

Developing citizen-centric cities

The Lucknow NextGen Cities Conclave witnessed discussions on various aspects required for developing a holistic smart city



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automated. Even then the ULBs have not come to a level where they can invest in city development activities.” He also talked about the challenge of lack of synergy between the development authority and the municipal corporation, which often work in silos.

Highlighting the importance of citizens paying user charges, he said. “Look at the solid waste treatment plants which were set up using funds from JNURM scheme and urban local bodies a few years ago. A lot of them are not operational. They have run into problem of management.” He further said that ULBs don’t have the required financial wherewithal or technical skills to operate these plants. As a result they are not being used anymore.

Sudhir Krishna, former secretary, ministry of urban planning and development, said that planning is an important part in execution of smart urban infrastructure projects. While laying down the roads, the administration should plan for sewage pipelines, optical fibre and transportation, among others, in a coherent manner.

Sadakant, principal secretary, housing and urban planning department, UP, said that governance is a major challenge in development of smart cities. “The development of a smart city requires smart leadership;

From L to R: NR Verma, Mukesh Meshram, Devesh Chaturvedi, Sudhir Krishna, Mehnaz Ansari, and Kumar Keshav.

it needs defining roles, responsibilities and inter-relationship of key stakeholders and opens a transparent governance system.”

Highlighting the lack of unified authority Dr Devesh Chaturvedi, principal secretary, UP planning department said, “The work of development is going on in the state but due to lack of synergy and coordination, people are not getting benefits.” For example, newly built roads which were being dug by Jal Nigam or telecom department are left on their own. “During the last Kumbh Mela, when I was DM of Allahabad we had strictly told all the departments that no roads are to be dug out without prior permission from the district administration.”

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Citizen participation is a must for smart cities. Only when citizens pay for the services, be it waste disposal and recycling, water or electricity, a city can be made viable and livable. The urban local bodies must generate their own resources for financing development work. This was highlighted by Alok Ranjan, chief secretary, Uttar Pradesh, at the NextGen Cities Conclave organised by Governance Now in Lucknow in May.

Delivering the keynote address at the conclave, Ranjan said, “Planned

urbanisation will make cities an engine of growth for Uttar Pradesh.” If urbanisation happens in an unplanned and unorganised fashion cities will act as obstacles for growth, as they will promote crime and lawlessness.

Explaining how urban local bodies (ULBs) can create resources instead of expecting grants from the government, he said, “ULBs have land – an expensive resource. Through monetisation and leveraging this resource ULBs can create surplus resource themselves.” However, the actual situation is completely opposite. “Most of the ULBs are in debt and are dependent on the government. This despite the fact that ULBs have revenue streams like property tax. The tax collection has been

On a smart road

Stressing upon the need for state multimodal transport Mukesh Meshram, managing director, UPSRTC, said that transportation system across the globe cannot run without government subsidies. “In San Francisco, the revenue earned from ticketing is just 25 percent of the operational cost, remaining is borne by federal, state and local government. Europe bears 50 percent. Australia bears 30 percent. What about India?” he asked adding, “Hardly any state government pays heed to transportation issues here (in India).”

“We have set up six SPVs [special purpose vehicles] under JnNURM – one each for Lucknow, Agra, Allahabad, Meerut, Varanasi and Kanpur. Out of 1,140 buses which started running in these cities a few years ago, only 850 buses are operational,” he informed. Municipal corporations have not taken the ownership of the transport system till date and most SPVs are in loss. The government needs to provide a long term solution, he added.

Kumar Keshav, managing director, Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation, said that cities should have an integrated mode of transport. “Metro services can be made more effective with proper feeder system: this could be motorised or non-motorised. Even rickshaws can be used properly for ferrying people from residential colonies to metro stations,” he said. Metro and bus services should not compete with each other, instead they should be complementary. Also, the common ticketing system will eliminate the need to buy a new ticket every time a user switches his/her mode of transport.

Opportunities galore

Mehnaz Ansari, USTDA representative, India, said that US president Barack Obama has announced a series of initiatives that would generate more than \$4 billion in trade and investment in India and support thousands of jobs in both countries. “As part of those efforts, USTDA Director Leocadia I Zak has signed agreements with three Indian state governments to mobilise US industry expertise and technologies to modernise the cities of Ajmer (Rajasthan),

Allahabad (UP) and Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh),” informed Ansari.

Allahabad is the first city which has been given to USTDA by the Indian government. “We plan to bring industry closer to government and catalyse some of the information exchange which will help in planning, preparing vision document for transportation, ICT, drainage, energy and all the other relevant things,” she said.

Holistic development

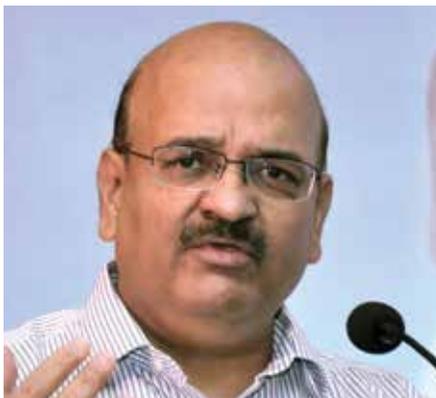
NR Verma, advisor, Awas Bandhu, housing and urban planning department, said that a holistic approach is needed for developing smart cities. “With reference to brownfield cities, we should have incremental approach instead of overhauling it overnight,

where it could be remotely monitored. The control room can simultaneously sent an alert to all respective agencies.

Anil Agarwal, ADGP, traffic, UP police, said that all departments must maintain centralised databases, which should be integrated.

Talking about strengthening of state enforcement machinery he said, “The strength of state’s traffic police is 3,079. On the contrary, the city of Bengaluru alone has more than 3,000 personnel. Security must be regarded as a part of infrastructure because unless you have security you will not have investment and there will be no smart city.”

GS Priyadarshi, MD, UP Electronics Corporation Limited, said that a smart city citizens should also deliver servic-



Alok Ranjan, chief secretary, Uttar Pradesh



Anil Agarwal, ADGP, traffic, UP police

which is not possible. There should be simultaneous advancement in governance, finance, business models and ICT infrastructure.”

DK Shami, advisor, fire, the ministry of home affairs, government of India, said the planners should have fire safety in mind while planning urban development projects. He said there are standards and benchmarks available in terms of fire safety of cities. ISO provisions clearly state the size of manpower and machinery required for dealing with fire issues in a city with certain population.

He also emphasised on the utility of security cameras with inbuilt fire smoke detection system and its integration with a control room from

es in a digital form. He gave examples of common services centres, which are operational in rural areas, and lok seva kendras, which are operational in urban areas, as models for electronic delivery of services.

Avanish Dureha, industry director defence and public security, SAP India, said that his company is helping Bhopal municipal corporation in delivering government to citizen services like property tax, water charges, birth and death registration, marriage registration, and user charges in an electronic format. He also talked about CityApp, developed by SAP, which offers a plethora of citizen services. ■

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