

DAILY PT POINTERS

14th May, 2024



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An overview of the Smart Cities Mission

How are smart cities defined by the government? What are the two major aspects of the Smart Cities Mission? Why is the mission considered to be exclusionary to many? Did the SCM override the 74th Constitutional Amendment?

EXPLAINER

Tikender Panwar

The story so far:

The Smart Cities Mission (SCM), a flagship programme of the NDA-1 government, has taken a back seat in this year's list of poll promises and achievements.

What are smart cities?

The term 'Smart City' has been used widely ever since 2008, after the great financial crash. Smart cities were defined by urban practitioners as new Silicon Valleys built with a strong integration of a network of airports, highways, and other types of communications, a so-called intellectual city with advanced ICT.

The NDA-1 government wanted to adapt to these global changes, already happening through the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). It went ahead with a major flagship programme and thus, the SCM was announced in June 2015. Hundred cities were selected for five years under the mission. However, the mission did not clearly define a smart city. It stated,

"there is no universally accepted definition of a Smart City... The conceptualisation of Smart City... varies from city to city and country to country, depending on the level of development, willingness to change and reform, resources and aspirations of the city residents. A Smart City would have a different connotation in India than, say, Europe. Even in India, there is no one way of defining a Smart City."

What was the SCM?

The SCM had two main aspects: area-based development consisting of three components – redevelopment (city renewal), retrofitting (city improvement), and green field projects (city extension); and pan-city solutions based on ICT. These further comprised some six categories that would include



Still in the dark: The Cachin Smart Mission Limited has installed LED lights on the Kabiradava Bridge and on the Kaloor-Kadavanthra Road, in Kochi. *N. NARA*

e-governance, waste management, water management, energy management, urban mobility, and skill development. Around ₹2 lakh crore was kept aside for the mission, with public-private partnerships (PPP) an important driver of the same.

The mission that was to be completed in 2020, was given two extensions till June 2024. Additionally, to make the mission effective, a business model of governance was adopted bypassing the existing models of city governance in the country. An SPV (special purpose vehicle) led by a bureaucrat or a representative of an MNC, and other major stakeholders was created and registered under the Companies Act. The elected council, thus, had little role in the governance structure.

What is the status of the SCM?

The Urban Ministry's dashboard as of

diversity in existing urban realities. The scheme was divorced from the ground realities of urban India – the urbanisation here is dynamic and not static like the West.

The SCM became an exclusionary scheme wherein not more than 1% of a city's geographical area was selected for development. For example, Chandigarh which received ₹96 crore in the first tranche under the SCM spent it on smart water meters, a Wi-Fi zone, and solid waste management programmes all ploughed into one pocket-sector 43.

According to two major reports by McKinsey, to make Indian cities liveable, a capital expenditure of \$1.2 trillion is required by 2030. In this context, ₹1,67,875 crore is less than \$20 billion in nine years. This comes to around 0.027% of the total requirement in urban India. Hence, there was little traction for this scheme.

Additionally, the SPV model designed for smart cities was not aligned with the 74th Constitutional Amendment, which led to many cities objecting to the governance structure. The design, according to critics, was too top bottom. A hilly town that had an annual budget of less than ₹100 crore claimed projects worth more than ₹2,500 crore. This was incongruent to the demands of the residents of the town.

Urban India, according to the World Bank has more than 49% of the population living in slums. In the name of executing smart city projects, there was displacement of people living in poorer localities. Street vendors, for example, were displaced and urban commons were disrupted.

Another major consequence of the SCM has been enhanced urban flooding. Some of the towns which have historically never been flooded were made vulnerable because of infrastructure development projects that spoiled or dismantled the water channels and contours.

Interestingly, the funding pattern shows that not more than 5% has come through the PPP route.

Where did the SCM falter?

The selection of 100 cities on a competitive basis was flawed due to the

THE GIST

Smart cities were defined by urban practitioners as new Silicon Valleys built with a strong integration of a network of airports, highways, and other types of communications, a so-called intellectual city with advanced ICT.

The Urban Ministry's dashboard as of April 25, exhibits that 8,033 projects sanctioned under the SCM have seen a fall in the total outlay from the expected ₹2 lakh crore to ₹1,67,875 crore, which is 10% less than the projected capital flow in 100 cities.

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- Smart Cities Mission was launched by the Hon' Prime Minister on 25 June, 2015.
- The main objective of the Mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, clean and sustainable environment and give a decent quality of life to their citizens through the application of 'smart solutions'.
- The Mission aims to drive economic growth and improve quality of life through comprehensive work on social, economic, physical and institutional pillars of the city.
- The focus is on sustainable and inclusive development by creation of replicable models which act as lighthouses to other aspiring cities. 100 cities have been selected to be developed as Smart Cities through a two-stage competition.
- The Mission is operated as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Central Government will give financial support to the extent of Rs. 48,000 crores over 5 years i.e. on an average Rs.100 crore per city per year. An equal amount on a matching basis is to be provided by the State/ULB

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What is the legal position on live-in relationships?

What did the Allahabad High Court state with respect to Muslims and live-in relationships?

Ziya Us Salam

The story so far:

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court stated earlier this month that a Muslim cannot claim rights in a live-in relationship when he or she has a living spouse. A two judge Bench of Justices A.R. Masoodi and A.K. Srivastava called such a relationship against the tenets of Islam while hearing a writ petition by Sneha Devi and Mohammed Shadab Khan. Ms. Devi and Mr. Khan had sought protection from police action after the woman's parents filed a kidnapping case against Mr. Khan.

What happened?

The couple had told the court they were adults in a live-in relationship and that they sought protection under Article 21 of the Constitution (protection of life and personal liberty). The judges, however, stated, "Islamic tenets do not permit live-in relationships during the subsisting

marriage. The position may be different if the two persons are unmarried and the parties being major choose to lead their lives in a way of their own." Incidentally, Mr. Khan was married to one Farida Khatoon since 2020.

"The constitutional morality may come to the rescue of such a couple and the social morality settled through the customs and usages over ages may give way to the constitutional morality and protection under Article 21 of the Constitution of India may step in to protect the cause. The case before us is, however, different," the court said, adding, "The constitutional protection under Article 21 of the Constitution of India would not lend an un-canalised support to such a right."

What have been previous orders?

Live-in relationships with variables of marital status of the partners, their possibly different faiths, birth of children and even separation have occupied the attention of the judiciary at various levels

in recent years. If in the case of Ms. Devi and Mr. Khan, only the latter was married, in another case last year, both partners were married but involved in a live-in relationship away from wedlock.

In November last year, the Supreme Court stayed orders passed by lower courts and the Gujarat High Court awarding maintenance to a woman from the man she had been living with. The top court order came after a Surat-based man challenged the High Court order arguing that their relationship could not be termed a domestic relationship as they were both married to other people at the time of cohabitation. While their respective marriages subsisted, they lived together in 2012 and had a daughter too a couple of years later. The woman had approached the judiciary as the live-in relationship did not work out, and sought relief under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. She sought maintenance too.

Interestingly in the same month, the Punjab and Haryana High Court stated

that a couple living together without obtaining a divorce from their previous spouse cannot be classified as being in a "live-in relationship" or being in a union similar to marriage. The court even felt that such an arrangement would amount to the offence of bigamy under Sections 494/495 of the Indian Penal Code. In this case, the man was already married. The court refused to provide protection to the couple, stating, "The male partner is engaging in a lustful and adulterous life with the female partner without obtaining a valid divorce from his previous spouse."

What have the Courts said about live-in relationships?

India does not have any laws that directly address a live-in partnership. As per the top Court, for a man and a woman to live together is part of 'the right to life'; therefore, a live-in relationship is no longer an offence. The Supreme Court in its various judgments has stated that a man and a woman living like a husband and a wife in a long-term relationship, and even have children, the judiciary will presume that the two were married and that the same laws would be applicable to them and their relationship. The concept of a live-in relationship was recognised in *Payal Sharma versus Nari Niketan* by the Allahabad High Court, where the judges felt, "A man and a woman, even without getting married, can live together if they wish to. This may be regarded as immoral by society, but it is not illegal. There is a difference between law and morality."

THE GIST

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UN-linked body defers accreditation of NHRC-India



NHRC Chairperson Justice Arun Mishra during the Statutory Full Commission Meeting. - Photo: PTI

ISHITA MISHRA
NEW DELHI

In a setback for India's human rights record, the Geneva-based, United Nations-linked Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) deferred the accreditation of the National Human Rights Commission-India (NHRC) for the second year in a row. The decision, which can affect India's ability to vote at the Human Rights Council and some UN General Assembly bodies, was taken during the meeting of the Subcommittee on Accreditation (SCA) on May 1, that included representatives from New Zealand, South Africa, Honduras, and Greece.

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The NHRC was set up under the Protection of Human Rights Act, passed by Parliament in 1993. It has been accredited as an 'A' Status NHRI since the beginning of the accreditation process for NHRIs in 1999, which it retained in 2006, 2011 and in 2017 also after the deferment.

The 'A' status was deferred this time after civil society organisations and human rights activists wrote to the global body, expressing concerns about India's record.

The Hindu- IR(GSII)

India, Iran sign Chabahar port operation pact

Dinakar Peri
Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Eight years after concluding the general framework of cooperation on the Chabahar port, India and Iran on Monday signed a 10-year contract for its operation.

The long-term agreement was signed between Indian Ports Global Ltd. (IPGL) and Port and Maritime Organisation (PMO) of Iran, enabling operation of the Shahid-Behesti terminal. Subsequently, IPGL will invest approximately \$120 million in equipping the port. India has also of-



Big deal: Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal with others during the signing of 10-year contract. PTI

ferred a credit window equivalent to \$250 million for mutually identified projects aimed at improving Chabahar-related infrastructure, officials said. The agreement was signed in the presence of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Mehrdad Razmeh, Minister of

Roads and Urban Development of Iran.

A memorandum of understanding for the development of the Chabahar port by India was signed in May 2015. The contract was executed on May 23, 2016 during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Iran.

Terming it a historic day for the maritime sector, Mr. Sonowal said the agreement heralded a new age of trade, marine cooperation, and transshipment while boosting trilateral trade between India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

“As India continues to invest in Chabahar port, its

efficiency and capacity will be further enhanced, solidifying India's commitment to the region's economic development. India will use the port for humanitarian aid shipments, reaffirming its commitment to support regional development beyond commercial interests,” Mr. Sonowal said.

He underscored Chabahar's significance, stating that it served as a vital trade artery connecting India with Afghanistan and Central Asian Countries.

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- A memorandum of understanding for the development of the Chabahar port by India was signed in May 2015. The contract was executed on May 23, 2016 during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Iran.
- Located in Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast, the Chabahar port is being developed by India and Iran to boost connectivity and trade ties.
- India has been pushing for the Chabahar port project to boost regional trade, especially for its connectivity to Afghanistan. India and Iran have projected the port as a key hub for the INSTC project. The INSTC is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode transport project for moving freight among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

The Hindu-Space(GSIII)-Page 20



An artist's concept shows the exoplanet 55 Cancri e, a rocky planet, along with the star it orbits in this undated illustration released by NASA.

Finally, rocky planet with atmosphere found 41 light years away

Reuters

Astronomers have searched for years for rocky planets beyond our solar system with an atmosphere, a trait considered essential for any possibility of harbouring life. Well, they finally seem to have located one. But this hellish planet, apparently with a surface of molten rock, offers no hope for habitability.

- The 55 Cancri e is among the few rocky planets outside our solar system with a significant atmosphere, wrapped a blanket of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide.
- The exoplanet is 41 light years away from the Earth and it circles its star Copernicus so closely that it has permanent day and night sides.
The planet, called 55 Cancri e or Janssen, is about 8.8-times more massive than the earth, with a diameter about twice that of our planet. It orbits its star at one-25th the distance between our solar system's innermost planet Mercury and the sun. As a result, its surface temperature is about 1,725 degrees C.
- The planet is probably tidally locked, meaning it perpetually has the same side facing its star, much like the moon does toward the earth. The planet is located in our Milky Way galaxy about 41 light-years from the earth, in the constellation Cancer. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 9.5 trillion km. Four other planets, all gas giants, are known to orbit its host star.

Indian Express: S&T (GSIII)-page 13

XENOTRANSPLANTATION

Transplantation of living cells, tissues or organs from one species to another

THE FIRST person to receive a pig kidney has died two months after his surgery. His family and doctors from the Massachusetts General Hospital, where the procedure took place, did not link his death to the transplant.

What is xenotransplantation?

'Xeno' is the Latin term for 'foreign' — xenotransplantation, thus, is the transplantation of living cells, tissues or organs from one species to another. In context of humans, "xenotransplantation is any procedure that involves the transplantation, implantation or infusion into a human recipient of either (a) live cells, tissues, or organs from a nonhuman animal source, or (b) human body fluids, cells, tissues or organs that have had ex vivo contact with live non-human animal cells, tissues or organs," according to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This includes transplantation of animal organs (like a pig kidney), or use of a pig liver for temporary perfusion during acute liver failure.

How does it work?

In practice, the actual surgery may not be very different from a regular organ transplant. But, the animal organ selected has to undergo genetic modifications, so that the human body does not reject it. A report from the Harvard Medical School, whose physicians were involved in Slayman's operation, said 69 genomic edits were made to the pig kidney in his case. Gene editing technology CRISPR-Cas9 was employed to "remove certain pig genes



Richard Slayman, 62, passed away on Saturday. Reuters

vested organs can be matched with the specific needs of the human recipient. The first xenotransplantation of a genetically-modified pig heart was carried out in 2022, but the patient died within two months.

What are the complications?

The biggest challenge with a xenotransplant (like a regular transplant) is to ensure that the human body does not reject the transplanted organ. Like in regular transplants, the patient is put on immunosuppressants, which leaves them vulnerable to other diseases and complications. Transplanted organs themselves may carry "recognised and unrecognised infectious agents", according to the FDA. This can then lead to subsequent transmission of diseases among humans, with certain latent retroviruses potentially causing disease "years after infection".

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PIB: History(GSI)

President's Secretariat

PRESIDENT OF INDIA PAYS FLORAL TRIBUTES TO FAKHRUDDIN ALI AHMED ON HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Posted On: 13 MAY 2024 11:47AM by PIB Delhi

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu paid floral tributes to Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, former President of India on his birth anniversary at Rashtrapati Bhavan today (May 13, 2024).



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Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed served as the fifth President of India, holding the office from August 24, 1974, until his death on February 11, 1977.
His political career began with his active participation in the Indian freedom struggle. He joined the Indian National Congress and was a loyal follower of Mahatma Gandhi, participating in the individual Satyagraha and Quit India Movement for which he was arrested in 1942. In 1974, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was elected as the President of India. His presidency is notable for his decision to proclaim a state of emergency by the advice of the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, in 1975.
He passed away in office on February 11, 1977, the first Indian President to die in office. His commitment to the nation and his contributions to Indian politics continue to be remembered.

PIB: Defense(GSIII)

Ministry of Defence

INDIA- FRANCE JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE SHAKTI COMMENCES IN MEGHALAYA

Posted On: 13 MAY 2024 1:48PM by PIB Delhi

The 7th edition of India- France Joint Military Exercise SHAKTI commenced today, at Umroi, in a fully developed and modern Foreign Training Node in Meghalaya. The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 13th to 26th May 2024. The Opening Ceremony of the joint exercise was attended by H.E. Thierry Mathou, Ambassador of France to India and Major General Prasanna Sudhakar Joshi, General Officer Commanding 51 Sub Area. Exercise SHAKTI is a biennial training event conducted alternatively in India and France. Last edition was conducted in France in November 2021.

Indian contingent comprising 90 personnel is being represented primarily by a Battalion of the RAJPUT Regiment besides personnel from other arms and services. Observers from the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force will also form part of the exercise. The French contingent comprising 90 personnel will be represented mainly by personnel from the 13th Foreign Legion Half- Brigade (13th DBLE).

Aim of Exercise SHAKTI is to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake multi-domain operations in a Sub Conventional scenario under Chapter VII of the United Nations Mandate. The joint exercise will focus on operations in the semi-urban and mountainous terrain. Objectives to be achieved from the joint training are high degree of physical fitness, rehearsing and refining drills for operations at tactical level and sharing of best practices.

Tactical drills to be practiced during the Exercise will include response to a terrorist action of capturing a defined territory, establishment of a Joint Command Post, establishment of an Intelligence & Surveillance Centre, securing of a helipad/ landing site, Small Team Insertion & Extraction, Special Heliborne Operations, Cordon & Search Operations besides employment of drones and counter drone systems among others.

Exercise SHAKTI will enable the two sides to share their best practices in Tactics, Techniques and Procedures of conducting joint operations. The joint exercise will facilitate developing inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between armed forces personnel of the two countries. This will also enhance the level of defence cooperation, further fostering bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.

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