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# TRANSFORMATIONAL INTERVENTIONS UNDERTAKEN TO DEVELOP URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRENGTHEN URBAN GOVERNANCE, SINCE 2014: HARDEEP S PURI

Relevant for: Indian Society | Topic: Urbanization, their problems and their remedies incl. Migration & Smart Cities

“2023 was a standout year for urban governance in India”, said Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs and Petroleum & Natural Gas today. While addressing the media at a press conference here, Shri Puri said that since 2014, the Government has undertaken transformational programmatic interventions to develop urban infrastructure and strengthen urban governance, with a strong focus on pro-poor welfare.

The Minister said that different sections of society have benefitted tremendously from our interventions this year – be it street vendors; informal urban workers; women and the girl child; low-income and middle-income families seeking the dignity of a house, tap water connections, sanitation, and other basic services.

Elaborating on the scale of urban transformation in recent years, the Minister said that since 2014, Rs. 18.07 lakh crores have been invested in urban development. This is a staggering 12-fold increase in investments compared to 2004-14, he stressed. Referring to the example of PMAY (U), he noted that 1.18 crore houses have been approved under the scheme which is around 9 times of earlier 13.46 lakh houses under JnNURM and RAY.



Speaking on the milestones achieved in year 2023, the Minister mentioned about the extension of National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD) Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act, 2011 until

31 December 2026, thus exempting certain JJ clusters from punitive action and allowing adequate time for reforms and inclusive measures. He further said that under the PM SVANidhi scheme, we crossed the milestone and mission target of 50 lakh beneficiaries (the current number stands at 58.89 lakh beneficiaries) and we also crossed the milestone of more than Rs. 10,000 crores disbursed. “Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U), we completed the construction of nearly 12 lakh houses this year (averaging a delivery of 1 lakh houses each month)”, he said. Under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban 2.0, he said, we remediated 879 lakh metric tonnes of waste, cleared 336 dumpsites, and reclaimed 3,708 acres of land. Over 68 CBG plants were approved for effective resource recovery from organic waste under the GOBARdhan scheme.

Shri Puri noted that under the AMRUT mission, we exceeded the targets for water tap connections and sewer connections this year. “There are now 1.87 crore water tap connections (original target: 1.39 crores) and 1.47 sewer connections (original target: 1.45 crores)”, he said.

Noting the work done by Government towards improving Urban Mobility, Shri Puri said that the Metro systems across the country achieved the landmark of crossing 1 crore daily ridership. Delhi Metro itself witnessed daily ridership in excess of 72 lakh passengers in August 2023. He also mentioned about the Namo Bharat train, India’s first rapid rail service inaugurated by PM Shri Narendra Modi on 20 October 2023; and PM–eBus Sewa scheme, launched on 16 August 2023 with the aim of augmenting bus operations by deploying 10,000 electric buses.

### **A comparative look at the progress made**

#### **Mission**

**Up till 31 Dec 2022**

**Up till 31 Dec 2023**

#### **Growth**

#### **PMAY**

Houses grounded

107.30 lakhs

113.53 lakhs

6.23 lakhs

Houses completed

67.10 lakhs

79.02 lakhs

11.92 lakhs

Person days generated for gainful employment

727 crores

864 crores

137 crores

Consumption of steel

100 lakh metric tonne

120 lakh metric tonne

20 lakh metric tonne

Consumption of cement

443 lakh metric tonne

526 lakh metric tonne

83 lakh metric tonne

## **AMRUT**

Completed projects

Rs 33,478 crores

Rs 43,573 crores

Rs 10,095 crores

Of the grounded projects, works physically completed

Rs 67,437 crores

Rs 75,256 crores

Rs 7,819 crores

Water tap connections

136.62 lakhs

187.40 lakhs

51 lakhs

Sewer connections

103.40 lakhs

147 lakhs

43.6 lakhs

LED street lights

97 lakhs

99 lakhs

2 lakhs

## **AMRUT 2.0**

Approved projects

Rs 94,955.12 crores

Rs 1,53,573.75 crores

Rs 58,618 crores

Water tap connections to be added/serviced

2.36 crores

3.66 crores

1.30 crores

Sewerage connections to be added/serviced

60 lakhs

1.01 crores

41 lakh

Contracts awarded

0

Rs 32,703 crores

Rs 32,703 crores

Water distribution network to be laid/replaced

58,707 kms

1.02 lakh kms

43,550 kms

Sewer network to be laid/ replaced

15,498 kms

28,458 kms

12,960 kms

WTP capacity to be added/ augmented

7,071 MLD

9,701 MLD

2,630 MLD

STP capacity to be added/ augmented

2,158 MLD

3,939 MLD

1,781 MLD

Water bodies to be rejuvenated

1,518

2,135

617

### **Smart Cities Mission**

Total projects

7,744

8,010

266

Completed

5,040 projects worth Rs. 93,529 crores

6,627 projects worth Rs. 1.32 lakh crores

1,587 projects worth Rs. 38,471 crores

### **SBM**

Waste processing

74% of total 1.52 lakh TPD

77.19% of total 1.57 lakh TPD

### **PM SVANidhi**

No. of loans sanctioned

45.03 lakhs

81.14 lakhs

36.11 lakhs

No. of loans disbursed

38.75 lakhs

76.62 lakhs

37.87 lakhs

Total loan amount disbursed

Rs. 4,548.99 crores

Rs. 10,114 crores

Rs. 5,565 crores

SVANidhi Se Samriddhi

33.52 lakhs

58.85 lakhs

25.33 lakhs

### **Metro rail**

Total operational

830.8 kms



905.42 kms

74.62 kms

\*\*\*

## RKJ/M

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**RKJ/M**

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# DANGEROUS STATUS QUO: ON CONTINUING HOSTILITIES IN MANIPUR

Relevant for: Indian Society | Topic: Regionalism, Communalism & Secularism

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January 25, 2024 12:20 am | Updated 07:53 am IST

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Eight months after ethnic violence broke out between the largely valley-dwelling [Meitei](#) and the hill-dwelling [Kuki-Zo](#) communities in Manipur, hostilities continue. The ethnic polarisation has persisted and displaced people on both sides are still unable to return to their homes; schooling and health care remain disrupted and the writ of the State government does not run in the Kuki-Zo hill areas. The government's inability to win peace and the failure of institutions such as the State Assembly to deliberate on the problem have compounded the conflict even as the Chief Minister, N. Biren Singh, continues to be seen more as an ethnic leader, preventing the possibility of any thaw in the pervasive hostility. Even media and civil society organisations seem to be divided on ethnic lines and, more dangerously, the role of the army and central paramilitary forces is being seen through this lens, evident in the utterances of the Chief Minister and representatives of ethnic chauvinist groups. The Union government's response has been to rely on a smoke and mirrors approach — a de facto assumption of powers related to law and order enforcement without publicly announcing the imposition of Article 355 that enables it to do so. There has been little follow-up on confidence-building measures between the representatives of the ethnic groups after visits by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and others from his Ministry. The latest [visit by a Home Ministry team](#) is a reaction to a resolution by some MLAs to take collective action following fresh killings and violence in Moreh town.

The predominance of militant outfits is alarming. Militias such as the Meitei radical Arambai Tenggol have been allowed to act as "defence squads", brandishing weapons and being allowed to vitiate the already perilous discourse in the valley even as Kuki insurgents do the same in the hill areas. The arms looted from police stations and camps have still to be recovered, which suggests that there is a dangerous militarisation of non-state groups. The Union government must focus on addressing this key issue on either side of the divide. Meanwhile, Mr. Singh has tried to erroneously link the prevailing conflict and the ethnic polarisation to the refugee situation in Manipur with many, predominantly from the Chin communities, fleeing the civil war in Myanmar following attacks by the junta. This has led to the demand for ending the Free Movement Regime (FMR) enabling trade and people-to-people contact near the border. While the porous border has also enabled drug trafficking and the movement of insurgents, a cessation of the FMR would be a case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

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# REPUBLIC DAY, A MOMENT TO PAUSE AND REFLECT

Relevant for: Indian Society | Topic: Salient Features of Indian Society

## Dear Readers

The Indian republic is in its 75th year – the year had, in fact, turned seminal four days before the country celebrated its republican ethos. Jan 22 was a rare watershed – not any other milestone that is part of the regular ebbs and flows of democracy. As this paper's editorial ([A seminal milestone, the journey ahead](#), IE January 23) pointed out, “January 22, 2024 will no more be just another day in the life of a nation. It will be the moment when a temple was consecrated in Ayodhya... A political movement that began as a challenge to the ruling consensus, having made its way to the system's centre, stamped its dominance and become the establishment, has now, almost 10 years later, brought a never-before convergence — of popular will, state power, religion”. January 22, as the editorial noted, “asks the nation for nothing less than a new self-description”.

Of course, the [BJP](#) juggernaut paved the way for this moment. The demand for the temple has been one of the defining elements of the party's politics for more than three and a half decades. The party, as this paper's contributing editor, Pratap Bhanu Mehta noted, has kept its promise. But [as Mehta pointed out](#) (IE, January 22), the consecration caught in its sweep virtually the entire political system of the country. True, the Opposition questioned the consecration, most of its top leaders stayed away from the ceremony. Yet, even they have been “obliged to pay allegiance to Ram...The Ram whose role in Indian cultural and spiritual life was one whose centre was everywhere and circumference nowhere, has now been anchored to a centre. Ram has been transformed from a radiant glow of righteousness, compassion, and imaginative power into something merely instrumental: A litmus test for national loyalty.” The editorial framed the challenge for them: “The BJP's political opponents, who, even as another parliamentary election draws closer, have yet to find the language to fight it, or to regain their own lost equilibrium”.

PM Modi has urged the need to temper victory with humility – “vijay” with “vinay”. The “grand temple” will inaugurate a new and a better era for the country he has said and envisioned it “as an emblem of Viksit Bharat”. It is a call to “all of us citizens, to pledge to build a capable, magnificent, and divine India,” he has said. This paper's columnist and RSS ideologue Ram Madhav ([Temple for Viksit Bharat](#), IE, January 27) also framed the consecration in the language of nation building: “The restored historic temple will infuse new life into the Temple of Prosperity of our people”.

The task will face the challenge of history. For, as this paper's editorial pointed out, “The temple that has been consecrated at Ayodhya was built not on a clean slate, but on a troubled back story that must be acknowledged and remembered if it has to be transcended... The BJP-led movement has vanquished its political opponents and won the day, but its government's slogan of ‘sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas’ will not automatically segue into ‘sabka mandir’ or ‘sabke Ram’. For that, much work still needs to be done”.

That's why the sobering words of social scientist Suhas Palshikar ([Turning on a new page with erasures](#), IE, January 23) about the erasures, already in the air for some time – the violence against plurality, the demand for homogeneity and the amnesia about what happened on December 6 – must have the ears, even of those who may not agree with it.

The litmus test for Viksit Bharat, as this paper's columnist, agriculture economist Ashok Gulati and his colleague at ICRIER Shyma Jose, [point out](#) (IE, January 22) will also lie in how

effectively it course corrects on the economic front, especially increasing employment and improving the lives of people in rural areas: “We have seen from the government data itself that in rural areas, real wages in fact have had negative growth in the last five years of Modi-2 period. This needs urgent attention and further research to create more employment-intensive growth processes”.

Most importantly, as this paper’s Republic Day editorial ([Restating the Republic](#), IE January 26), pointed out “any attempt to recast and remake the nation, howsoever tall or righteous its claims, must necessarily be tested against the touchstone of the values and ideals enshrined in the Constitution that, 75 years later, continue to animate and nourish the Republic”.

Stay well.

***Kaushik Das Gupta***

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[Filmmaker Tanuja Chandra on the lessons learnt while directingPremium Story](#)

[Sriram Raghavan on his two-decade journey as directorPremium Story](#)

Bigg Boss 17 finale is finally here with top five finalists - Ankita Lokhande, Mannara Chopra, Munawar Faruqui, Abhishek Kumar, and Arun Mahshetty - competing for the prestigious trophy. The show began on October 16 with various contestants and will feature electrifying performances by couples, including Samarth-Isha and Neil-Aishwarya. Hosted by Salman Khan, the grand finale promises a star-studded event.

**END**

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## MINT

Relevant for: Indian Society | Topic: Urbanization, their problems and their remedies incl. Migration & Smart Cities

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) maiden report on 'Finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions,' released on 24 January 2024, fills a long-felt gap in our understanding of the fiscal health of the third tier of government in India: local institutions of governance. Though it is now more than 30 years since the 73rd amendment to the Constitution institutionalized Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) at three levels in rural India—gram panchayats at the village level, mandal panchayats at the block level and zila parishad at the district level—empowerment of the kind envisaged in 1992 is yet to be realized. And sadly so. According to the 2011 Census, almost 69% of our population resides in rural areas. By any reckoning, it is no exaggeration that panchayats are critical to providing local governance and stepping up rural development. As the report says, local governments at the panchayat level (about 262,000 such) have a "significant role in translating the vision and developmental policies of both the Central and State governments into action."

Local governments invariably have more detailed information on the preferences and local needs of citizens than any higher level of government. This makes them best suited to provide many basic public goods and services, such as health, education, sanitation, etc. Yet, despite their pivotal role, challenges abound. Starting with inadequate independent financial resources and heavy reliance on grants from upper tiers of government and an inability to deliver due to lack of trained manpower to weak infrastructure and lack of political will, PRIs have fallen far short of their potential. As the report points out, their efficacy is "contingent upon factors such as the availability of adequate resources, nurturing of capabilities, political support, and active engagement of the local community." Of these, the main stumbling block is inadequate resources. Over the years, PRIs have done little to augment their own revenues—items like property tax, fees and fines—while preferring the softer option of transfers from higher levels. Inevitably, this reliance on grants has meant they are not financially self-reliant, thereby limiting their ability to decide local spending priorities themselves.

The principle of subsidiarity, as enshrined in the EU's Maastricht Treaty, is no less true of all federal forms of government. In a nutshell, it means that higher levels of government should perform only those functions that cannot be effectively performed at the local level. Ideally, the level responsible for providing a particular good or service should also be in charge of its funding and revenue collection, minimizing the scope for moral hazard. For basic services, this means it is PRIs that must provide these to citizens. However, as with economic development in general, where regional disparities are sharp, the devolution of powers and functions to panchayats (and their performance) varies greatly across states. In general, India's southern states have done better than others, which may perhaps explain why these states have made more progress on human development indicators. Clearly, when it comes to the bottom layer of government, we still have a long way to go, notwithstanding the hope embodied in India's panchayati raj legislation, including one-third reservation of seats for women in elected PRI bodies. It will be a while before we realize the dream of Mahatma Gandhi that "every village will be a republic or panchayat, having full powers." But we must speed it up.

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