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## Businessworld Joins India's Vision Of Smart Cities

BW Smart Cities, a bimonthly publication, aims to be a platform for knowledge and information

BW Online Bureau



BW|Businessworld, one of India's most respected business media brands, has joined the country's vision of developing 100 "Smart Cities" with the launch of a new knowledge and information platform.

Businessworld Group launched its new publication BW Smart Cities at an event attended by top urban planning experts, professionals, business people, and government officials in New Delhi on March 26.

The print edition's launch came 42 days after the website [bwsmartcities.com](http://bwsmartcities.com) went live. BW Smart Cities will be a bimonthly publication.

The event at the Taj Mahal Hotel was accompanied by panel discussions on issues related to urban development, with many speakers calling for empowering municipal corporations as an essential step towards city development.

Former urban development secretary M. Ramachandran, speaking during the discussion on "Cities of Tomorrow: Leading the Change", said Indian states have not done enough to develop modern cities.

He said the idea of developing smart cities is to overcome the lack of development in the past and be at par with what is latest in terms of managing cities.

Ramachandran advocated empowering cities in taking up local development projects, saying it is critical to make people participate in processes.

Karuna Gopal, president of Foundation for Futuristic Cities, similarly said it is not enough to build modern infrastructure but governments must have mechanisms to engage people in their plans.



N.S.N. Murty, associate director, government and public services, at PwC India, lamented that municipal corporations in the country lack financial management and other specialist skills.

He said most civic bodies are financially bankrupt and need to be given more powers. To overcome their resource-crunch, cities often try to monetize their land resources or hand over operations of essential services to private players, but Murty does not see it as a sustainable model of running a city.

He prefers public-private partnerships rather than full privatization in running utilities and basic services.

Vaibhav Chaudhari, associate director of CBRE South Asia Pvt. Ltd., said in designing a city's infrastructure, authorities must have a long-term vision to meet future growth. In the case of Gurgaon, dubbed as "the Millennium City", this was not done and the city suffers from chronic congestion problems, Chaudhari said.

Spain's Ambassador to India, H.E. Gustavo de Aristegui, told the gathering about his country's success in deploying smart technologies in services and providing state-of-the-art water and transport infrastructure in cities such as Madrid and Barcelona.

Speaking during the session on "Future Structures: Reimagining Partnerships for Smart Cities," the Ambassador explained that Spain has combined modern development with preservation of its history and heritage.

Barjor E. Mehta, lead urban specialist at the World Bank, stressed the need to develop good systems of revenue and accounting at local level. He said city mayors must be given more administrative powers.

Shailesh Pathak, executive director of Bhartiya Group, who moderated the discussion, echoed that view, saying mayors rather than chief ministers should control cities.

Amitabh Kant, Secretary, Department Of Industrial Policy and Promotion at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, described smart cities as just one component of urbanisation.

He said technology companies will play a key role in planning smart cities. Kant sees modern public transport systems as crucial to building such cities.

The panel discussion on “The Internet of Things and Smart Cities”, moderated by BW Smart Cities executive editor Preeti Singh, featured Manu Ahuja, India and Southeast Asia President of Assa Abloy, Prof S.P. Ketkar of Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Social Cops co-founder Prukalpa Sankar and iYogi president Vishal Dhar.

Muktesh Chander, Special CP, Traffic, Delhi Police – also speaking at this session – spoke about Delhi Police’s plans for using advanced technologies to improve traffic management in the national capital.

Member of Parliament and BJP’s National Spokesperson Meenakshi Lekhi called for investing in people and their knowledge base to realise the smart city vision.

She favours a greater role for Indian companies and indigenously-developed technological solutions in making cities smarter.

Anurag Batra, chairman and editor-in-chief of Businessworld, said BW Smart Cities magazine and Businessworld Group will cater to various stakeholders by being an information platform.

“Our vision is not just to be a business magazine. We want to be a platform catering to communities in their need for knowledge and information,” he said.

The Indian government is expected to soon roll out the Smart Cities project, which aims to create 100 “smart” cities across the country based on the use of better technology, superior civic management, modern governance and efficient infrastructure.

These cities are being developed to meet the challenges of growing urbanisation amid an economic expansion, creating immense business opportunities in a number of areas, including real estate, technology, transport, project management, infrastructure and finance.

<http://www.businessworld.in/news/infrastructure/businessworld-joins-india-s-vision-of-smart-cities/1791046/page-0.html#>