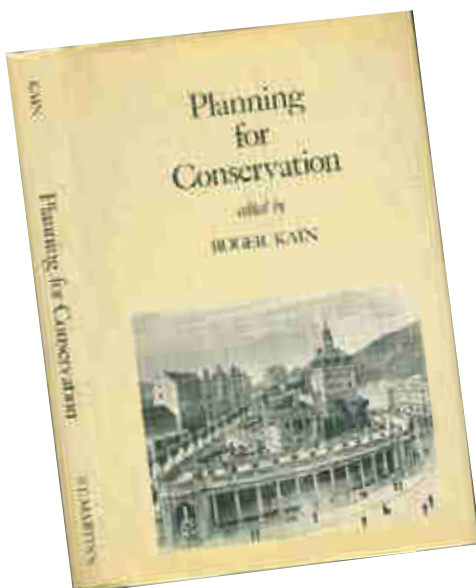
Spread over 14 chapters, written by experts as in-depth essays on subjects ranging from reconstruction of Poland after its destruction in 1914 to the origins of conservation movement in Germany or conservation planning in Canada to the early campaign for a national park in the Lake District (North-West England) to building controls in Paris, the city as an artifact, the book makes very interesting reading for a cross section of readers.

The various essays, which are actually research papers read out at a conference in England, demonstrate the development of the philosophy of conservation and changing attitudes in the conservation and design debate. Examples of urban and rural conservation show how the theories have been put into practice in a wide

range of geographical and historical contexts and regions.

While this is clearly a Western thought, what is important from an Indian angle is that when we visit European cities we notice the beauty and neatness of design and importance given to natural heritage and the built environment as well. Here we need to learn a lot from them.

Roger Kain, the editor of this volume says: conservation planning no longer counts only enlightened individuals or altruistic groups as its champions. Nor it is a concern solely of the often small, specialised government departments which nurtured it, but rather it is today a sine quanon of environmental management. He further adds, "The man-made environment is continually rebuilt to reflect changing motives, attitudes and tastes as societies evolve politically, economically and technically". Much of the beauty of Paris stems from the continued existence of



## Book

Planning for Conservation

## Editor

Roger Kain

## Publishers

Mansell, London

## Pages

292



*The Lake District National Park  
North West England*

streets, parks and monumental vistas created during the Second Empire, writes Kain.

There is a full chapter on the building regulations and controls that still exist in Paris and are said to have contributed to what the beautiful French city stands for today in the international urban contexts. The writer Norma Evenson, a professor of architectural history at California University, says a great city can be a work of art, a collective and complex art, but a superior art. In any city, she adds, the human fabric constantly changes but it is the relatively stable architectural environment which gives the city its physical identity. "Paris is Paris because it looks like Paris... and must be preserved as a single artifact, intact!"

The book-actually all the experts roped in by the publishers-does not only talk about urban history, city designs and architectural beauty but at one place author Francis Sandbach, a lecturer in interdisciplinary studies at the Kent University, takes note of gradual development in the public

demand and efforts of governments to declare certain open areas as national parks. Giving plethora of examples and historical references, the researcher says that people in England were quite restive during the interwar period and their concerns were about preserving the naturally endowed countryside. In 1926, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) was formed to bring together national and local interest groups concerned with the countryside. Its task was to coordinate the promotion of relevant legislation, seek voluntary agreements to preserve important features of the landscape, and to advise landowners, developers and individual members of the public. During the interwar period in England various aspects of preservation warranted special attention and creating national parks was one of the significant movements. Impressed by the American and Canadian national parks after a visit in 1925, Lord Bledisloe, the parliamentary secretary to Agriculture Ministry began a personal publicity campaign in Britain. Eventually a committee was formed for

national parks and the first National Parks Act of 1949 came into being. A number of pressure groups made this possible.

My intention of detailing the national parks movement of England was mainly to compare such campaigns in India which have been demanding nature conservation and protection of wildlife and rivers. Also because the author of this particular paper gives example of a series of agitations and their background before the Lake District National Park was declared as preserved region. There was a society, I was impressed to read, which was formed to look after footpaths. Its name was Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society (COSFPS) which, along with the Friends of the Lake District, fought for preservation of parks and natural sites.

While a lot is still needed to be done in India, as the country takes strides of progress, the development paradigm would surely require to take into consideration the importance of nature conservation for the benefit of humankind.

The book deals with a number of issues and provides the readers the benefit of some detailed studies of developed nations to show how well they looked after their cities, countrysides, lakes and other natural assets despite stepping up the economic growth. It may appear a bit outdated for the readers to go into historical details of what happened in England some 100 odd years ago, what is still relevant is that the British who ruled India for quite some time, had brought along their best practices and had started preserving many of today's beautiful buildings and forests. The Archeological Survey of India (ASI), chiefly entrusted with preserving heritage buildings in India, was set up by the British in 1861 and some of the best parks, later taken over by Project Tiger were actually conserved by the British. ■

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# Urban streets need space to breathe!

With the increasing urban population, and lack of proper planning guidelines and policies for streets, the cities in India have its streets clogged up with heavy traffic, illegally parked motor vehicles, encroached sidewalks, leaving almost no walkable space for pedestrians. Streets are planned considering vehicles and traffic movement as primary focus which resulted in reducing widths of sidewalks and decreasing open spaces such as boulevards. Congested cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and other metros need retrofitting to help decongest the city streets and make walkable spaces for the city dwellers



**Ashok Wankhade**  
Managing Editor

**C**ities across the world have historically been defined by streets and public spaces. Streets which can be defined as lifeline of cities, nowadays can be seen clogged up with traffic, illegally parked vehicles and encroachments. Especially in Indian cities, a probable reason for such a scenario is easy affordability of motor vehicles. Also, lack of spatial management turns out to be an important factor for condition of streets in urban India. Today, pedestrianization seems to be a far left behind concept. With almost no place to walk around cities, the urban scenario in India urgently needs a makeover of its streets, make walkable places, and lanes which are not overcrowded with vehicles, but which gives a sense of openness. Gone are the days when we had open spaces – the sidewalks, boulevards, lakeside areas, parks and forest patches which allowed the city residents to socialize, walk around, places which smelt of earth or greenery and not of diesel and dust.

A city like Delhi, the second most populous after Tokyo with 25 million people residing (as per World Urbanisation Prospect), seems to burst at the seams with migrants and slum dwellers. In such conditions, open public spaces are necessary breathers for the city. Currently, most Indian cities have no specific street design guidelines to throw light on urban street planning. The existing guidelines majorly emphasise on national highways and major roads with minimalistic stress on streets and lanes, and almost no consideration of pedestrianizing space or space for small utility stalls.

A few big cities like Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru have in a way begun to work on street planning and design, with guidelines primarily focusing on streets as public spaces, mimic 'global' engineering standards at the expense of the local designs of streets that make them

beneficial to public life. Urban planning in India generally follows a top to down approach with minimalistic participation of citizens and least consideration on public spaces.

To learn from and improve in urban designing, some of the European cities such as Amsterdam and London can be good examples. These cities offer shared spaces, reimagine roadways and sidewalks for civic life, an intuitive approach to designing public thoroughfares has resulted in improved traffic movement on streets and enhanced safety of pedestrians as the vehicles slow down to navigate a unified public zone, whereas, walkers and cyclists have improved amenities and access to the city. Also, development of green patches on street corners, installing more sitting spaces, spaces for street art for public, ultimately results in a more harmonious and humane urban environment.

Another good example can be Bengaluru with its 'Tender SURE' project for transforming the public realm repairing old roads, potholes, broken footpaths, and fixing design to reduce chaotic traffic jams and build more walkable spaces. The city authorities implemented the project in two phases covering 12 roads in total in the past 10 years. The design of Tender SURE roads prioritizes safety of pedestrians and those using non-motorised transport (NMTs), also it showed concern about the needs of street vendors. Under the project, aesthetic development with focus on practicality and utility was one of the major concerns.

Therefore, taking into consideration the aforementioned examples, while designing streets and 'chowks' (open quadrangle formed at junction of two roads, or sometimes also considered as open market areas) planners need to lay emphasis on designing it for the city dwellers rather than for vehicles. Also, the public spaces, sidewalks, streets, designed must represent the city's cultural practices and engagement of its residents with such spaces. ■



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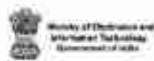
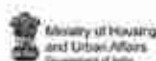
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