

**Press Information Bureau
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Enhanced Per Capita Investment, capacities of cities driving urban transformation, Says UD Minister

Next batch of smart cities and launch of Liveability Index on 23rd of this month Selection of cities, allocation of funds, eviction of unauthorized occupants as per rules, says Shri Naidu

322 cities acquire Credit Rating; 163 cities gearing up for Value Capture Financing

No separate clearance from Ministry of Environment for construction projects in Delhi; Notification issued

New Guidelines soon to enable private investments for affordable housing on private lands as well

More than threefold increase in investments, Per Capita spending, Central Assistance and substantially enhanced capacities of city governments under the new urban missions launched during the last three years is driving the much needed urban transformation in the country, said Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu, Minister of Urban Development and Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.

Briefing media on the urban sector initiatives of the Government here today, Shri Naidu said that a rule based framework has been introduced to ensure objective selection of cities and allocation of central funds without any discretion and discrimination and the same has been followed in getting unauthorized occupants of government houses evicted.

The Minister said that a major course correction has been launched during the last three years to improve urban infrastructure and quality of life in cities in an environment of inclusive, sustainable and accelerated urban development. Giving an account of the positive outcomes of the initiatives of the Government that are driving urban transformation, Shri Naidu said:

-Per Capita Investment of Rs.15,475 has so far been approved during 2014-17 under new urban missions for a five year period which is 315% of Rs.4,918 approved for the earlier ten years. A total investment of Rs.4,13,475 cr has so far been approved for improving basic urban infrastructure which is 350% of Rs.1,18,034 approved under JNNURM;

-A total of 6,737 projects have so far been approved which is 215% of 3,138 projects cleared under JNNURM, reflecting substantially enhanced capacities of city governments for project formulation and implementation through deployment of professional staff and through intensive handholding;

-748 cities have formulated the much desired Master Plans, 172 cities have reported over 90% Property Tax Collection during the last three years;

-In an indication of the new language of governance and resource mobilization, 322 AMRUT and smart cities have acquired Credit Ratings of which 147 have got investment grade while 163 cities in 18 States and UTs have initiated measures for mobilizing resources through Value Capture Financing tools;

-For the first time in the country, 500 AMRUT cities and 60 smart cities identified so far are pursuing five year comprehensive action plans for infrastructure development as against ad hoc approval of projects in the past;

-In an illustration of area and outcome based urban development approach introduced, under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), provision of water taps to 1.39 crore urban households besides expansion of sewerage networks by 31% to 62%, 111 cycling and walkway projects and development of 1,921 new parks and green spaces in mission cities is being taken up.

Shri Naidu said that with cities now moving forward on the path of well thought out course of infrastructure development, 'City Liveability Index' will be launched on the 23 of this month at the National Workshop on Urban Transformation in New Delhi. The next batch of smart cities also will be announced that day, he informed.

The Minister said that the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change yesterday issued a notification doing away with the need for a separate Environmental Clearance from that Ministry for construction and building projects

up to 1,50,000 sq.metres in Delhi. Such approvals, will henceforth, will be issued by DDA, NDMC and the three MCDs in their jurisdiction.

Stressing on the need for inclusive and sustainable urban development to ensure access for the poor and the vulnerable to urban spaces, Shri Naidu said construction of 20,25, 573 affordable houses for urban poor has been approved in a short time as against only 12,40,904 sanctioned under JNNURM. He stated that new guidelines will soon be issued to enable private investments in affordable housing even on private lands under Affordable Housing in Partnership component of PMAY(Urban) under which only public sector partnership is allowed so far.

Shri Naidu said public transport is being promoted in a big way to address the issues of climate change and pollution and the Metro network in the country is set to double over the next two years from the present 346 kms with 353 kms of metro lines becoming operational.

Expressing concern over unauthorized occupation of government houses, Shri Naidu informed that 2,843 such houses were got vacated during these three years by acting tough as per rules including 411 higher type accommodation occupied by former MPs and Ministers. A total of 95 unauthorised occupants lost their cases in various courts reflecting on the challenging task faced in their eviction. Still, another 190 cases are pending in courts including 80 in the High Court and 110 in District Courts but the long hand of law will reach them, said Shri Naidu.

Cities with new found confidence, awareness, enthusiasm and competitive spirit are driving urban transformation with is crucial for Transformation of India, Shri Naidu said.

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