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		<h2>COVID 19 and Cities: Thoughts from Urban Leaders</h2>			
					
					
					

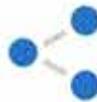


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> INTERVIEWS

This section highlights various stakeholders, bureaucrats and policy makers influencing governance in the country.

Controlling COVID in Urban Areas

It is the fifth phase of the lockdown ongoing and the world is impatiently waiting for the lockdown to end. The statistics of the Corona outbreak, considering the infection and the death toll, display a devastating picture but the increase in recovery rate can be looked at as a good omen.

However, be it the increasing recovery rate or overnight preparations of facilities, resources required, it can be accredited to tireless hard work of our local governments, especially city leaders where the infections are more compared to rural areas. It is a matter of fact that effective implementation of smart and impactful strategies at the grassroots level that have promising shown results. The cities, in war mode now, have utilised technological interventions to upscale the service delivery, monitoring and surveillance, healthcare facilities, awareness programmes and a lot more. And, Smart Cities Mission has posed as the driver for an improved response of cities against the Corona pandemic.

For instance, the Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs), an integral part of the smart cities, are being used as COVID-19 war rooms by the smart cities. Hence, in the time of lockdown, it was the technology that came in as a critical resource and response tool at this hour. E-offices being implemented in the government departments. 'Work From Home' has become the new norm. Video conferencing tools are the new meeting rooms, No more Seminars but Webinars! This can be termed as the new scenario highlighting the significance of e-Governance.

However, It would not be wrong to say that the pandemic has brought not only challenges but opportunities as well. And, city leaders are leveraging the opportunities to make the cities more prepared and disaster resilient, enhancing health infra, improving municipal services and citizen grievance redressal systems, and on the whole, making cities more liveable.

This issue of eGov Magazine which Elets Technomedia has brought in collaboration with National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) is a display of the hard work and efforts of city leaders in their battle against the Coronavirus pandemic. Elets Technomedia had organised a series of webinars in May-June 2020 with over 50 city leaders to highlight the initiatives they took, challenges they faced, preparatory measures implemented, and their opinion on the governance in times of crisis. This issue is a medium to document and disseminate their efforts in protecting the cities from the pandemic.



DR RAVI GUPTA

Editor-in-Chief, eGov magazine, and
 Founder Publisher & CEO,
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SALES & MARKETING

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SUBSCRIPTION & CIRCULATION TEAM

Manager, Subscription: +91-8860635832,

subscription@elets.in

DESIGN TEAM

Art Director: Om Prakash Thakur

Deputy Art Directors: Gopal Thakur, Shyam Kishore

ADMINISTRATION

Director: Archana Jaiswal

EDITORIAL & MARKETING CORRESPONDENCE

eGov - Elets Technomedia Pvt Ltd: Stellar IT Park Office
No: 7A/7B, 5th Floor, Annexe Building, C-25, Sector-62,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh - 201301, Phone: +91-120-4812600,
Fax: +91-120-4812660. Email: info@elets.in

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Founded in 2005, eGov magazine is published in both print and online formats. Innovative use of ICT in Governance is at the heart of our all eGov initiatives.

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Contact: Anuj Sharma; Mobile: +91-8076514979;

Email: anuj@egovonline.net



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COVID 19 and Cities: Thoughts from Urban Leaders



Durga Shanker Mishra
Secretary
MoHUA



Kunal Kumar
Joint Secretary, MoHUA and
Mission Director,
Smart Cities Mission

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Director
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Additional Commissioner
North Delhi Municipal
Corporation



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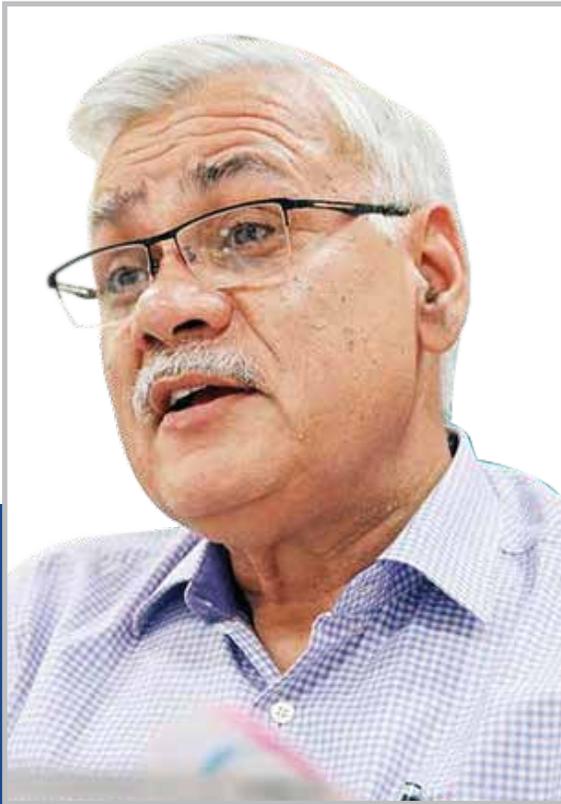


Dr Kajal
Director
Urban Local Bodies,
Government of Uttar
Pradesh



**Prabhushankar T
Gunalan**
Executive Director
Chennai Metropolitan Water
Supply and Sewerage Board

COVID Lesson: USING TECHNOLOGY TO TRANSFORM CITIES



DURGA SHANKER MISHRA
Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
(MoHUA), Government of India

Smart Cities interventions have posed as an enabler for various civic bodies in India in battling the COVID crisis. Discussing the Indian smart cities, their future and how it has helped the nation to fight the pandemic, **Durga Shanker Mishra**, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

ROLE OF SMART CITY INTERVENTIONS

Mr. Mishra talked about how the technologies implemented under the Smart Cities Mission has been of great help to the cities in responding to the pandemic. He said, "45 Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) have been operational across the nation. And, these played a major role in tackling COVID and strengthening the local government's response against COVID-19."

Mr. Mishra further said, "100 smart cities are like catalysts. These smart cities will pose as a lighthouse for other cities to learn from and develop." All cities need to be smart, he added. In addition, he said, "MoHUA is providing policies and platforms for cities to learn from one another. Tools like liveability index, smart city rankings, etc. are a medium to promote best practices in cities."

CHALLENGES

Speaking on challenges in water conservation and its effective management, Mr. Mishra said, “1.39 crore taps are needed to be installed in houses or nearby so that all can get access to water. However, there are challenges like in a few places laying water pipeline will be a herculean task.” These infrastructural works like these take time, he added.

In addition, he said, “Our next focus area is the ‘Jal Jeevan Mission’ and we will be working to conserve every drop of water and we will make sure that whatever water is available will be used in the most optimum manner.”

The major learning from the COVID crisis is how we can make more effective use of various technologies for not only making cities more resilient but also to prepare cities to sustain and sail through tough times. Social distancing has become a part of our lives now. Doing things electronically will be seen more and more in the coming days.

“45 Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) have been operational across the nation. And, these played a major role in tackling COVID and strengthening the local government’s response against COVID-19.”

Addressing the topic of affordable housing, he said, “Nearly 64 lakh houses are being conducted under Housing For All.” He further added that the Ministry is looking forward to including better and advanced technological measures to aid the affordable housing section. To serve the cause, “We launched a Global Housing Technology Challenge. Also, we are funding various institutions to boost indigenous technology and innovation for the urban sector.”

LEARNING FROM PANDEMIC

He said that major learning from the COVID crisis is that how we can make more effective use of various technologies for improving not only making cities more resilient but also prepared to sustain and sail through tough times. Social distancing has become a part of our lives now. Doing things electronically will be seen more and more in the coming days. Post-COVID era will be very different, he added. He highlighted examples like telehealth services, drone monitoring and more.

In addition to learning, Mr. Mishra said, “How resilient are smart cities on climate change? we are working on that.” He added, “Public health & sanitation (Swachh Bharat Mission) and telehealth will be more important for smart cities in the coming future.” 

SMART CITIES STRENGTHENING URBAN RESILIENCE

Smart cities have played a crucial role in enabling the urban local governments in the time of COVID crisis. Throwing light on smart city interventions and how they have enhanced urban resilience and built capacities of civic bodies, **Kunal Kumar**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and Mission Director, Smart Cities Mission addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.



KUNAL KUMAR

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and Mission Director, Smart Cities Mission

ROLE OF SMART CITY INTERVENTIONS

Talking on the topic Mr. Kunal Kumar said, “The testimony of how smart cities have progressed will actually come from how did it perform in the times of crisis. So there is a saying that “As the going gets tough, the tough gets going” and smart cities have lived up to this.” Many cities have turned their Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) into COVID war rooms, he added.

Elaborating on how ICCCs came to aid for the authorities, he said, “ICCC has earned a better name for itself which is Integrated Community Centre (ICC). If I talk about Bangalore they turned the ICCC into a war room overnight and started using it against the pandemic.”

Mr. Kumar further said, “ICCC has enabled cities to use predictive modelling as per the data collected. Also, it has enabled the police and corporation for enhanced surveillance and monitoring.” Call centres are also being run, complaint redressal portals, helpline number management, telemedicine services and more were also developed and are managed through ICCCs, he added.

CHALLENGES

What posed challenges were lack of proper information, lack of awareness among people, need for effective monitoring and surveillance. To answer such challenges

smart cities have adopted a four-quadrant approach

Information- It is important to know about the disease, where is it spreading, what it is doing, what healthcare facilities are available, how facilities can be availed etc.

Communication- This is two-way communication so that people may know about what actions are being taken by the authorities, what they should do, how do they get passes, what measure must be taken, etc. So citizens can talk to authorities and authorities can communicate with people.

Management- This includes the overall management of civic affairs including people, healthcare, lockdown norms, etc. For this, there is a lot of coordination involved between the departments.

Preparation- This is where we are trying to be prepared for disasters and pandemics in the time to come. We have to plan according to what we have experienced and we have to augment our services and preparations accordingly.

LEARNING FROM PANDEMIC

Talking about learning, Mr. Kumar said, "I think we should

"We definitely need to work on our disaster preparedness and upgrade our services, systems and functions as per our experiences from COVID and improve our resilience."

"ICCC has enabled cities to use predictive modelling as per the data collected. Also, it has enabled the police and corporation for enhanced surveillance and monitoring."

not finance projects we should finance our workers, finance education not schools, finance mobility not transport, finance water not taps. If these lines are adopted people become more innovative to find out solutions and better measures to reach the outcome. But if we finance the input like schools rather than the education, investments will be absorbed but results might not come out as expected."

Moreover, he said, "We need to adopt dynamic planning. Dynamic planning is easy to say but difficult to grasp. In simple words - either a place can follow a plan or a plan can follow a place. If a place is following a plan it is called Static Planning. However, if a plan following a place it is Dynamic Planning wherein the place is changing day by day and your plan is changing with it."

"We definitely need to work on our disaster preparedness and upgrade our services, systems and functions as per our experiences from COVID and improve our resilience", Mr. Kumar concluded. [e.gov](#)

COVID NOT THE LAST PANDEMIC, WE NEED PREPAREDNESS



HITESH VAIDYA

Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)

ROLE OF SMART CITY INTERVENTIONS

On the role of smart city interventions, Mr. Vaidya said, initially a lot of people criticised the smart city approach but today those investments are giving returns. The Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCC) are now working as COVID war rooms. "We must address that tech has been a great enabler for us to fight the COVID-19", he added.

"Cities are using ICCCs to monitor the lockdown situation, tracking and trailing infected people, monitoring those under quarantine, facilitating the logistics of essential commodities, and more," said Mr. Vaidya.

"We have gathered a lot of information and now it's important to see how we use it...How tech can bridge the gap with bettering capacity, we need to look at that and implement things accordingly", he added.

CHALLENGES

Highlighting the lack of preparedness, Mr. Vaidya emphasized on making resilient cities. While addressing the questions on the viral pandemic he said, "COVID-19 is not the last disaster or pandemic we are facing. There will be more coming our way.

Indian cities are putting their best foot forward to control the Corona crisis. However we need to ask, are the technologies we have been implementing to smarten our cities can be of any help? To throw light on such aspects of the COVID situation and significance of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in controlling the pandemic, **Hitesh Vaidya**, Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

We need to question, how prepared are we to tackle such disasters."

To improve the present actions and our preparedness, there is a need to go back to basics. Cities need to be made more responsible for citizens and therefore, a citizen-centric approach is what is needed, said Mr. Vaidya.

A bottom-up approach can be an answer to enhance our efforts and point them in the right direction. "We have to start going back to the neighbourhood level, ward level for effective planning for such situations", he added.

LEARNINGS FROM PANDEMIC

Mr. Vaidya was of the view that this is the time, the authorities must look forward to bring in structural reforms in the city governance and also in making the cities more resilient and ready for disasters like COVID-19 in future. "We need to create protocols for citizen-centric governance systems...It's time we need to rethink where we are lacking that such huge damage has been caused", he added.

Talking on urban administration, Mr. Vaidya addressed the 74th Amendment Act which empowers the municipal bodies and local governments saying, "We need to find out how we can improve things and make them work as we expect." Further, he brought in the picture the urban planners, their curriculum and their role in enhancing city governance. He said, "The role of urban planners have been taken up by the engineers, management people and others." Stressing on the need for more and better-skilled planners Mr. Vaidya said, "We need to make people realise that working in ULBs is a profession and we need more young minds to strengthen our ULBs." [elets.gov](https://www.elets.gov.in)

Agra Model: A Successful Approach Against COVID



ARUN PRAKASH

Commissioner, Agra Municipal Corporation and
CEO Agra Smart City

There are various initiatives taken by the Agra Municipal Corporation (AMC) in collaboration with the Agra Smart City to prevent the further spread of the viral disease, says **Arun Prakash**, Commissioner, AMC and CEO Agra Smart City in a live webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Prakash informed that the civic body has developed 'Smart Health Centre' under the Smart City Mission that helps in spreading awareness about various Dos & Don'ts amidst Coronavirus situation. The move involves a briefing of 3-5 mins regarding the Coronavirus which is being given to every patient that reaches out to the health centre for the general consultation or for a specific checkup.

Talking about the essential supplies, Mr. Prakash said, Agra District Administration and Agra Smart City joined hands to ensure doorstep delivery of the groceries by developing an Online Information Portal for the citizens. The portal will be operated from the Integrated Command Control Centre (ICCC).

People can get all the relevant information regarding door-to-door suppliers list for groceries, fruits & vegetables on the portal, he added.

A COVID-19 war room is set up to answer and guide citizens for doorstep delivery and to remove the panic among citizens for non-availability of essential items.

Agra District has launched the Citizen COVID-19 Self Registry Platform for the citizens to assess their health risk, and create PIN code based early risk assessment matrix for authorities, Mr. Prakash added. The app is based on SmartFeedback SaaS platform which is powered by Microsoft Azure. The newly developed application allows citizens to self-select their symptoms, travel and contact history, assesses their risk level and gives them fundamental instructions. It's been kept simple and interactive to enable ease of use, said Mr. Prakash.

CHALLENGES

Detailing on resolving challenges, especially providing food to poor and migrant labourers, Mr. Prakash said a 'Cooked food bank' was constituted which collects cooked food packets from various NGOs and distribute the same to the people in need.

Talking on another challenge that involved sanitisation of areas, he said, the authorities are conducting fogging and sanitation of all prominent places regularly and thorough monitoring of the process is being done.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Mr. Prakash informs that the use of technology has also helped in ensuring a successful lockdown. Moreover, the authorities were helping spread general awareness about the COVID-19 situation including the Dos and Don'ts on the portal and through the Public Awareness (PA) systems. In addition, 100 hoardings were set up in various unipoles spreading awareness about various Dos and Don'ts.

He told, authorities are continuously keeping an eye on the citizens to ensure the lockdown norms are being followed. With the help of ICCC, spots were identified where people were crowding and inputs were provided to the police department to take appropriate action. Further, e-challans were also issued to people violating the lockdown norms and bringing vehicles on roads for non-essential reasons, he added.

Agra authorities have developed a Lockdown Monitor app to keep a check on the movement of people throughout the city, said Mr. Prakash. The app is developed with the help of Secura, official vendor of the surveillance system for the authorities, under its CSR initiative. The application detects groups, crowd, and the close proximity of people. Identifying any of which an alert is instantly sent to the police to take necessary action immediately. 

NDMC Gearing Up Against Corona



DR RASHMI SINGH
Additional Commissioner
North Delhi Municipal Corporation

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on initiatives taken, Dr Rashmi said, “The most important factor required was teamwork at every level from Mayor to Commissioner to Deputy Commissioners to people across various departments.”

The action was focused on a priority basis. There were a few things which are essential and cannot be compromised like sanitisation, waste collection and disposal, etc. and these works were carried amidst the lockdown, she added.

Speaking on the remote working, Dr Rashmi said, “This crisis has taught us that work can be done effectively, productively using tech necessarily without going to the office.”

Adding on the measures taken, Dr Rashmi said, “We have started various helpline services in the healthcare sector. We have also started helplines for our employees. There are helpline services for the delivery of essentials as well.”

CHALLENGES

On challenges, she said, there are no numbered or limited

Coronavirus crisis has posed a major challenge in front of the civic authorities across the nation. Track and trailing the ones vulnerable to the infection, infected ones, quarantining them and provide apt medical support are a few of the challenges. **Dr Rashmi Singh**, Additional Commissioner, North Delhi Municipal Corporation spoke on the issue in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

challenges. Health emergency is one challenge, there are socioeconomic challenges as well and more. “Considering challenges in the urban governance system, we probably need to play safe cards for livelihood security for poor and social security, etc.”, she added. Dr Rashmi mentioned that well being for all is one of the major challenges that ULBs are facing today.

LEARNINGS FOR PANDEMIC

Dr Rashmi, on the preparations, said, “Adaptation is the key in times of COVID. And we need to think about different vulnerabilities as well.” She highlighted that there is a need for people to adapt to the situation and gradually head back to normalcy to regain stability.

Adding on she said, “I think in urban governance the dimension of the local economic development and social safety nets need to be taken care of.” For this, one of the approaches is the work at the policy level wherein new programs, legislative frameworks, surveys, etc. can be reformed. Such schemes and steps can help the government in proper data keeping of the daily-wage workers and this makes the job easier when direct benefits have to be transferred to these workers in times of crisis, she added.

Further, Dr Rashmi said, “However, we all are aware that we have to take risks in this crisis and fight on the ground with COVID-19 and somewhere we have to have that sense of duty and reliability.”

Moreover, “We need to build awareness generation about the existing facilities and provisions.” Also, there is a need to look at the genuine issues that people are facing, she added. 

Ghaziabad's Readiness for Pandemic



DINESH CHANDRA SINGH
Municipal Commissioner, Nagar Nigam Ghaziabad

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Singh, addressing the initiatives taken against COVID-19 pandemic, said, "We identified the hotspots and we sanitised the areas as per the medical guidelines issued to us." Moreover, he mentioned that the waste from quarantine centres, COVID-19 hospitals, isolation wards, and COVID-19 hotspots was classified as hazardous biowaste and the Ghaziabad civic body is implementing effective strategies to ensure the hazardous biowaste does not get mixed with the regular municipal waste.

Adding on to the corporation's initiatives, Mr. Singh also mentioned, "We also have round the clock operational control room which has been of great help to us during this time of crisis."

Further, Mr. Singh said, "We have helplines in place running 24x7. We also have CCTV cameras installed which are being used to monitor the movement of people and vehicles during the lockdown phase."

Moreover, "We are using GPS to track all the garbage collection vehicles. Moreover, surveillance is also taken seriously, especially due to the lockdown", he added.

In a series of webinars organised by Elets Technomedia to highlight the works done on the grassroots level by district administrations, **Dinesh Chandra Singh**, Municipal Commissioner, Nagar Nigam Ghaziabad spoke on the initiatives by the Ghaziabad civic body to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and their functioning in times of crisis.

On the issue of essential supplies, Mr. Singh said, "We have nominated the vendors to sell vegetable and fruits in many areas. However, for hotspots, the vendors are prohibited. Therefore, in that case, people are directly calling on the helplines or to the police for the delivery of essential commodities."

CHALLENGES

Talking on the challenges faced, Mr. Singh said, "One of the major issues were of the migrant labourers. To provide them with food, shelter, and other facilities was a challenge."

Sanitization was another big challenge the corporation dealt with, said Mr. Singh. Though it is the part of our regular job but the level at which it is being carried in this time of crisis posed as a challenge for us and we overcame it successfully, he added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Mr. Singh, answering a question regarding the preparedness of Ghaziabad in terms of medical infra and facilities, said, "We have enough isolation wards in the city. We have dedicated COVID hospitals and we also have arranged beds for quarantine proposes in two to three colleges."

Apart from the abovementioned facilities, Mr. Singh also said, "We have distributed cloth masks as they are washable, reusable and hence are not prone to infection easily." Moreover, the corporation is also providing enough sanitizers and soaps and other such preventive equipment to our workers on the field and in offices to ensure proper prevention of the Coronavirus. We have also been conducting workshops for our workers and staff members sensitizing them about the use of sanitizers, proper handwashing and more, Mr. Singh added. [elets.gov](#)

Aligarh's Approach to Curb Corona Menace



SATYA PRAKASH PATEL

Municipal Commissioner, Aligarh Municipal Corporation & CEO, Aligarh Smart City

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Patel, describing the approach adopted by the civic body to curb the Corona menace, said that the city was divided into five zones and the inter-city vehicular movement was strictly restricted. This helped us in ensuring the social distancing in a better manner, he added.

Mr. Patel detailed the measures taken by the ULBs. He said, "Aligarh smart city started telemedicine service through our Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC)." Also, a database of vendors, shops, schools, hospitals and every service in the city has been made. Through these, people can communicate with our call operators and based on their requirement, their calls will be further connected to the nearest vendor."

On leveraging smart city interventions to respond against the pandemic, he said, "We have started the first phase of the smart city work and developed the ICCC. We didn't know the ICCC can turn out to be a great enabler. In this time of crisis, we are using it for monitoring compliance of lockdown, providing telemedicine services, keeping a check on logistics of essential commodities, and more."

Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh has taken some commendable steps in safeguarding the city from COVID-19. **Satya Prakash Patel**, Municipal Commissioner, Aligarh Municipal Corporation & CEO, Aligarh Smart City highlighted the contributions made by the Aligarh civic body in containing the COVID-19 outbreak in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Speaking of challenges faced, Mr. Patel said, to get the team ready to tackle this situation it was hard. "We have a team of 2300 people and I started by motivating them to make them realize the significance of their role in our fight against COVID-19", he added.

"It was a challenge to sanitize narrow lanes in the old parts of the city as machines cannot enter them. So, the corporation with the help of agricultural engineers developed a tractor-mounted machine with a 100 m long pipe attached to it. The machine enabled us to sanitize every nook and corner in the city", added Mr. Patel.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Mr. Patel, while highlighting the preparations of the civic body, said, "We started the lockdown from the day 'Janta Curfew' was observed."

Adding on preparations, he said that sanitisation is being done on a regular basis. The sanitization drive is being extensively carried in public places, markets, residential areas, mandis, and the other places of mass gathering.

Mr. Patel, on the adoption of technology, said, "E-offices is being used to minimise the workforce working in the office, major work is being coordinated through video conferencing."

Furthermore, "In a bid to promote hygienic habits we installed handwashing facilities in public areas and street corners and we are further planning to expand it in the entire city so that when people come out they can continue to follow the clean habits", Mr. Patel said. [elets.gov.in](https://www.elets.gov.in)

How Ahmedabad is Battling Corona Crisis



NITIN SANGWAN

Deputy Commissioner, AMC and CEO
Ahmedabad Smart City

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Talking on the initiatives, Mr. Sangwan said, "We increased our testing manifold. Through this move, we can also detect asymptomatic cases. We have 30 teams which are working on a daily basis and testing around 500-700 samples a day."

Further, he said that a multipronged strategy is used for the house to house survey. In one day as many as one lakh houses have been covered. Medical checkups are being conducted by the officials and a database is prepared accordingly.

On the supply of essential commodities, Mr. Sangwan said, "We have been working on an app for aggregating grocery stores and also information about what all they are selling." Moreover, the civic body has collaborated with companies like Swiggy, Zomato for delivery purposes, he added.

Mr. Sangwan highlighted that the civic body has also launched a helpline - 155303 for citizens to inform the authorities about their food requirements and needs which will further be delivered to them at their doorstep.

On the use of technology Mr. Sangwan said, "We are monitoring realtime lockdown with the help of the Integrated

The big metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bangaluru are major hotspots of the Coronavirus pandemic. Therefore, in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia, **Nitin Sangwan**, Deputy Commissioner, AMC and CEO, Ahmedabad Smart City spoke on how Ahmedabad civic authorities are fighting the COVID.

Command and Control Centre (ICCC). We are using smart cameras, therefore, in case any movement detected, an alert is directly sent to the police for prompt. We have a record time of responding in one min against the lockdown violation."

CHALLENGES

Addressing challenges, he said, fear among people about the availability of food grains, essential items, medicines, etc. posed a challenge for the authorities. In an effort to relieve people, Mr. Sangwan said that the citizens need not to worry about the food grains as the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has enough food grains for sustenance. "Therefore, people do not have to spend extra money on storing more ration", he added.

PREPARATION OF PANDEMIC

Speaking on the preparedness of medical facilities in Ahmedabad, he said, "We have more than 1000 bed-capacity hospitals with the state of the art facility. Moreover, we have nearly 2000 bed-capacity of COVID-19 facility available." Apart from this, the civic body has recruited more doctors and nurses for further strengthening our healthcare services, he added.

Taking the discussion towards quarantine facilities and their upkeep, Mr. Sangwan said, "We have set up a mini library, a community radio and a few more such more facilities for people who are quarantined or are infected and staying in the COVID-19 centres."

Further, addressing the safety of the officials working on the field and in offices, he added, "We also have a well placed backup plan in case any corporation official gets infected of COVID-19. There are provisions for financial assistance for their families, health cover and more." 

RAJKOT RESTRAINING COVID OUTBREAK



UDIT AGARWAL
Commissioner, Rajkot Municipal Corporation

ROLE OF SMART CITY

On the role of smart cities in times of pandemic, Mr. Agarwal said, "We were keeping track of the virus from Day 1. Initially, we started keeping the records of foreign passengers who were arriving at Rajkot. The government of Gujarat had asked us to track and put them in home quarantine for 14 days. The first containment zone of Gujarat was set up in Rajkot."

On the initiatives taken for upscaling testing, he said, "ICMR has given very clear guidelines, who all are to be tested. There are many cases, where patients were found positive without any symptoms. With rapid testing, we can isolate a large number of people but it is impossible to test each and every person in the country."

Further, he added, "With Corona spreading, we need to cover our mouth and nose, maintain social distancing. The world must learn from Japan, the way they handled the virus... Developing immunity and social distancing will be the new normal for next few years."

Smart cities have played a vital role in the times of Corona. Throwing light on Smart city interventions and how they have enhanced the capacities of civic bodies **Udit Agarwal**, Commissioner, Rajkot Municipal Corporation addressed a webinar organized by Elets Technomedia.

"To curb the spread of the Coronavirus, we have installed 1000 high-resolution cameras across the city, through which we had fined over 4000 people who were caught spitting in the public places. Through these cameras, we are able to track the vehicles on roads. We started plotting indicators on the map to follow the trend of the virus", Mr. Agarwal said.

Moreover, he said, "We developed an in-house application to keep track of those in quarantine in the city. They were all asked to give their presence every hour without any failure." Around 38 big LEDs are installed across the city to create awareness among the people, he added.

CHALLENGES

Citing challenges, he said, "In Rajkot, there were no home delivery systems. Some of the delivery services were limited to food items. No supermalls or any other e-commerce sites were delivering essentials in the city."

"To start a home delivery system in the city was a huge challenge for us. We started a collaboration with auto-rickshaw drivers and grocery stores to provide doorstep deliveries. We tied up one auto-rickshaw driver with two shops and it was working nicely. For medicine, we tied up with courier services, in the city", said Mr. Agarwal.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking of preparations Mr. Agarwal told that sanitization is being actively done across the city. "For sanitization, we took the help of fire services. We have almost sanitized running 3500 km in the city. Along with Ahmedabad, Rajkot was the first city in the state to start sanitization in public places", Mr. Agarwal added.

Moreover, "We have started community kitchens for daily wagers and over 13 lakh people are feed regularly in the lockdown", said Mr. Agarwal. [rajkot.gov](https://www.rajkot.gov.in)

How Is Chandigarh Mitigating COVID



KAMAL KISHORE YADAV

Commissioner, Chandigarh Municipal Corporation and CEO, Chandigarh Smart City

INITIATIVES TAKEN

On Initiatives taken, Mr. Yadav said, "We have created a COVID war room which is functional 24x7."

Adding on he said, "We are providing the poor and homeless people are with appropriate cooked food every day." Moreover, the building and construction board has been paying the migrant workers Rs 3000 on a monthly basis, he added.

"Chandigarh was the first city to label the houses where people were home quarantined. Later on, the move was followed by other cities as well", told Mr. Yadav.

Further, he said, "We have a mobile application through which we are tracking people under quarantine. Also, if someone breaks the quarantine norm or moves out we get an alert and a prompt action is being taken."

Mr. Yadav said, "We have a separate helpline number active

Chandigarh, a Union Territory and the capital of Haryana and Punjab has its own set of issues while tackling Corona crisis. To understand, how Chandigarh is mitigating the COVID menace, Elets Technomedia organised a webinar with **Kamal Kishore Yadav**, Commissioner, Chandigarh Municipal Corporation and CEO, Chandigarh Smart City

for essential service delivery. People can call and place their order for essentials and the same is being delivered to their doorsteps."

CHALLENGES

Speaking on challenges he said, "We faced three major challenges - First was the implementation of the curfew in the area. Its enforcement, crowd management and spreading awareness among people. Second, was supplying essentials to the people at their doorsteps. Especially we focussed on slums and colonies. And, the third challenge was optimally utilising our healthcare facilities."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

"We are working in a synchronised manner. All the senior officials hold a videoconference with the city leaders of Panchkula and Mohali. Also, we have three big medical facilities, their team,s also join in to discuss the further course of action and other important points", said Mr. Yadav.

Mr. Yadav said, "Looking at instances that many healthcare workers were not allowed to enter their housing societies in a fear of virus infection, we have dedicatedly booked a hotel where rooms are being given to such workers, doctors and nurses." Also, there are facilities for quarantining those health workers, police officials, sanitary workers and other frontline workers tested positive for COVID, he added.

Further, Mr. Yadav said, "We are prepared for any type of worst situation in case needed." Moreover, it is not only Chandigarh we need to focus but also we are looking at Haryana and Punjab. If the cases rise in any of the two states, we need to be vigilant on people who are travelling to and fro these states via Chandigarh, he added. [elets.gov](#)

Tumakuru Curbing Crisis



T BHOOBALAN

Commissioner, Tumakuru City Corporation

ROLE OF SMART CITY INTERVENTIONS

Speaking on the use of smart city interventions, Bhoobalan said, "Smart city interventions have helped us in geo-marking all the quarantined houses. We have over 480 cases under observation with travel history."

Further, emphasizing on the surveillance and monitoring, Bhoobalan said, the corporation is using CCTV cameras and drones to monitor the lockdown across the city. "We are taking slum areas very seriously. We have established fever clinics near the slum areas. We are also doing ground research and strict monitoring to ensure all suspects including asymptomatic or symptomatic, are identified and isolated", he added.

Specific colour codes have been given to each category of persons under surveillance like yellow for those who require 1-14 days under quarantine, for 15-20 days orange, for serious cases red, and green for those who have completed their quarantine period and recovered cases, said Bhoobalan.

CHALLENGES

Addressing challenges faced, he said that initially there was a lack of masks and PPE kit. However, "Within 3-4 days we received the required number of PPEs from the State Government."

Stepping forward with effective strategies to tackle the Coronavirus crisis, all the three tiers of the Government are proactively and tirelessly working to prevent atrocities. Speaking on such efforts Tumakuru, **T Bhoobalan**, Commissioner, Tumakuru City Corporation, joined in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

On the supply chain issue, he said, "If the supply chain is affected, the prices of essentials will surge. So we are taking care that the supply chain is not affected. We are directly reaching out to the farmers to ensure no overpricing is done."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on the initiatives taken, Bhoobalan said, "In the wake of lockdowns implemented nationwide, we have taken every step possible to ensure that the lockdown and social distancing norms are being adhered to."

As many as 35 vehicles are deployed to deliver groceries, vegetables, fruits, and other essential commodities to the people's doorstep in order to ensure no one steps out of their houses, he added.

Moreover, on the healthcare facilities in Tumakuru Bhoobalan said, "We have established COVID care centre for serious cases. For mild to medium cases, we have dedicated facilities in health centres or isolation centres. Apart from these, we also started fever clinics in every nook and corner of the city for primary attention to any suspected case which if needed can be further referred to dedicated hospitals."

On the safety of workers, Bhoobalan said that the civic body is ensuring that an adequate number of PPEs and masks are given to the sanitation workers. Also, regular health check-ups are being conducted for ensuring the safety of the workers.

Closing the session, he said, as of now we are in a good position with regards to the COVID-19 situation with no active case at present. Moreover, the corporation is prepared to respond in case the situation worsens. [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

GURUGRAM ULBs EFFECTIVELY TACKLING COVID



SONAL GOEL, IAS

CEO, Gurugram Metropolitan City Bus Ltd (GMBCL) and Additional CEO, Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA)

INITIATIVES TAKEN

On the initiatives by GMDA, Mr. Sonal said, "We have a smart city division which has leveraged its Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) as a COVID war room. We have around 300 cameras for monitoring." A dedicated team is there for surveillance and the moment they get a feed from the camera wherein norms are being compromised, an immediate alert is being sent to the team, on the ground for prompt action, she added.

"GMDA is also monitoring a call centre wherein we receive various complaints related to civic services or the lockdown situation etc... In addition, we have a GIS lab which we also use to provide e-passes to people for movement within the city."

On GMBCL, Mr. Sonal said, "We used our buses to transport ration, groceries, fruits and vegetables, and other essential commodities to the citizens." GMBCL in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram changed buses into mobile grocery stores, she added.

Further, "the Gurugaman (locally popular name of GMBCL) also initiated a voluntary distribution drive wherein we distributed sanitation items - hand sanitisers and disinfectants, masks, eatables, etc. in the slum areas. Also, we distributed essential food items in the slum areas...We also used our social media

In a bid to control the Coronavirus outbreak, local governments have been working tirelessly implementing intense measures. In a webinar with Elets Technomedia, **Sonal Goel**, IAS, CEO, Gurugram Metropolitan City Bus Ltd (GMBCL) and Additional CEO, Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) highlighted the strategies adopted to tackle COVID crisis.

handles to spread awareness among people and we regularly post information regarding COVID", she mentioned.

CHALLENGES FACED

When questioned on challenges faced, Mr. Sonal mentioned the issue of the migrant labourers. "We used our buses to transport migrant labourers from various places to quarantine centres, relief camps and shelter homes."

Another big challenge that posed was transport of Quarantined people or those infected and medical staff. GMBCL buses were also used by the Chief Medical Officer to transport medical teams and also the people who were under quarantine.

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES & PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

While sharing a presentation, Mr. Sonal said, "GMDA has developed "CovHarA" which is an online platform developed with an aim to integrate all the health-related bodies on a single platform holding information related to healthcare centres, patients, healthcare workers, etc." The authority has also started telemedicine service through the portal, she added.

Regarding GMBCL, Mr. Sonal said, "Before the lockdown was officially announced by the Government of India and COVID cases had started to surface, we began regular disinfection of GMBCL buses and displaying health-related posters on our buses to spread awareness among people."

"We have also transformed one of our buses into a mobile COVID testing unit which is being used for sample collection", Mr. Sonal added. She concluded by saying that civic bodies in Gurugram are effectively functioning to help people amidst the crisis, prevent the Corona spread, and to ensure the lockdown norms are being strictly adhered. 

Trivandrum Smart City Tackling Corona



P BALA KIRAN

CEO, Trivandrum Smart City Pvt. Ltd.

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on the initiatives taken, Mr. Bala Kiran said, "On January 31, when the first case of COVID-19 surfaced, it was three students who have returned from Wuhan. That time the whole protocol which we developed at the time of Nipah virus spread was modified as per COVID and swung into action."

Adding on he said, "Root mapping has been done meticulously. All the people coming from outside India or from any other state in India have been meticulously tracked, monitored, and proactively being called upon and asked them to be in home quarantine."

"Because of our 100 percent literacy rate and because of our high awareness we tend to follow the directions from the government very seriously", he added.

Further, Mr. Bala Kiran said, "We have come out with this campaign called 'break the chain' under which, in Trivandrum, there are more than 3000 hand wash centres has been created on the road at various places. Everybody on the road, near the

Local governments have been at the forefront of fighting the Corona crisis. And, smart city interventions have enabled ULBs to fight the pandemic effectively. Highlighting the role of civic bodies and smart cities, **P Bala Kiran**, CEO, Trivandrum Smart City Pvt. Ltd. addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

bus stop, near the offices can use this facility without spreading the virus. That's where the chain has been broken."

He said, "We have started 25 community kitchens which the Kerala government followed and right from the day 1 we have started this kitchen. At these kitchens, people in need can request for the food, lunch, breakfast over the mobile phone, over the WhatsApp or even through the counsellors and the contact people."

CHALLENGES

Talking on challenges, Mr. Bala Kiran said, "As we had the experience of fighting Nipah virus, it came in handy for us at the time of COVID outbreak."

Further, he said, "Monitoring people under quarantine was one of the challenges. For that, we leveraged smart city interventions. Also, drones were used for monitoring and surveillance of slum areas."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on the preparations for the pandemic, Mr. Bala Kiran said, "In Trivandrum, 20,000 people are under the home observation right now. The Police department has been extremely strict and vigilant and moving on the movement of people."

In addition, he said, "We have been stitching masks. We have got two tailoring units where 2000 masks have been stitched on a daily basis. Over 1500 litres of sanitizer has been prepared locally and a huge awareness campaign has been running in the district. [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

Panaji Smart City Upscaling Development Works



SWAYAN CHAUDHURI

Managing Director and CEO, Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Ltd

PANAJI SMART CITY

Speaking on the projects under the Panaji Smart City, Mr. Chaudhuri said, "We took a lot of project like building cycle tracks, waterfront development, pedestrianising streets and a lot more to enhance the liveability in the city." Moreover, unique initiatives were taken like building walkway through mangroves.

Highlighting the progress of a few projects, Mr. Chaudhuri added, "The project is almost complete like upscaling the power infrastructure and linking the same with the ICC. This is important because if anything goes wrong in future the officers can actually map the target area and can get the issues resolved. Throwing light on the resumption of projects halted due to lockdown he said, "All our projects are back on track now."

Further, Mr. Swayan told that the Panaji Smart City has signed an agreement with the Government of Denmark for developing an urban living lab to build capacity.

Post relaxations from Centre, the development work has started and smart cities are bucking up to complete their targets. Talking on the Panaji Smart City works during lockdown and mobility issues in Goa, **Swayan Chaudhuri**, Managing Director and CEO, Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Ltd addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

Talking on digitisation and use of technology, he said, "Our all internal communication is digital. So not much of an issue we faced when work from home came in...We managed to quickly set up a web platform to get approvals and other such works for which we needed to move out of the office."

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: A CHALLENGE FOR GOA

Speaking on public transport in Goa, Mr. Chaudhuri said, "Public transport is a real challenge for Goa. There are very few options available to commute to and fro the airport."

Adding on the topic he said, "High transport needs a lot of footfall. Considering Goa, it will not be viable to have metro or monorail or other such high transport systems due to less population, especially offseason in terms of tourism."

However, there is a long term plan for improving mobility in Goa, he added. Mr. Chaudhuri said, "There is a comprehensive mobility plan for the state. Also, we have partnered with a firm Goa Miles for cab services across the state." Goa is also coming up with a new airport in the northern part of the state so we will be looking at inter-connectivity for that as well. And, partnership with Goa Miles can serve the purpose to an extent, he added.

Further addressing the issues faced due to lockdown and how tourism has been affected Mr. Swayan said that tourism is a major industry in Goa and has faced a big drop due to lockdown. Resting his words he said, "Tourism forms a big chunk of Goa's economy so we have to work on how to resume operations in a manner that we get the economy up and running again." [elets.gov](#)

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Amritsar Suppressing Corona Outbreak



SHIVDULAR SINGH DHILLON
Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, Punjab

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Talking on the initiatives, Mr. Singh said, “Most of the patients were traced from the airport. We were against an invisible and unknown enemy and no one knew how to deal with the disease. We started training sessions at the airport to handle the situation with care. Suddenly, there were requirements for masks, sanitizers and PPE kits, and the production capacity was not there. But, we had to arrange all the basic necessary things to fight the virus.”

Further, he said, “Social distancing was a new norm in the crisis. It was amazing the way people have adopted the new norm and supported the government against COVID-19.”

The government is providing food items and other basic necessities to the poor. Many NGOs are putting their best to support the poor in this crisis, Mr. Singh added.

In order to curb the ongoing Coronavirus epidemic, the Punjab government has taken many measures. Detailing on the initiatives taken by Amritsar district officials in protecting the city from the pandemic, **Shivdular Singh Dhillon**, Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, Punjab joined in a webinar organized by Elets Technomedia.

Moreover, he mentioned, “The first recovered patient of COVID-19 in Punjab was from Amritsar... The medical and para-medical staff did a wonderful job of helping people in the pandemic. Not only the medical staff but the policemen, sanitization workers, water supply workers, electricity workers did commendable jobs in the crisis.”

CHALLENGES

Speaking of challenges, Mr. Singh said, “The challenge started for Amritsar before lockdown. When the crisis started, the Government of India decided to quarantine the people who were flying back to the city from different countries. Initially, keeping those people in quarantine was a huge issue.” Also, people were coming from Pakistan through Attari border and putting them to quarantine centre was a huge issue as they were very reluctant, he added.

“Many foreign embassies were trying to evacuate their citizens with special flights, getting those people from different places in the curfew was a daunting task. Logistics have to be taken care of, creating medical facilities for them, setting up helpline numbers was another big challenge for us”, said Mr. Singh

LEARNINGS FROM PANDEMIC

“It’s a new learning experience for everyone, from administration to medical staff to policemen. Now, the medical staff have developed a certain kind of patience, for those who need special care”, Mr. Singh said. Adding on he said, “The government has developed COVID care centres for asymptomatic patients. We have developed a 1000 bedded COVID care centre in Amritsar. To keep the bare minimum human to human contact, we are using technology.” [elets.gov](#)

Smart Cities Collaborating to Fight Corona



SAMEER UNHALE

Additional Municipal Commissioner
Thane and CEO, Thane Smart City Limited

ROLE OF SMART CITIES

Talking on initiatives by the Thane Smart City, Mr. Unhale said, “We have a Digi Thane platform which is a digital communication platform. We have over four million engagements as of yet through the platform.”

Further, Mr. Unhale mentioned that the smart cities across the country are collaborating with each other and coming up with various programmes to aid the people in times of crisis. “We are also conducting online counselling sessions for people to understand the pandemic and precautions need to be taken primarily”, he added.

Moreover, “We are also using different sought of apps for COVID tracking, monitoring and more. Also, monitoring quarantined people and the movement of people is actively done”, he said. There over 1300 camera in the city and any violation of the lockdown norms send amn alert for authorities to take action, he added.

Smart cities have played a crucial role to counter the COVID pandemic using technological aids. And, to understand how smart cities are joining hands to tackle the crisis, Elets Technomedia organised a webinar with **Sameer Unhale**, Additional Municipal Commissioner, Thane and CEO, Thane Smart City Limited.

Speaking on contribution of the municipal corporation, Mr. Unhale said, “We are taking care of the migrant workers and providing them food and shelter as required. Also, steps are being taken to supply the essentials to the doorstep and avoid people crowding at any place. Moreover, NGOs have come forward to aid people in different areas like food distribution, spreading awareness, and more.”

CHALLENGES

Mr. Unhale, while addressing the challenges said, “Urban areas have a role to play in any pandemic pr epidemic because of the population density, foreign travels, diversity of people, migration and more. A big challenge is to tackle the virus spread. And, for that, we need to garner all our strengths and resources to collect data, process it and use it to control the pandemic.”

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on preparations, Mr. Unhale said, “Complete government ecosystem in centre and states, along with different stakeholders from the social and corporate world – at this moment – are making all-round efforts to control the spread of coronavirus in the country. The viral outbreak has claimed over many lives.”

“The situation – in actuality – is exigent as all the government and private agencies, including urban bodies, municipal corporations, collectorates, hospitals, civil and traffic police forces, railways and special purpose vehicles for smart cities missions need to work together and rise to the occasion to control the spread of coronavirus,” said Mr. Unhale.

However, he mentioned, “The control rooms have been set up in the respective departments and the flow of information is prompt from the Centre as well as from the State. Hence, the dissemination of information and our actions have also been prompt.” 

Mangaluru's Approach To Tackle COVID



MOHAMMAD NAZEER

Managing Director
Mangaluru Smart City Limited

MANGALURU SMART CITY'S APPROACH

Mr. Nazeer said, "Mangaluru has all the four types of transport - roadways, railways, airways and waterways. And, the district administration had the task of collecting data from all the areas of travel like bus stands, railway stations, airports and ports. Moreover, the duties include identifying crisis, making arrangements for isolating and quarantining people needed and more."

"As we are a bordering city with Kerala there is a big flow of people from Kerala travelling to the Middle East and both Kerala and both are hot spots. We also have a good number of students, migrant workers and corporate workforce", he added.

The Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) is an initiative under the smart cities mission to collect data, integrate services and active monitoring and surveillance. The ICCC is being used as COVID war room. Data is being actively recorded from various sources, helpline services are being monitored, citizen grievances are being taken care of and more such services

Smart cities have been at the forefront of the COVID crisis and aided the civic authorities in curbing the pandemic. Discussing how the Mangaluru smart city dealt with the crisis, **Mohammad Nazeer**, Managing Director, Mangaluru Smart City Limited joined a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

are being delivered. We also have disaster management and emergency response system. Also, we are providing e-paases for people who required to move out during the lockdown. Moreover, GIS mapping of quarantine areas is actively done, he added.

CHALLENGES

The major challenge, on the whole, Mr. Nazeer said, "The challenge is to take appropriate measures and contain the COVID positive cases."

In addition, Mr. Nazeer said, "We were asked to set up a 37 bed ICU in four weeks time. It was challenging but we did developed the hospital in 21 days. It comprises of clean corridors, all state of the art medical facility required, electricity power backup, medical gas systems, etc."

Moreover, "We have had a lot of challenges in terms of smart city and urban development. Major challenges that we faced were manpower mobilisation, procurement of material, transportation of construction material, shortage of funds for development and safety issues of labour", he added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

"Our preparations included, providing essential services to citizens remotely. We have the smart city project under implementation which helped us in during the test of time. The ICCC was turned into COVID war room that enabled the district administration to fight the COVID pandemic", Mr. Nazeer added.

"Also, preparations were made for monitoring people under quarantine and their GIS location is being tracked regularly.

Adding onto preparations, Mr. Nazeer said, "We have to bring the migrant labourers back to get the work back on track. We need to be more vigilant and stringent about the health and safety of workers, and take all the preventive measures possible." 

Naya Raipur Mitigating COVID Crisis



SALIL RAI SRIVASTAV

Additional CEO

Naya Raipur Atal Nagar Vikas Pradhikaran

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Srivastav said, "We were monitoring the people's movement, vehicular movement, crowd gathering, streets, roads, social distancing, etc. Hence, ICT enablement has really helped us in this time...We have network controlled LED streetlight throughout the city."

Adding on he said, "We have been able to serve the people remotely through online portals where all the government services are made available. People need to visit any government office for payments, submission of documents, registering themselves for a certain scheme or any other work. Also, we have a citizens grievance system online. All emergency services were also monitored remotely."

PROBABLE SOLUTIONS

Mr. Srivastav, citing probable solutions to various problems that occurred due to the COVID crisis said, "New solutions which I think should come up like AI-based thermal screening

As smart city interventions played an important role in enabling civic authorities to fight the COVID pandemic and keep the city safe. Throwing light on How Naya Raipur mitigated the Corona menace, **Salil Rai Srivastav**, Additional CEO, Naya Raipur Atal Nagar Vikas Pradhikaran joined a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

system for this we can use thermal camera and every individual's data will be recorded as well. Also, this can be useful at railway stations and bus stops where a large number of people are travelling."

Another solution can be - GIS-based Tracking and Mapping System. Using this people's movement can be tracked and lockdown norms can be monitored. Moreover, mapping of hotspots and quarantine areas can be of great help. Also, tracking of supply of essential goods, he added.

Besides that, Mr. Srivastav said, "Facial recognition and QR codes are the new normal for marking attendance in place of biometrics. Initially, there were issues for providing passes to people who want to move out during lockdown for some reason. So we worked on it and started issuing e-passes."

He added, mobile medical units and telemedicine can be of great help for people who are suffering from illnesses other than COVID. Similarly, virtual classrooms are one of the solutions for the continuation of education in remote manner.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Mr. Srivastav said, "In a situation like the COVID pandemic, the response starts from crisis management but extends to healthcare, law and order, supply chain, economic, impact and environment. Such situations help us to realise our preparedness and the loopholes where improvement is needed." A lot of changes needs to be done in planning and smart cities. However, all the technology or facilities present with the authorities have been optimally utilised to tackle the crisis, he added.

Concluding his address, he said, "When we know that we have to live with the virus then it is important to know how. Hence, the solutions should be people-centric and people should know how to stay safe and live with the situation until any vaccine is out and the threat levels decline." 

Managing COVID Crisis at Ground Level



DR ARVIND KUMAR CHAURASIYA
Commissioner
Meerut Municipal Corporation

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Dr Chaurasiya said, "The first case surfaced on March 13. We immediately collected the sample and sent it to Pune due to lack of testing facility in the city. And it was found that 23 people in the family of that person were also infected."

Adding on he said, "We are collecting waste from the containment zones separately. Separate vehicles were used and we were sending the waste to incineration units as per guidelines by the government."

Moreover, as the movement is completely restricted in the containment zones, the essentials were supplied at doorsteps of the people, said Dr Chaurasiya. Even though there was a curfew imposed from 7 pm to 7 am, if required the essentials or medicines were delivered to people at their doorsteps, he added.

"We are preparing 1 lakh food packets for the migrant

Municipal Corporations and other civic bodies acting on the grassroots level to battle the COVID crisis has contributed majorly in controlling the pandemic.

Dr Arvind Kumar Chaurasiya, Commissioner, Meerut Municipal Corporation addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia to know more on managing the crisis at the ground level.

labours who have returned from Delhi or other big cities. Similarly for other poor and the needy food grains, shelter are being provided", told Dr Chaurasiya. Also, the financial benefit of 1000-1200 is being transferred to the poor through DBT, he added.

Dr Chaurasiya, on technology, said, "We leveraged technology for contact tracing, especially for people from Tablighi Jamat. We found 86 of them in Meerut and four of them were found positive for COVID." Further, ICCC is being used as a war room and for telemedicine facilities, he added.

CHALLENGES

Citing the challenges, Dr Chaurasiya said, "Here, the hygiene standards are not up to the mark." Moreover, unawareness and partial knowledge led to rise in the number of COVID cases. "We had nearly 200 cases in the second phase of the lockdown. People started believing that if the temperatures will rise the virus will get killed and they began avoiding physical distancing once the temperature rose. Due to this the cases reached 300 within 10 days only."

"Another big challenge was to identify asymptomatic cases", he added.

LEARNINGS FROM PANDEMIC

Speaking on the learnings from the pandemic, he said, "One thing that we learnt is the belief that people had in civic authorities increased during this time. People supported efforts by the authorities."

There is a need for us to upscale our healthcare infrastructure nationwide keeping in mind pandemics like COVID that we are facing. This will help us to be more prepared and resilient in the times to come, said Dr Chaurasiya. [elets.gov](#)

How Shahjahanpur is Controlling COVID



SANTOSH SHARMA

Commissioner, Shahjahanpur Municipal Corporation, Uttar Pradesh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on initiatives, Mr. Sharma said, "To curb the Coronavirus pandemic, we have taken many measures in the city. We have focused on cleanliness and sanitized the city many times. We have not left any stone unturned to keep the public places clean and sanitized. We are even sanitizing all the government vehicles and parking places in the city. We have been using big machines and small hand sanitizers."

Further, he said, "The place where Corona patient was found, we have sealed the area and addressed the issues of all 800 households residing in the hotspot. There is no movement in the hotspot and necessary items are being provided on the doorsteps."

"We have even provided handwashing facilities in many public places. All the sanitization workers are provided with

In order to curb the ongoing Coronavirus epidemic, the Uttar Pradesh government has taken many steps. Detailing on the initiatives taken by Shahjahanpur Municipal Corporation in protecting the city from the virus, **Santosh Sharma**, Commissioner, Shahjahanpur Municipal Corporation, Uttar Pradesh joined in a webinar organized by Elets Technomedia.

PPE kits, gloves, boots, and sanitizers to keep themselves safe from the virus", Mr. Sharma added.

Moreover, Mr. Sharma said, "To help the poor, we have started two community kitchens which provided 1000 boxes of food daily two times a day. In our district, we have provided direct cash benefits to 3229 people, who were badly affected due to the lockdown. We even provided food to stray animals." Telemedicine services for the public, not only in our district but in nearby areas also was started, he added.

CHALLENGES

On challenges, Mr. Sharma said, "Migrant labourers started to pour in around the last week of March. We had provided them with food packets, installed handwashing machines and for them. As soon as we got orders from the government, migrant labourers were contained and all the facilities were provided to them. We are even trying to provide employment to these labourers so that they don't have to go back to big cities for livelihood."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

While addressing the preparations for the pandemic, Mr. Sharma said, "The testing has rapidly surged up. We did a survey in rural areas, to keep a record of migrants. We have ensured that all the migrants' health reports are normal and none of them is showing any symptoms. We have tested many, who have shown some symptoms. There is a helpline centre to deal with the crisis."

Moreover, "We have issued ID cards and passes to our employees so that things can work smoothly during the lockdown", he added. The officials are giving their best to contain the virus, with the support of people in the district. [egov](https://www.egov.in)



DR J SURESH BABU, IAS
Chief Secretary
Government of Manipur

People's Participation Crucial in Controlling COVID

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Addressing the webinar's core theme, Dr Babu said, "We are doing the Reverse Transcriptase - Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test and not just antibody test." Now, Manipur is heading to 100 percent testing, he added. In addition, Dr Babu said, "We have mandated that anybody who is entering the state has to undergo the RT-PCR test."

While speaking on the migrant labour issue he said, "We opened a website on which we have around 80,000 registrations. And, we have nearly 40,000 people who want to come back." Among the North-Eastern states, Manipur is the first state which took the decision to get back those stranded in other states. So far, 16,000 have already returned and many have arrived by road, Dr Babu added.

"We have a website where people have registered with us. Based on people's occupational profile we are creating a database and developing a plan where I want to put them under skill development programmes as per their background. And then the government can act as a mediator to get them better jobs and also enhance their skill set", said Dr Babu.

CHALLENGES

Initially, we faced a few issues in supply essentials to people. With the help of citizens, things were made possible. "Villages

Manipur is the state where proactive measures and stringent follow up by the people has resulted in better controlling of the Corona pandemic. To know more on Manipur's effective strategies to tackle the COVID menace, Elets Technomedia organised a webinar to interact with **Dr J Suresh Babu, IAS**, Chief Secretary, Government of Manipur.

started donating vegetables, eatables to other villages in need and many communities, independent groups, clubs and more joined in. The government is also actively helping the villagers in distributing food and other essentials."

Dr Babu raised concerns on the existing education saying, "Education sector is the worst affected as it is not known when it will come back to normalcy or anywhere near to that...In the higher education sector, we need to have a changing trend and we need to reform the curriculum looking at the perspective jobs and industrial requirement. We need to develop students into professionals."

Speaking on the tourism sector, Dr Babu said, "Tourism will take years to come back on track. However, this is the time tourism should be reoriented and it will flourish in the long run." Considering the long term aspect, there is a need to link the North-Eastern states together by the tour operators while creating packages.

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on challenges, Dr Babu said, "We have seen a sudden rise in cases in the past few days. Every village is sealed by its own people and people are not allowing anybody from outside to enter. So to this extent, people are following social distancing and lockdown."

Dr Babu said that local clubs and women groups are managing community quarantine centres. There is a mass movement which is going in and the entire community is actively participating and displaying exceptional efforts so that the people under quarantine do not feel left out.

As a concluding note, he said that the proactive approach of the state government and district authorities have been crucial in controlling the outbreak. Moreover, the active participation of people has led Manipur to a better position. [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

Mizoram's Take on Mitigation of Crisis



DR C VANLALRAMSANGA
Secretary, Department of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation, Government of Mizoram

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Dr Vanlalramsanga, "The state has been fortunate to have less number of cases when compared with other big states. However, the government is still taking all the possible preventive measures to break the chain of transmission of the Coronavirus."

"Our state government has been proactive in tackling the Coronavirus. Even before the effect of COVID-19 was visible in the country, in January, we did a public appeal to make people aware of the virus", he said.

Municipal Corporations and other civic bodies acting on the grassroots level to battle the COVID crisis has contributed majorly in controlling the pandemic.

Dr Arvind Kumar Chaurasiya, Commissioner, Meerut Municipal Corporation addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia to know more on managing the crisis at the ground level.

"We started thermal screening of the people coming from Myanmar and Bangladesh borders on February 4. At that time nowhere in the country, the thermal screening was done", told Dr Vanlalramsanga. Also, starting from the month of February, the people coming from Europe or other countries were made to home quarantine in the state, he added.

CHALLENGES

"There was a time when we felt that we must airlift the PPE kits from other states. Hence, Mizoram became the first state to airlift the PPE kits in a dedicated aircraft. The aircraft was dedicated for the cause as a precautionary measures", mentioned Dr Vanlalramsanga

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on preparations Dr Vanlalramsanga said, "Many of the migrants are returning back to the state. Also, people from foreign countries are coming back. We expect around 15,000 people to return back. The exodus has already started and we are prepared with all precautionary measures for it."

"Our proactive functioning was because of our active and well-educated leaders and also people's participation strengthened our efforts", he added.

Adding on, he said, "Before the Centre announced the nationwide lockdown, we already had implemented the same in the state...We have nine taskforce and two committees who are all coordinating for mitigation of the pandemic."

"Furthermore, we have a 3-tier system for COVID mitigation - state-level task force at the apex; district-level task force; and village-level task force", told Dr Vanlalramsanga. All three tiers are working coordination and constantly taking measures to mitigate the crisis, he added. [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

Managing COVID Without IT Was Not Possible



DR SHALINI RAJNEESH, IAS
Additional Chief Secretary, Planning, Programme Monitoring & Statistic Department, Karnataka

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on the initiatives, Dr Rajneesh said, "The state government has set up 15 committees to monitor different activities in the state. I am heading the grievance redressal committee and we were getting lakhs of calls every day from people." The issues of people were rising during the lockdown with every passing day, she added.

"We were getting calls for ration requests, calls seeking information on the lockdown and what next going to happen. We were also getting calls for medical assistance during the lockdown", told Dr Rajneesh. Social media was one of the tools used to resolve the issues of the people, she added.

"We have started an internship programme for postgraduates, who will be helping government to battle the COVID in different sectors", told Dr Rajneesh.

The onset of COVID-19 in Karnataka was confirmed on March 9. After two days later, the state became the first in India to invoke the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 to curb the spread of the disease. To know more on the issue, Elets Technomedia organized a webinar with Dr Shalini Rajneesh, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Planning, Programme Monitoring & Statistic Department, Karnataka.

CHALLENGES

Dr Rajneesh, speaking on the challenges faced, said, "From the last few days, it's been a huge challenge and it's changing with every passing day. Everyone from the health department to policemen to government officials to citizens all are supporting each other in this crisis."

Adding on challenges, she said, "The huge challenge was to set up coordination between the helpline numbers...We are trying to set up a single platform for all the grievances as it can be seen as a gift of COVID to citizens."

Further, she said, "We are focusing on zero unemployment. With the help of data collected, we are trying to find how many people are unemployed. We are now looking at qualitative data, which will help us in the near future." It's compulsory for all the people to register the data they have secured with the concerned department. The data is being protected and necessary ones are published on the public domain, she added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Dr Rajneesh said, "We used this pandemic to create our database. We have created a portal to link the work of the govt towards labour welfare activities, with CSR funds. We registered many NGOs with us, which we can use in future if such a crisis arises again."

Moreover, "We linked farmers directly to the market vendors through a mobile app so that they don't incur losses and supply of vegetables should continue seamlessly", she added.

Concluding her address she said, "We open to welcome any innovative ideas from the people and will be happy to implement them for a larger good. Without IT platforms, it is unthinkable to tackle such a crisis in a country like India." 

Andhra All Prepared for COVID



DR PV RAMESH, IAS

Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister,
Govt of Andhra Pradesh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Talking on the initiatives taken, Dr. Ramesh said, "We started talking to the concerned departments before this pandemic has occurred in the country. We were the first state to start the quarantine process much before the nationwide lockdown was announced."

Adding on he said, "We recruited nurses and the upgraded the healthcare equipment available... We reached out to every household for providing the essentials at their doorstep and gave them the guidelines for social distancing and other preventive measures amidst lockdown."

Moreover, "We traced 83,000 of the contacts and put them in isolation. Further, we started screening, quarantining, and other procedures followed", Dr. Ramesh added.

Dr. Ramesh said, "We have set up five state-level hospitals with beds and all the essential equipment."

Further, speaking on initiatives, he said, "Our main focus was to identify the migrants, counselling with them and help them to understand the meaning of Isolation."

State governments have been on their toes since the onset of the COVID pandemic and are taking stringent measures to control the pandemic. To know about preparations of Andhra Pradesh to tackle the pandemic, **Dr PV Ramesh, IAS**, Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister, Govt of Andhra Pradesh addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Citing challenges, Dr. Ramesh said, "This is a global pandemic and there will be a serious contraction during this financial year. This is the time where everybody needs to think very seriously. Everywhere the important economic activities are shut down whether it services, whether it is industries, the supply chains are distracted completely. And I don't think we have confronted with a similar situation in the past."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on preparations, Dr. Ramesh said, "We have done three levels of strategy - First is we take care of the migrant workers; Secondly, we trace everybody and put them in isolation; and the Third step is we do is we set up the testing process for them."

In addition, he said, "We have the one of the highest testing capacity with more than 8,000 people being tested per day and further we are trying to increase it to 15,000."

Dr. Ramesh, "As far as the technology is concerned, we are using technology I think we are using it in various ways. We use technology in tracing the cases, testing the patients, and also in various other operations."

Adding on the preparations he mentioned, "We need to expand our healthcare ecosystem. We need a huge healthcare operation team for this."

"Today there is only the government who is managing the pandemic so there would be a role for the private sector but we can't deny the fact that there is a huge role for the government. They need to really control and create a new paradise for India for the health system", he added. 

No Panic Only Awareness

OUR MOTTO AGAINST COVID



P NARAHARI, IAS

Commissioner, Urban Administration & Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Narahari commenced his address stating that the motto of the State Government was - "No Panic Only Awareness". This was done so that each and every stakeholder behaves properly and contributes accordingly.

Mr. Narahari said that there are three aspects which were needed to cover for the pandemic situation when it comes to urban administration.

"The first one is the behavioural aspect which includes - Creating Awareness among the citizens which is the most important thing; Motivating officers to work effectively to fight the pandemic; and Media Management", said Mr. Narahari. The second is the Administration. And, the third aspect is Inter-departmental coordination. "It is the thing I would say very crucial. Various department of administration is interlinked with the urban administration during this entire crisis", he added.

India, in the past two-three months, has put its best foot forward to control the pandemic and save lives. To bring in light the challenges faced by the governments when the Coronavirus started spreading in the country, **P Narahari, IAS**, Commissioner, Urban Administration & Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

On acknowledging challenges faced by the authorities, Mr. Narahari said, "The reverse migration is one of the major challenges we have to handle at this point in time. We also used IT-based solutions to provide food, shelter and essentials to the poor and the labourers."

Further for the migrant labourers and those who have lost their jobs due to the lockdown, the Government of Madhya Pradesh is trying to look for opportunities to generate employment in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY), National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), and Swatch Bharat Mission programmes.

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

Talking on preparation he mentioned the use of technology. Mr. Narahari said, "We are using technology-based solutions. Capacity building of urban officials on disaster management, planning and monitoring of the urban infrastructure is what we are looking at when it comes to leveraging technology. Developing a robust system, dashboarding and reporting made the management easy in such situations. This pandemic has taught us how to live in a crisis."

"We have started a call centre at the office of Bhopal Smart City for grievance redressal, complaints from people and also for emergency purposes", he added. "Moreover, we tied up with WhatsApp and Facebook and we also converted Madhya Pradesh Jansampark page into COVID-19 crisis management page", said Mr. Narahari.

Concluding his address he said, "I am very sure that all of us will come up with new Ideas and Innovations and will ensure that in the coming days there will be a better society created than what we are living in now." [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

URBAN GOVERNANCE IN TIMES OF CORONA



DR TEJASWI NAIK

Additional Commissioner, Directorate of Urban Development, Madhya Pradesh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on the initiatives taken, Dr Naik said, "We, at the Urban Development Department, have given the responsibility to handle the call centres. We started two call centres, one for the medical issue and the other for lockdown related issues. We are handling 10,000 calls on a daily basis."

Smart Cities Mission has been of a great help to the civic bodies and has enabled them to tackle the crisis effectively. "Most of the smart cities across the country have got an asset called COVID Control Room which is basically Integrated Command and Control Centre developed under the Smart Cities Mission", Dr Naik.

CHALLENGES

There were various challenges from technology, human resource admin to governance. Initially, we were not able to take all the calls and revert to people in-time. However, by using technological aids thigs improved. "We are using IVRS system for landline phones at the call centre. Also, we have a

Cities are facing one of the major challenges in city governance in times of Corona. **Dr Tejaswi Naik**, Additional Commissioner, Directorate of Urban Development, Madhya Pradesh joined in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia discussing on urban governance in times of Corona.

"We, at the Urban Development Department, have given the responsibility to handle the call centres. We started two call centres, one for the medical issue and the other for lockdown related issues. We are handling 10,000 calls on a daily basis."

chatbot at the portal. These eased on the efforts of people to reach the authorities", Dr Naik added.

"Finances is a major question when it comes to challenges and we need to lay focus on that as the economy has been suffering due to crisis. Hence, we need to look for newer ways of revenue generation other than the taxes at present", added Dr Naik.

Dr Naik said that moreover, there is a need to revamp our public health services as in the times to come we need to be more prepared.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

On preparations, Dr Naik said, "Considering the call centre, we started landline phones then shifted to excel sheets. Then we shifted to google sheets and finally, we developed a portal on which people can post their complaints, issues they are facing, any help if needed, etc."

Further, he said, "Inputs from people are taken seriously and considered while taking decisions. As people's decisions are very important for governance to be effective."

Dr Naik said, "Now, we have a database of the virus spread and its effect. And, I am pretty sure that in the times to come we would enhance our preparedness from our learnings and be more ready for any such situation." [egov.gov](https://www.egov.gov)

ULBs Controlling COVID At Grassroots



DR KAJAL

Director, ULBs, Government of Uttar Pradesh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Dr Kajal highlighted the efforts of ULBs in different cities of Uttar Pradesh citing the examples like telemedicine service in Aligarh; use of Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) in Agra for monitoring lockdown, public movement, public places, logistics of essential commodities and more.

Further, she said, the pandemic has also posed as an opportunity for the civic bodies. "We can focus on other duties of the ULBs but primarily we should be concerned about sanitization", she added.

Dr Kajal, answering a question on healthcare, said, "Betterment of healthcare infrastructure has always been one of the most significant works under the ULBs. It is not because of the COVID-19 that systems are being geared up, however, the pandemic has made us improve healthcare facilities on a war footing."

On the role of smart city interventions, she said, "Many cities are using of technology-powered developments made in the cities under the smart city mission." Smart city components are being used for monitoring lockdown, tracking patients and people under quarantine, streets, markets, public places, logistics of essential goods and more, she added.

Local governments had played a crucial role in combating the Coronavirus pandemic at the grassroots level. Talking on the efforts of the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in fighting the pandemic, **Dr Kajal**, Director, ULBs, Government of Uttar Pradesh addressed a live webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Highlighting the challenges faced by the ULBs she said, "The biggest challenge that the ULBs are facing is in helping stranded labourers. Providing them with enough food, shelter, getting their regular health checkups done to ensure their safety is not an easy task."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on preparations, Dr Kajal said, "Lockdown was a difficult decision but the Government has done it for a greater good...There is no harm in being overprepared and we are doing it and we should be doing it. Putting India under lockdown has given us time to prepare for things coming our way."

Moreover, on medical research groups and organisations worldwide, Dr Kajal said, "This is a novel virus and not much is known about it. It is only inferred that breaking the transmission chain, preventing the infection is the best practice...Testing is the key. And, we have to break the chain to prevent further infection by isolating people infected. Most cases are asymptomatic and it makes it more difficult."

Also, on the workers and their role, Dr Kajal said, the workers have been provided with appropriate gears and PPEs before they begin sanitisation work. Also, the health of the workers is being taken care of.

Addressing the way forward, she said, "Those areas, state or countries that have earlier experience of pandemics have responded quickly to the situation as they have lessons from their past. We should also be learning from it and preparing ourselves in a better manner to avoid any more damage in future in such cases." 

We need social smart cities, healthcare is of utmost importance



ANTONI VIVES

Chief Urban Development Officer in NEOM and Former Deputy Mayor, Barcelona

SMART CITIES AND COVID PANDEMIC

Mr. Antoni while talking about the smart cities and the COVID pandemic, said, “We all should think twice when we talk about smart cities. We need to think if we talk about technology, sensors, design, plan, etc. or we talk about making cities more liveable.”

Adding on he said, “Smart city has to invest in the capacity we put in hands of the public sector. By ensuring the people’s privacy is not hampered, we need to have technology tracking people’s health, and other important aspects.” It is a crucial thing that smart cities should develop a capacity to reach out to the people who are most needed, Mr. Antoni added.

Moreover, taking the smart city concept in the reference to Coronavirus pandemic, Mr. Antoni said, “We need to shift a

The COVID pandemic has been hard-hitting for India and as the death toll rises governments are intensifying their approach. However, knowledge sharing has been a concept of great help in these times. Sharing his views on COVID pandemic and how things can improve, **Antoni Vives**, Chief Urban Development Officer in NEOM and Former Deputy Mayor, Barcelona addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia

little bit the idea of the smart city to what we call a social smart city or civic smart city. In such cities, the focus should be more on social services.”

LESSONS FROM PANDEMIC

From the Corona pandemic which has claimed thousands of lives worldwide, a lesson to learn is how fragile we are, said Mr. Antoni. “The crisis has placed our preparedness in question. It has made us realise our capacity and opened opportunities for civic leaders to improve our readiness for disasters and pandemics”, he added.

He said, “When we think of pandemics, the first thing that comes in mind is the functioning of public health sector. Wherever the public health sector has been strong the capacity to react against such pandemics has been higher.”

Adding on, he cited an example of Europe saying, “Germany where the infections had been as high as anywhere else but the death toll has been one of the lowest. That is because the country has the capacity to react effectively. On the contrary, Italy and Spain have lower capacities.”

Elaborating on lessons, Mr. Antoni said, “The second lesson is the importance of place where we live. We need to look at the ways we can improve and take care of the population individually and together.”

Another big lesson from COVID-19 is that there is a need to generate employment opportunities in small towns and villages so that people need not migrate to look for work. Also, it will help in the decentralisation of development, said Mr. Antoni. [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

ICCC to Rescue



CHARULATA SOMAL

Managing Director, Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation (KUIDFC)

ROLE OF SMART CITY INTERVENTIONS

Describing the use of technology installed under the smart city mission, Ms. Charulata said, “Effective public communication, tracking, data collection, surveillance are some of the areas for which Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) have been leveraged.” However, technology cannot replace the hard work of those frontline warriors who are in the field fighting the pandemic, she added.

Moreover, “Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has set up a war room with the help Bangalore Smart City Limited. Similarly, in Mangalore, they have different departments sitting in the ICCC and they have also set up a helpline like the one in Bangalore”, she added.

Further, answering a question on digitization in the state, she said, “In terms of digitization, Karnataka was the first state to implement municipal reforms, by leveraging technology for the same. In 2006, we had a municipal reform cell. Through the years we were able to develop various e-governance apps. The municipal reform cell was then renamed as the Karnataka Municipal Data Society.”

The Government’s proactive approach and effective execution resulted in containing the Coronavirus pandemic across India. And, smart cities have played a significant role. Highlighting the topic, **Charulata Somal**, Managing Director, Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation (KUIDFC) addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Citing challenges, Ms. Charulata said, “The availability of labour, materials and logistics was a challenge. It will take some time before we are able to use our logistics and ensure that we have adequate movement.”

When asked about the issues that the local bodies are facing in urban governance, Ms. Charulata said, “If we speak about the problems in urban governance, its a common set of problems like sewerage management, mobility, solid waste management and more. The problems do vary from city to city but overall it’s a common set of problems that the Urban Local Bodies face.”

LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC

There is a need to work on digital literacy in the nation. As many people, especially those economically weak and poor labourers, are not much literate when it comes to using technology for even regular affairs like paying online electricity bills. It is important to improve this sphere as in a time like today, technology is the final resort.

Ms. Charulata concluding her address, said, “The most important lesson we have learned is that we are not operating in silos. To make a smart city a success there are lots of coordination that is required at the level of cities and across the various department and most of all from the public. At the end of the day, we need to take everybody together and move ahead.” [@gov](#)

Transport & Planning Need to Focus on Resilience



SUDHIR SINGH CHAUHAN

Chairman, ITPI Haryana Chapter and Senior Town Planner, Town & Country Planning Department, Haryana

IMPACT OF COVID ON PLANNING

Highlighting the effect of COVID on transport and planning, Mr. Chauhan said, "COVID-19 is still new to us and day by day we are learning from it."

He said, "The worst affected sector is transportation. The transport system has to go through a lot I think. The physical distancing has to be assured, the seating capacity has to be changed and so on." Moreover, inter-city travel will be reduced as people do not prefer travelling inter-city or inter-

As COVID-19 is a novel pandemic which has impacted the country to a greater extent, not only authorities are trying to control it but planners are also on their feet to consider the loopholes and plan cities which are more resilient. On this **Sudhir Singh Chauhan**, Chairman, ITPI Haryana Chapter and Senior Town Planner, Town & Country Planning Department, Haryana addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

districts now. Also, as work from home is the new normal, people will be travelling less comparative to earlier, he added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

"We are preparing for the pandemic and we are recommending guidelines to make cities more resilient. Also, the planning perspective has to be changed as per the need of the hour", mentioned Mr. Chauhan.

Taking the discussion towards the planning aspect, Mr. Chauhan said, "We are focussing on various aspects of planning, be it land bylaws, be it planning commercial spaces as work from home is the new norm, health and well being, and infrastructure and environment are some of the major areas."

Adding on he said, "All the aspects of planning are being considered. Citing examples he said, balconies need to be bigger, a common area where the doors for four flats or two flats open is needed to be restructured looking at physical distancing aspects, and more."

Further, "From the planning perspective, we are not much focussing on migrant labourers, however, government schemes are taking care of them. But where we can contribute is to develop shelters for labourers near the construction site so that they do not have to travel distances for work. So, we require industrial housing to aid workers. Also, we need schools nearby for children and a few establishments for shops. So everything needed should be at walking distance."

Concluding his address, Mr. Chauhan said, "Everybody should stay safe. The pandemic is novel and not much is known about the virus. We are still in the learning stage so we need to be cautious." 

Reimagining Indian Transport Systems



AMIT BHATT

Executive Director

Integrated Transport, WRI, India

IMPACT OF COVID ON TRANSPORT SECTOR

Stating the impact of COVID, Mr. Bhatt said, "Maximum impact of COVID is seen on the transportation sector. About 85 percent of all the passenger demands are for road-based systems and in that, another 85 percent is through buses." There is a fear of contamination among people, he added.

Adding on the fear, Mr. Bhatt said, "One it has led to the lockdown across the country and because of this, the demand

COVID-19 crisis has brought hard days on the transport sector but has also given opportunities to rethink and reimagine our transport system. Highlighting a few points on reimagining transport systems in Indian cities, **Amit Bhatt**, Executive Director, Integrated Transport, WRI, India joined a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

for shared transport has fallen significantly. And, the public transport sector alone is going to lose somewhere around Rs 1.5 lakh crore due to no or low ridership."

LEARNINGS FROM PANDEMIC

On learnings, he said, "Firstly, we have to remember that health facilities are of prime importance. Resilience is much more needed in the transport space. Currently, our cities are designed in a way that more and more cars will be running so we design wider roads. But as the private vehicles are a minority on roads there is a need to reimagine transport in the cities."

Elaborating on reimagining aspect Mr. Bhatt said, "For this, we need to focus on five aspects - First is shared transport. There is a need that we focus on shared mobility. We need to rely on walking, cycling and shared transport. Secondly, we have to operate our services with care. One way with which we can improve social distancing is by increasing the frequency of buses or metros. Thirdly we have to improve. Citing an example of Mumbai he said, the city transport a massive number of people with suburban rail system which is not the way to transport people. So there is a need for improvement. Fourth is support. We have to support the public transport system. And, the fifth is Communication. If cities can develop something like SOPs for COVID labelling programme or any certificate stating that they follow certain measures to regain the trust of people. I think such measures can help bring back the transport systems on track."

"In the end I would say, public transport, cycling, walking are the key to our cities. If we look at Indian cities, they are designed for shared and community living. And, we need to focus on bringing sustainability in cities", he concluded. [eGov](#)

PMPML Aiding Commute Amidst Lockdown



NAYANA GUNDE

Chairman and Managing Director, Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited (PMPML)

ROLE OF PMPML

On the role of PMPML, Ms. Nayana said, "PMPML main focus is to facilitate a sustainable, efficient, safe and well-maintained transport infrastructure for the public. We allow urban and rural dwellers the opportunity to participate in economic activities and access essential services, especially for students & women."

Further, Ms. Nayana said, "Currently, in PMPML only those departments are working who are providing essential services. We are providing services in major hospitals. We are providing bus services to all frontline warriors including policemen, doctors, para-medical staff, banking personnel, sanitization workers and more." Specific instructions have been given to the drivers and conductors to not to allow more than 20 people in a bus, she added.

On effective strategies adopted, Ms. Nayana said, "We have

Maharashtra is one of the most Coronavirus affected states in the country. The state has topped the chart both in the number of cases and deaths in the country. Elets Technomedia organized a webinar with **Nayana Gunde**, Chairman and Managing Director, Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited (PMPML) to know the detailed plans to curb the epidemic in Pune.

established a command and control centre in our office from where we can track all the buses."

Moreover, "AFCS (Automated Fair Collection System) was introduced where the conductor has the E-ticketing system. So the tickets are no longer paper tickets. So, that we are getting the realtime data that how much collection we did in a day."

CHALLENGES

Discussing challenges during COVID crisis, Ms. Nayana said, "Due to the COVID-19 crisis, we had to gradually reduce the number of buses on the road. Earlier, we were catering to around 11.5 lakh passengers in Pimpri-Chinchwad and Pune. We were running about 1600 buses prior to the crisis. But now, we have only 100 buses on the roads. With the number of buses and passengers reduced the income plunged drastically. Our Income was around Rs 1.55 cr daily but it came down to Rs 1.5-2 lakh."

"We are also trying to decrease our losses and cut down our costs. For which we have shut down seven of our depots. We have stopped all the new purchase and rescheduled our routs", she added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on preparations she said, "The masks and other protective gears are compulsory for drivers and conductors. They have to ensure that the people who are entering the bus should wear a mask. Sanitizers are provided to them, buses are sanitized 2-3 times daily.

Adding on Ms. Nayana said, "We have started sanitizing tunnels and cabins in every depot and provided sanitizers to major terminals and depots also." [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

Smart Cities Mission Enabling Cities' Resilience



DR RAJENDRA JAGTAP
IEDS officer, CEO & Executive Director
Pune Smart City

ROLE OF SMART CITIES

Dr Jagtap, speaking on the role of smart cities, said that various measures are being taken in smart cities across the country. Using Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC), cities have created dashboards to monitor people under quarantine, vehicular movement on roads and highways, compliance of lockdown norms and so on. Pune has also taken such initiatives to prevent the further spread of the Coronavirus.

Moreover, 24x7 helplines have been activated in cities for a prompt response to any emergency situation, said Dr Jagtap. Cities are also using online portals for giving passes to people serving in emergency services and ensure their swift movement. Admiring the Government's initiative of Smart Cities, Dr Jagtap said that such effective measures taken to control the situation would not have been possible without the Smart Cities Mission.

CHALLENGES

Talking about the challenges, Dr Jagtap brought in light how

Smart Cities Mission has played a pivotal role in empowering cities, not only with the right technology for better functioning but also making cities more prepared for disasters and a situation like we are in. Talking on the Role of Smart Cities to fight COVID-19, **Dr Rajendra Jagtap**, IEDS officer, CEO & Executive Director, Pune Smart City addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

the nationwide lockdown affected the supply chains and logistics of essential goods. Also, he spoke of how farmers have upgraded their methods with the scenario using technology. He said that farmers are coming forward to deliver the food grains directly to the public. Farmer Help Groups are taking the orders from the people on WhatsApp and delivering the farm produce directly to the public in nearby areas.

On challenges, Dr Jagtap further said, "In India, we are still lacking in many areas including sewage management, waste management, water issues and more. There is a lot we need to improve not only in improving our physical infrastructure but also the delivery of municipal services, healthcare services, mobility infrastructure and more."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

On the preparation of the civic bodies, Dr Jagtap said, "In ABD areas, we have set up 'smart clinics' and we are further planning to set up more such smart clinics to help in case of pandemics." Furthermore, he said, geotagging and looking at chances of getting such pandemics is another focus area where we are trying to develop and come up with a solution for accurate and adequate data.

While wrapping the session, Dr Jagtap concluded by saying, "Since there is no cure, it is an opportunity for us as well as everyone concerned to come up with effective medicine or vaccination...We need to focus on preparing cities for such situations in future by revamping our disaster management plans." 

Delhi Dueling With COVID



TANVI GARG

District Magistrate, New Delhi

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Talking on the initiatives by the district administration, Ms. Tanvi said, "In contaminated zones, essential service providers are ensuring door-to-door delivery keeping social distancing in view. Social distancing is very essential in this time of crisis. The government has asked markets, manufacturing units, hospitality associations to make social distancing compulsory."

Also, the government is ensuring passes to the small vendors after verifying their documents to deliver essentials at the people's doorstep, she added.

Talking on the Bengali market issue, she said, more than 35 persons found residing in unhygienic conditions and completely ignoring social distancing at a pastry shop. All the people were screened and shifted to the night shelter. Henceforth, the market is declared as containment zone and was sealed by the Delhi police. Moreover, the government has included penalty provisions against irresponsible behaviour in the pandemic.

CHALLENGES

One of the major challenges was to prevent community transmission in Delhi and spread awareness among people as much as possible. On this, Ms. Tanvi said that the government's main focus is to restrict viral transmission to enter the third phase by initiating different awareness programmes. The government has started many preventative measures to curb

As the Coronavirus cases rose in the National Capital, the district administrations and the Delhi government started 'Operation SHIELD' - Sealing, Home Quarantine, Isolation and Tracking, Essential Supply, Local Sanitisation, and Door-To-Door Checking to contain the virus. Elaborating on this, **Tanvi Garg**, District Magistrate, New Delhi, addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

"In contaminated zones, essential service providers are ensuring door-to-door delivery keeping social distancing in view. Social distancing is very essential in this time of crisis. The government has asked markets, manufacturing units, hospitality associations to make social distancing compulsory."

the virus. All practices should be implemented as a behavioural change among people in the state. Different colour coding is used to mark different areas on the basis of the number of COVID positive cases surfaced, she added.

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on the New Delhi's action plan and preparation, Ms. Tanvi said, "Firstly we set up the Triage facility at IGI Airport for screening vulnerable and asymptomatic passengers. Also, we set up a paid quarantine facility at the airport. We have over 600 passengers in quarantine that had shown symptoms of infection but only five of them have tested positive. All the other passengers will be discharged after the tests. The government is aiming to restrict the Coronavirus patients from entering the national capital."

She concluded by saying, "Many preventive measures have been launched by the government to curb the infection. We are regularly giving the instructions and making public announcements on avoidance of mass gatherings and strict following of social distancing in the national capital. The government has started more than 30,000 hunger relief centres in the Capital, she added. e.gov

COVID is Priority, Rest is Secondary



KK NIRALA
District Collector, Ahmedabad

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on initiatives taken, Mr. Nirala said, "Social media has provided a very effective platform for the Government to communicate the steps being taken, essential announcements, and also it is easier to get public's reaction. This is a two-way communication that is beneficial for taking apt steps."

He said, "Ahmedabad is the first district to make the permits online to facilitate people." The district administration has taken a significant step wherein mobile ATM service has been started in the city for the convenience of the people, Mr. Nirala added.

Talking on the supply of essentials, he said, "We have over 1 crore population in Ahmedabad and the city is one of the largest in the state. During this lockdown, we are trying to provide all the essential commodities including groceries, medicines, and eatables to people."

Further, he said, "Many senior citizens were facing difficulties regarding regular medical checkups due to COVID-19 patients. Therefore, we started telemedicine facilities for people who need regular medical checkups or need to consult doctors for any other ailment they are suffering from."

The State and local governments have played a critical role in slowing the pace of COVID-19 spread in India. One such district is Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh which has shown commendable efforts in containing the viral spread. **Dr Vaibhav Shrivastav**, Collector and District Magistrate, Pilibhit, discussed Pilibhit's approach to fight the pandemic in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Addressing the challenges, Mr. Nirala said, "Earlier we had only two testing facilities in Gujarat but now we have more labs. Only in Ahmedabad, there are over three testing facilities. The Government has also allowed a few private healthcare facilities to test the disease. There are over 1,200 dedicated beds available for COVID-19 patients. There are also 30 beds for critical situations and 500 beds for quarantine purposes. In Ahmedabad, more than 5000 beds are available in total for COVID-19."

Turning his words towards Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), Mr. Nirala informed, "Initially it was difficult to get PPEs. Now we are in a good position considering PPE kits as many private agencies that have access to PPEs are donating it to the hospitals."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on preparations, Mr. Nirala said, "We had given enough safety guidelines for our essential commodity stores and suppliers. We have tied up with shopkeepers, truckers, wholesalers, and meetings have been conducted to take out fear from their minds."

Further, on pharma companies he said, raw materials are being supplied and not even a single day any firm faced any difficulty in their functioning.

Concluding the webinar session, he said that our first priority is to fight the virus and stabilise economy and others are secondary. [egov.gov](https://www.egov.gov)

Managing Corona Pandemic



ARUN MAHESH
District Development Officer
Ahmedabad, Gujarat

INITIATIVES TAKEN

As soon as World Health Organization declared Coronavirus a pandemic, the Ahmedabad district administration started reaching panchayat offices, health workers, co-operative societies, farmers, banks to ensure the virus doesn't spread in the rural areas, told Mr. Mahesh.

"We also started distributing pamphlets and used social media platforms to create awareness for the disease. This pandemic has made us learn new things daily", he added.

Adding on initiatives, he said, "Initially, we screened around 375 international flights. We started tracking people who have international travel history and asked them to quarantine themselves at home. We even started an application for all those who were quarantined and provided them guidelines."

Moreover, Mr. Mahesh said, "We started 12-day surveillance in the city to track people who are highly vulnerable to the disease. We traced these people and kept them under observation. We created a verified data and started calling these people to assure they don't have any symptoms."

In order to curb the ongoing Coronavirus epidemic, the Gujarat government has taken many measures. Detailing on the initiatives taken by Ahmedabad officials in protecting the city from the virus, **Arun Mahesh**, District Development Officer, Ahmedabad, Gujarat joined in a webinar organized by Elets Technomedia.

Also, Mr. Mahesh said, "We started a massive sanitization programme in the city and asked all the panchayats and civic bodies to begin sanitization work in their areas."

CHALLENGES

"The bigger challenge was the migrant labourers who were trying to reach their respective states. We helped them to travel back. After getting instruction from the Ministry of Home Affairs, we started creating shelter homes for migrants. We had to manage 40-50 thousand migrants and provide them with basic facilities", said Mr. Mahesh.

Furthermore, he mentioned, "We had an issue with the interstate transport system, which was later ratified."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Talking on the preparations, Mr. Mahesh said, "The entire health staff was trained to take samples from suspected people. The officials started the testing extensively... Also, we started mobile testing labs. Through mobile testing labs, we prevented a large number of people from infected ones."

"People in rural areas were more aware and imposed numerous fines on people who violated norms in the pandemic", Mr. Mahesh told.

Citing a need for an upgrade, he said that upscaling healthcare facilities is important and to take steps to aware people on boosting their immunity.

"Frontline workers are more vulnerable. But, the state has provided us with PPE kits, masks, gloves, boots which we have distributed to all the frontline workers as their safety and health is one of the prime concerns", highlighted Mr. Mahesh. [elets.gov.in](https://www.elets.gov.in)

Bemetara Fighting COVID



SHIV ANANT TAYAL

District Commissioner
Bemetara, Chhattisgarh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Talking on initiatives taken, Mr. Tayal said, "We placed strict checkpoints on inter-state highway to increase vigil to restrict the movement of vehicles or people, as Bemetara is not very far from Madhya Pradesh. These are placed to ensure the lockdown norms are being taken care of."

Mr. Tayal said that the authorities have categorised people in different categories like the ones which have travel history. In such a case people were tested and asked to quarantine. Those who were found to have contact history were also tested and quarantined. Those who were suspected cases were kept in isolation wards under medical supervision.

Speaking on the initiatives taken to help migrant labourers, he said, "Those who are working in other States, the Government is paying Rs 500 on a weekly basis to each worker through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Workers who are registered with the labour departments in the state are being provided with financial assistance and, the workers who are registered under the MNRGA scheme are receiving benefits through the scheme."

Amidst the COVID crisis, district administrations across the country are adopting strategies to control the pandemic and restore the socio-economic sphere. **Shiv Anant Tayal**, District Commissioner, Bemetara, Chhattisgarh, in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia, discussed on the effective implementation of strategies by the District Administration to fight COVID.

On the use of IT and other technology, Mr. Tayal answered that from identifying farmers, assessing the quality of paddy, its accounts, to tracking logistics and supply is completely done through a digital process. Also, a database of all the farmers and ration cardholder are maintained digitally.

CHALLENGES

Speaking of challenges, Mr. Tayal mentioned that the district administration faced challenges with regard to the availability of masks. Also, the supply of essentials posed a challenge initially. However, "To prevent COVID-19 outbreak in the district we have enough number of PPEs and a reason behind it are efforts from people. We have a local mask production unit run by locals who stitch masks and we help them to sell it for Rs 10 per piece."

"People also came forward and helped the authorities in distributing food to all the poor and the needy. Also, the civic bodies with the help of NGOs are doing door-to-door services", Mr. Tayal added.

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

Addressing the preparations, Mr. Tayal said, "We have acquired local dharmshalas, inns, buildings to house people, especially migrant labourers who are either stranded or have no shelter." Further, it is also being ensured by the authorities that people in need get meals three times a day, he added.

Stressing on the level of social distancing being practised in the district, he said, "We have shifted major mandis to open grounds and placed every stall at a certain distance to make sure that people do not overcrowd and have enough space to keep up with social distancing." 

Raigad Upscaling Resilience



NIDHI CHOUDHARY

District Collector and District Magistrate,
Raigad, Maharashtra

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Ms. Nidhi started off by mentioning that Raigad is a neighbouring district of both Pune and Mumbai and both the cities are COVID-19 hotspots. Therefore, "Realizing the fact, we proposed a curfew in the district much before the nationwide lockdown was implemented", she added.

On the proactive approach of the authorities, Ms. Nidhi said, "There was a popular event where a huge number of people were supposed to collect, so we proactively stepped up and convinced people to avoid gathering and made them aware about the significance of the curfew in the district."

Speaking on the supply of ration to people, Ms. Nidhi said, "We ensured ration to all and we had also bought ration from NDRF funds and gave it to tehsildars for distribution as to cater to the massive need of the poor, daily waged-labourers, and the ration cardholders", said Ms. Nidhi.

The local governments are the executives ensuring the compliance of the Centre and State's guidelines to keep people safe from the Coronavirus pandemic. **Nidhi Choudhary**, District Collector and District Magistrate, Raigad speaks on the course of action in Raigad against the Coronavirus pandemic in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Citing challenges, Ms. Nidhi said, "The initial focus on healthcare soon shifted to other issues like the issue of migrant workers, ensuring the supply of essentials, maintenance of law and order, ensuring clinics keep helping people in need, and more."

She added, "As the cases increased in Pune, a lot of people started coming back to their homes in Raigad, said Ms. Nidhi. An effective strategy we used was to make them understand the situation and convinced them to self-quarantine...we used a mobile application for tracking the movement. This helped us a lot to monitor the movement of nearly 1 lakh people who returned from Mumbai and Pune to Raigad. Also, we had over 1000 people who returned from foreign countries and properly followed the quarantine guidelines and stayed in isolation for not only 14 days but 28 days."

Further, Ms. Nidhi said, "Many people came forward to help the poor and the needy by providing cooked food and help the authorities in catering to the huge demand in times of crisis."

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

Addressing the preparedness of the district authorities in terms of healthcare facilities, Ms. Nidhi said, "We created a 120-bed dedicated COVID-19 hospital, a district COVID healthcare centre, we have a 350 bedded private hospital and another 200-bed facility in Panvel, as it is not far from Mumbai so in case of any emergency we can shift the patient to hospitals with advanced facilities in Mumbai". Our strategy of keeping all the COVID-19 patients, their treatment, and healthcare facilities in Panvel has worked well as of yet, she added. [elets.gov](https://www.elets.gov.in)

Wardha's Effective Measures Against COVID



VIVEK BHIMANWAR
Collector and District Magistrate
Wardha, Maharashtra

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Vivek started off by saying, "Wardha has the lowest number of COVID cases in Maharashtra and four cases are only active, as on June 29". Credit goes to the people, ULB officials, frontline workers, he added.

"Our proactive approach and early action to ensure that all the advisory from the Centre and the State government is immediately implemented", said Mr. Vivek.

All the people who came in contact with a COVID patient were asked to either go to quarantine wards or if they want to be home quarantined, then their entire will be asked to quarantine. Most people chose for home quarantine option, he added. Further, talking about the supply of essentials, especially in the containment zones, Mr. Vivek said, "All the essentials were delivered to people at their doorstep."

Further, he said, "Our borders have been guarded by police as well as non-police people. The training was given to these

With the onset of COVID-19 outbreak, the Government met with one of the biggest challenges. And, to control the pandemic effectively, Local Governments have a major role to play at the grassroots level. Talking on strategies adopted by Wardha authorities to control the pandemic, **Vivek Bhimanwar**, Collector and District Magistrate, Wardha, Maharashtra addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

people for screening people while entering or exiting the district and other essential facts. We deployed people on rotational shifts."

CHALLENGES

Speaking of challenges he said, "Initially, we did not have the testing facilities here. So, all the sample were sent to Nagpur. But we pulled up our socks and started a new lab with the help of a government hospital." Now, the new lab is functional and it is testing as many as 120 samples a day. Nearly, 4500 samples have been tested as of yet, he added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

On preparations, he said, "Only creating facilities is not important but surveillance is very important. Identifying a case in its earlier stage is crucial."

Moreover, he said, "We are the only district who is not spending money from the govt treasury. All the NGOs came forward and organised camps for migrants and took care of their needs."

Adding on preparations he said, "We are testing people for Tuberculosis, Pneumonia. Also, we are testing pregnant women, old aged people, children below the age of 10, people with a travel history and all those who are suspected or vulnerable for getting infected."

Highlighting Wardha's contribution, Mr. Vivek said, "Doctors from Wardha served in Mumbai when Mumbai faced a shortage of doctors."

Moreover, he said, "We have also used IEC initiatives for spreading awareness among the people regarding the virus and what preventive measures need to be taken." 

Pilibhit's Approach Against COVID



VAIBHAV SHRIVASTAV

Collector and District Magistrate
Pilibhit

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Shrivastav, addressing the webinar about the measures taken by the district administration, said one of the important steps we took was to prevent people from crowding in mandis. To achieve that we started door-to-door delivery of vegetables to the people directly. "We used the Centre's portal 'Supply Mitra' for carrying out the home delivery of vegetables", Mr. Shrivastava added. Also, a fixed rate list was provided to vegetable vendors in mandis and to grocery stores to prevent overpricing of essential commodities.

"Moreover, for the convenience of the people, we started spreading awareness on our social media platforms. Also, people were reaching out to us in any emergency case, in need of any help, complaints if any and so on, through our social media handles", said Mr. Shrivastava.

"Our social media handles were of great help in providing people with telemedicine service as well. People used to upload their prescriptions and provide details of the symptoms online and a doctor used to attend to those and prescribe medicines", said Mr. Shrivastava.

CHALLENGES

Speaking of challenges, Mr. Shrivastava said, "People were not following the lockdown norms due to unawareness. In such cases,

The State and local governments have played a critical role in slowing the pace of COVID-19 spread in India. One such district is Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh which has shown commendable efforts in containing the viral spread. **Vaibhav Shrivastav**, Collector and District Magistrate, Pilibhit, discussed Pilibhit's approach to fight the pandemic in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

our social media portals helped. Also, we made public announcements to make people aware of the situation. Moreover, we banned the vehicular movement on highways and roads."

Further, he said, "We also used drones for monitoring. We made a control room which effectively helped in controlling and monitoring the situation."

Citing an example, Mr. Shrivastava told an incident when around 9,000 to 10,000 migrant workers entered the district limits. "We immediately responded to the situation...At every corner of the street, health personnel were deployed to conduct primary testing of all the workers", said Mr. Shrivastava. Many of those workers were quarantined, he added.

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

Addressing preparations he said, "We promoted the use of Arogya Setu app among the people. The app has helped us in locating numerous Corona positive people."

Elaborating on preparedness and modus operandi of Pilibhit to contain the virus, he said that the area under five-kilometre radius, where the cases surfaced was sealed and a door-to-door survey was conducted, samples were collected and tested for the viral infection. The preparation was with a view to restrict further infections hence stringent preventive measures like sealing of the affected areas were taken.

Concluding the session Mr. Shrivastava said, as of yet things are under control in Pilibhit. Cooperation from the public has played an important role in containing the pandemic. NGOs, Gurudwaras and common people came forward to provide food for the poor and the needy. Also, through the help of our SHGs, we are getting masks prepared locally and sanitizers are being manufactured in-house. elets.gov

NARAYANPET GEARED UP TO OVERCOME COVID



HARI CHANDANA DASARI

Collector and District Magistrate
Narayanpet, Telangana

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Talking about initiatives taken by the civic body to tackle the pandemic, Ms. Dasari said, “We decided to close down our borders even before the lockdown started.” The authorities deployed police officials at the village borders so that people don’t move in and out, she added.

Speaking on the supply of essentials, Ms. Dasari said, “We have roped in SHG women for doorstep delivery of vegetables, fruits, meat, milk, groceries and other essentials. We have also provided them with 14 vehicles for the purpose.”

Moreover, “We have a Geo-tagging app which is developed by NRSC and using the app we have started geo-tagging the houses of those under home quarantine.” She added, due to a lot of movement of vehicles carrying essential goods, the authorities are using drones to frequently sanitize the area and the vehicles entering the district limits.

Further, she said, “We have also developed a telemedicine platform called T-Consultant to connect the non-COVID patients in need of medical attention with the doctors. The people can connect using their smartphones, laptops with the doctors on the digital health platform.”

In order to contain the viral outbreak completely, it is important to act at the grassroots level. And, the role of local governments become prominent in this aspect. Detailing on the initiatives taken by the Narayanpet district authorities in protecting the district from the pandemic, **Hari Chandana Dasari**, Collector and District Magistrate, Narayanpet, Telangana joined in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Speaking on the challenges she said that initially, lack of PPE kits and availability of masks posed a challenge. However, working on initiatives to produce masks locally resolved the issue. Ms. Dasari said, “We have women who are skilled for making sarees, but due to lockdown they had no market to sell. So, we bought a stock of sarees from them and gave it to SHG women to stitch masks out of it.”

The women started getting more orders for the masks and therefore there are about 4000 women working for stitching masks and they are selling them in places like Hyderabad and various other parts of the states, she added. “We have also ordered 2 lakh masks for distributing to our general public”, said Ms. Dasari.

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

Addressing the Narayanpet’s preparation, she said, “We onboarded all our local representatives, we spoke to the Sarpanches, all the ward members and explained them diagrammatically, showed them how the virus spreads and how precautions to be taken in villages”, she said.

Moreover, to strictly prevent the movement of vehicles and people across the borders, “We requested our neighbour districts to arrange migrant camps and also urged the Government of Maharashtra, our neighbouring state, to see that people don’t migrate out”, she added.

Summarising the session she said, “The authorities have been proactive in dealing with the outbreak and there are clear guidelines which have been provided to us and we are taking actions in line with the guidelines issued.” 

Osmanabad Restraining COVID Actively



DEEPA MUDHOL-MUNDE
Collector and District Magistrate
Osmanabad, Maharashtra

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Ms. Deepa, on initiatives taken, said, "We identified migrants, their regular health checkups for corona and their isolation in the farmhouse, schools, or in the identified institutional quarantine places at least for 14 days helped us in mitigation of corona spread."

Further, "we followed a strict implementation of Containment Zone SOPs. A total of 62 such zones were marked in Osmanabad. Of the 62 zones, at present 26 are active. Surprisingly, we had only 60 index cases and the remaining 119 were identified by expert teams of zones by tracking the close contacts of the index case", she added.

In Osmanabad, special efforts have been made to improve the immunity of 1100 tuberculosis patients by providing them multivitamin tablets, protein powder along with a hygiene kit of sanitizer and masks. In the same way leprosy patients, HIV/AIDS patients are also supported with food kits, told Ms. Deepa.

With the onset of COVID-19 outbreak across the country claiming thousands of lives, the district authorities have buckled up their preparations to fight the pandemic and save lives. To know more about measures taken by Osmanabad authorities, Harshal Desai of Elets News Network (ENN) interviewed **Deepa Mudhol-Munde**, Collector and District Magistrate, Osmanabad, Maharashtra

Adding on she said, "We made the most of IEC to spread awareness. We used YouTube channels, social media handles, appeals from Akashwani by district level officers and experts, local bodies as well."

CHALLENGES

Citing challenges, she said, "As Coronavirus' epidemiology was not known, prevention and mitigations guidelines were not there. So daily one to one communication through video conference with all field level doctors and front line workers were conducted. Moreover, continuous support by providing products like sanitizers, PPE kits helped us to motivate workers. Various WhatsApp groups were formed so that all staff and officers get timely support and help."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

As per government's orders, the Osmanabad district is linked with the lab of Latur Government Medical College, told Ms. Deepa.

Adding to preparations she said, "To reduce unemployment and scarcity of labourers at industries, we circulated Google Form to collect the information of skill and unskilled labourers and gave it to respective authority to fill the gap from both sides. During Lockdown period to resolve the citizens' complaints one dedicated WhatsApp complaint team was formed which redressed complaints with the help of respective authorities."

For the distribution of foodgrains, supply department developed NPH (Non-Priority Holder) app, which enabled them central monitoring on every PDS shops and also covered citizens not having ration cards in this system. Moreover, in Osmanabad, nearly 50-60 different NGOs are actively working for food distribution, awareness, survey, spraying of disinfectant, distribution of masks and sanitizer, etc. [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

Bhilwara Model to Battle Corona



RAJENDRA BHATT

District Magistrate and Collector, Bhilwara

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Bhatt addressing the webinar said that our proactive approach is the reason behind the success of the Bhilwara model. Talking about the approach adopted by the Bhilwara authorities he said, "Sealing of the district borders was one of the immediate measures we implemented." The move was to ensure no movement of people or vehicles to and fro the district.

In addition, public transport like buses, cabs, and others in the district were also brought to halt, said Mr. Bhatt. Further, wherever positive cases were found, the areas were mapped and areas where the areas where more cases were found were labelled as COVID-19 hotspots and were strictly monitored, he added.

Moreover, a team of 2300 workers was constituted which conducted a door-to-door survey covering all the residences in the district including the urban and the rural areas.

Talking on the efforts to aid people during the lockdown, Mr. Bhatt said, the authorities have set up a war room for effective implementation of the initiatives and regular monitoring of the movement in the district.

Bhilwara district of Rajasthan is taking impactful initiatives to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and the district's approach has been well appreciated. Highlighting Bhilwara's model to tackle the pandemic **Rajendra Bhatt**, District Magistrate and Collector, Bhilwara spoke in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

The control room was also used to monitor the logistics of the essential commodities to ensure the lockdown norms are being followed and social distancing is practised. Moreover, "We started the doorstep delivery of all the essential commodities including vegetables, fruits, groceries, and medicines", added Mr. Bhatt.

CHALLENGES

Speaking on the challenges faced, Mr. Bhatt said, "The first COVID-19 positive person in the district was a doctor. The authorities started contact tracing and enlisting the number of the patients he had consulted. Identifying the patients was one of the major challenges we dealt with."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Detailing on the preparation by the district authorities, Mr. Bhatt said, "We implemented the lockdown much before the Centre implemented the nationwide lockdown. The Chief Minister, Ashok Gehlot was briefed about the move beforehand."

All the festivals are and will be celebrated behind closed doors. People should not come out to the streets in order to celebrate any occasion, said Mr. Bhatt. "We are fighting to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and such activities can dissolve the sole purpose of lockdowns implemented nationwide", he added.

Resting his words, Mr. Bhatt thanked the people in the district for their cooperation and marked it as a reason for the success of the Bhilwara model. Even today people are very cooperative and are disciplined considering the seriousness of the pandemic. It is the people who are driving the efforts by the administration towards a better future. [elets.gov](https://www.elets.gov.in)

Dholpur Managing Corona Crisis



RAKESH KUMAR JAISWAL
District Magistrate and Collector
Dholpur, Rajasthan

INITIATIVES TAKEN

While addressing the initiatives, Mr. Jaiswal said, "During this lockdown, we have created many quarantine and isolation centres which can accommodate 3500 people."

"As banks witnessed crowds, we ordered them to shut down. But seeing the villagers' needs, we started a scheme of door to door pension. Under the scheme, at least 475 teams went to all the pensioners' doorsteps to deliver the pensions", mentioned Mr. Jaiswal.

Adding on initiatives, he said, "We are providing food to the needy people. We are helping migrant workers with shelters and food. We are also spreading awareness to people on home quarantines."

CHALLENGES

Citing crowd management as a challenge for the authorities, he said, "We have witnessed huge crowds at the banks, offices and market places and to control the crowd in markets, we had regulated timings for them."

"Moreover, to regulate markets, we let the one side of the market open one day and the other side on the next day. Similarly, the vegetable market crowd has become a challenge for us, so we

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating havoc in the state of Rajasthan. Over 15,000 positive cases have surfaced and 356 have died. Elets Technomedia organized a webinar with **Rakesh Kumar Jaiswal**, District Magistrate and Collector, Dholpur, Rajasthan to know how the district is putting in efforts to curb the pandemic in the city.

shifted the market to the stadium to control the crowd", he added.

Further, Mr. Jaiswal said, "Hospitals also faced crowding issues. Hence, we opened 21 temporary OPDs in the catchment area in different Tehsils. We also started 16 mobile OPDs to cater to more cases."

On fake news issue, Mr. Jaiswal said, "Not only Corona, but we were also fighting against the spread of fake news from the last few days. So we banned the social media platforms of many fake news providers."

"The most important problem which we have realized was the unemployment occurred during this crisis. To tackle it, we have started the employment scheme through MGNREGA...We are assuring that workers, who are working under the MGNREGA scheme, are maintaining the physical distancing. We have made proper food arrangements; drinking water and attendance facilities are kept with proper distancing", Mr. Jaiswal added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Speaking on preparation, Mr. Jaiswal said, "Our main focus is to regulate the liquidity of facilities in the rural areas and provide the employment to the migrant workers."

Further, "We have created the mobile OPDs, testing and screening facilities at the border check posts. Especially those who have come from most affected areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat they are being sent to institutional quarantine facilities."

Moreover, "We are giving our strong effort to open the industries under which we did meetings with different stakeholders. The utmost challenge which we are facing in opening the industries again is because of the migration of the labourers", Mr. Jaiswal added. [elets.gov](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

JHALAWAR'S PREPARATION FOR COVID IN CHECK

As the Coronavirus has affected masses across India, an effective strategy is to act on the grassroots level. Considering the fact, district authorities have been adopting impactful strategies to fight COVID-19. Speaking on efforts made by Jhalawar district authorities, **Sidharth Sihag, IAS**, Collector & District Magistrate, Jhalawar, Rajasthan addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on the steps taken by the district to curb the menace of COVID-19 Mr. Sihag said, "We are focusing on food security in the district as food security is linked with the livelihood." Further, he said that regular efforts are being taken to spread awareness on practising social distancing. Also, people were urged to embrace digital operations as physical movements could act as carriers and transmitters of the virus, he added.

Talking about technology-powered initiatives during the lockdown, Mr. Sihag said, "We are already using e-office and using video conferencing to avoid the physical meetings. Moreover, we are observing that the digital channels are the preferred options to deliver a majority of our services."

Adding on the technology aspect he said, "Those under home quarantine have been tracked by their name, number and location by an app. If they have been detected outside their quarantine area, automatically a report is being



SIDHARTH SIHAG, IAS
Collector & District Magistrate
Jhalawar, Rajasthan

generated and shared to the collector and sub-divisional officers."

CHALLENGES FACED

"Initially the challenges we faced was the shortage of PPE kits. But now we have got a good number of PPE kits to cater to the need...Also, we have faced a shortage of masks, sanitizers. However, gradually that problem also was resolved", he added.

Migrants issue was another challenge. On this, Mr. Sihag said, "We have provided the essentials to the poor and also to the migrant labours. For this, we took help the CM relief fund, the NGOs and the social workers also came forward. Till now we have distributed 35,000-40,000 ration packets and 2 lakh food packets among the needy people." In the district, more than a lakh labourers have been deputed through NREGA which is solving the employment problem to some extent, he added.

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES & PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

He further spoke on testing that is being carried out in the district, Mr. Sihag said, "In our district, the testing has been increased from the beginning and we have tested more than 3000 people from the total population of 15 lakh. So, I think we are testing more than the national average." Concluding his address he said, "We are hoping that we will be having more data to deal with this crisis in future. Hopefully, some vaccine also will be ready till then." [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

Churu's Take Against Corona



SANDESH NAYAK

Collector & District Magistrate, Churu

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Sandesh, addressing the approach and the strategies adopted by Churu district, said, "We traced the people who have a history of travel to foreign countries and those who have come in contact with any foreigners."

Adding on he said, "We continued tracking and monitoring. We also tracked Tablighi Jamat people and found as many as 10 people who tested positive for the infection."

"In order to promote a simplistic living or simplistic and minimalistic lifestyle among the people, we started 'Give Up Something Campaign' in Churu so that resources are being used judiciously and only when required. This sent forth the message to people to go out only for the urgent needs and not for things which could be avoided", he said.

"A village-level vigilance committee was created to track people and ensure social distancing is taken care of and lockdown norms are being followed", said Mr. Sandesh.

CHALLENGES

Initially, people were not serious about the whole pandemic thing. But, when we started conducting contact tracing of

It posed a challenge for the civic bodies to track and trail the ones vulnerable to the infection or are infected and quarantine them and provide them with apt medical support for recovery and contain the virus. On similar grounds, **Sandesh Nayak**, Collector & District Magistrate, Churu addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

those found positive, then people realized how contamination works and there a whole lot of possibilities for anyone in near proximity to an infected person to get infected, he added.

A major challenge the authorities faced was of the migrant workers. Many migrant workers with no place to live started off for their home towns on foot. "In Churu, our proactiveness played an important role here. We approached the workers and convinced them to stay back as not doing so will defeat the purpose of the lockdown", said Mr. Sandesh. Temporary shelters were erected for the workers to stay and the authorities ensured that the workers are provided with enough dry ration and food, he added.

PREPARATION FOR PANDEMIC

"In Churu, we are carrying out door-to-door surveys spreading awareness among people and making them understand about the seriousness of the lockdown and what all preventive measures should be taken to avoid the viral infection", said Mr. Sandesh.

Talking about the healthcare facilities, Mr. Sandesh said, "We have a 150-bed hospital dedicated for COVID-19 which might be increased to 300, as per the government."

"Most cases we found were asymptomatic cases. However, we only required ventilators for just four cases. Those were already suffering from other illnesses and were bed-ridden", he added.

On availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), Mr. Sandesh said, "We have mandated masks in the state so that people do not go out without masks. We have enough PPEs available in the district so we are prepared at that part." 

Our Proactiveness Against COVID Proves our Resilience



RAJESH KANKIPATI, IAS
District Magistrate and Collector, Surendranagar

Since the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, the local governments in India have been on their toes to curb the menace. Talking about efforts of one such district Surendranagar, Gujarat, **RAJESH KANKIPATI, IAS**, District Magistrate and Collector, Surendranagar addressed a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Addressing the theme of the webinar, Mr. Kankipati said, "States like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh have taken a lead in creating a beneficial environment for small businesses to resume. For this, the labour laws have been amended. The Gujarat government has said that for the first

1200 days after the commencement of production, as many as 35 contract laws are not applicable. The focus will only be at minimum wages act, maternity benefits, safety norms at the workplace, and issue to prevent fatalities", he added.

"People have been great support for the authorities. I was amazed that during all the three phases of the lockdown, the shopkeepers' associations were very cooperative and kept all the shops closed", he said.

Mr. Kankipati added, "Quarantine in India has been a successful approach as many people had recovered and in many areas, the spread was effectively controlled."

CHALLENGES

Answering a question on challenges faced, Mr. Kankipati talked about migrant labour issue saying "In my districts, we have about 50,000 to lakh labourers and we provided them with a ration kit on a weekly basis." The State government's relief fund was utilised to serve the purpose, he added. "The NGOs also came forward to help", he said.

Considering PPE kits he said, "Initially, we faced a heavy shortage of PPE kits and similarly for N95 masks. But there were many manufacturers who came up and started manufacturing the PPE Kits, N95 masks, ventilators at the reduction 50-60 percent rates. Hence, the government has now procured these in large quantities and there are no more shortages."

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES AND PREPARATION

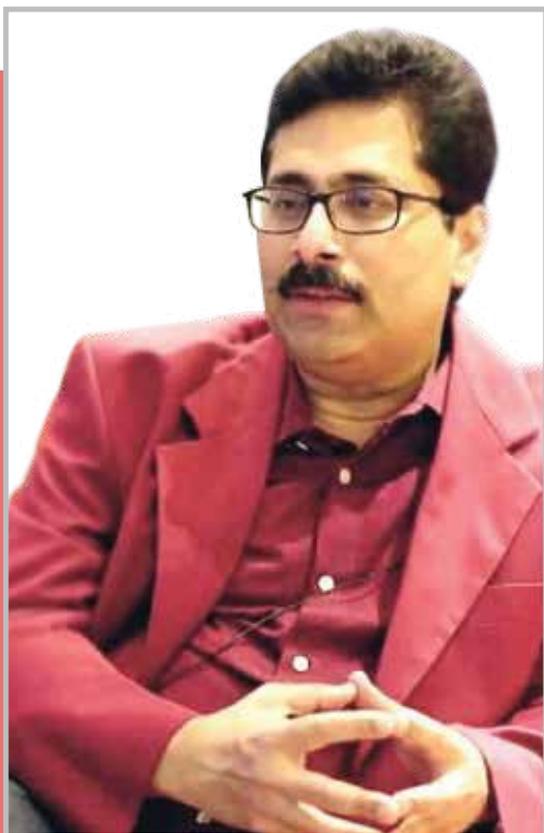
Mr. Kankipati said that following the announcement of the lockdown, the Government of Gujarat took a significant step and designated COVID-specific hospitals in every district on the advice of the Chief Minister.

"We informed the local Indian Medical Association chapters that if any flu symptoms are found, the patient should be immediately referred to our flu OPD in the government hospital", he added.

"When we realized that there can be a spike in the cases in June and July, we have created COVID care centres at the block level which have 20-bed hospitals either in a community health centre or in a private health centre facility. At the sub-districts, we have created 50-bed care centres and at the district-level, we had the 100-bed hospitals", told Mr. Kankipati.

Concluding his address Mr. Kankipati said, "We are a resilient nation and the proactiveness with which we rapidly geared up to control the pandemic is evident of our readiness, preparedness and resilience." 

Effect of COVID on Waste Management



V SRINIVAS CHARY

Centre of Excellence, Urban Governance & Infrastructure Development at Administrative Staff College of India

WASTE MANAGEMENT SCENARIO AMIDST COVID

Mr. Srinivas showed a presentation during the webinar and commenced his address with a note "The waste is coming from various sites with varying degree of risks." Adding to this he said that the waste coming from households with COVID patients is also biomedical waste. And to deal with this type of situation is not easy.

With the onset of Coronavirus pandemic, the civic bodies have been more than ever active in the collection and appropriate disposal of waste. Highlighting the effect of COVID on waste management, **V Srinivas Chary**, Centre of Excellence, Urban Governance & Infrastructure Development at Administrative Staff College of India joined in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

Highlighting the reports stating about the presence of Coronavirus in patient's faeces, he said, "As per reports, virus presence was traced in sewage hence to deal with it is a major task... Many gated communities have decentralised treatment system without disinfection. They treat only the biological component and there are risks involved in it." There is a need to be more comprehensive and a need to build redundancy and a need to go beyond guidelines to stop the community transfer, he added.

Covid's presence has been there in faeces from many countries and this goes to the wastewater. "In India, we have water supply lines and wastewater lines running parallel in many cases. So mixing up of water can take place. However, disinfection of the virus can be done easily but we have to more vigilant and keep on disinfection regularly."

Scope of Improvement

Putting forward his suggestions to improve the situation, Mr. Srinivas said, "All the water boards have to increase the residual chlorine and that has to be used for treating water at centralised or decentralised STPs to prevent the virus spread. Toilets should be cleaned using hypochlorite. Faecal waste shall be treated at FSTP - thermal treatment. Greywater treatment should be done using sodium hypochlorite. And, PPEs should be used by workers at every level." The government should also think of rolling out an insurance plan for the sanitation workers as well, he insisted.

Moreover, he said, "COVID presence can be tracked using wastewater. Samples can be collected from various areas and this can be used as a tracker for tracking the vulnerable communities. [elets.gov.in](https://www.elets.gov.in)

People in Villages Taking Stricter Preventions



RAJAT BANSAL

Collector & District Magistrate
Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Speaking on the initiatives, Mr. Bansal said, "COVID-19 has an adverse effect on children. With the help of UNICEF, we have made small videos to educate them in Dhamtari district." A slogan was created by the government teachers "Hum Bhi Hain Corona Warriors" to spread awareness about Coronavirus in the district, he added.

On the status of rural area, Mr. Bansal said, "People in rural areas are much more aware. Around 400 villages have sealed their borders to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are creating employment opportunities in the organic farming sector."

Further, "We have developed Kisan Bazar to provide an opportunity for the farmers to sell their crops and vegetables." In Kisan Bazar, farmers who are living near the Dhamtari district can register the crops and people can buy them sitting in their home, he added.

"We are taking stringent actions against fake news or false information spread on social media in Chhattisgarh. Many FIRs have been lodged against violators", said Mr. Bansal.

Chhattisgarh reported its first confirmed case of coronavirus on March 19, 2020 in Raipur, where a woman returning from London via Mumbai Airport was tested positive. Since then the authorities have been on toes to curb the Corona menace. Elets Technomedia organised a webinar with **Rajat Bansal**, Collector & District Magistrate, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh to know the action plans to curb the pandemic in the district.

CHALLENGES

Highlighting the challenges, Mr. Bansal said, "Managing migrant workers was a huge challenge for us. We made special arrangements for them in the quarantine centres and provided them with all the required necessities".

We have ensured social distancing for farmers in our district. As Chhattisgarh is the rice bowl of India, a large number of the population is dependent on agriculture.

We have over 200 rice mills in Dhamtari, which are fully functional. Some other industries have gradually opened by providing relaxation and social and physical distancing are properly maintained in the industries.

We are in talks with salons, hotels and pan shops and more relaxations will be provided to them in the coming days.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

On the preparations, Mr. Bansal said, "We had made strict guidelines for liquor shops. One senior police officer was deputed at each wine shop to manage the crowd and adhere to the guidelines of social and physical distancing...We have created zigzag barricading and drawn circles to maintain physical distancing in the district."

Further, he said, "Sanitizer and masks are available everywhere, voice feature of WhatsApp is being widely used, Google forms are being used, Geotagging has been used to make a containment plan of COVID-19."

Recently, Dhamtari district administration performed a mock drill professionally to check how vigilant officers are. It was to create awareness among the citizens and district-level officers, he added. [elets.gov](#)

Amethi's Approach to Handle COVID Crisis



ARUN KUMAR

District Magistrate & Collector
Amethi, Uttar Pradesh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Citing the initiatives taken, Mr. Kumar, "To keep a check on the cases, we increased the sampling and testing in the district. We are bringing in new innovations to tackle the rising cases of COVID-19."

Mr. Kumar informed, "With the Central government easing the relaxations, we have also allowed industries to start operations with 30 percent of the workers and following all the norms set by the government." In the first two phases of the lockdown, all the industries in the district were closed and sanitized, he added.

Further, he said, "With harvesting season coming up, we have eased the curfew for farmers so that they can harvest and sell their products in the open market."

CHALLENGES

"The numbers of migrants surged after March 30 and it increased

Uttar Pradesh has seen a rise in the number of cases from the last few days. With migrants coming in, the case surged which was a huge challenge for the government to tackle. Elets Technomedia organized a webinar with **Arun Kumar**, District Magistrate & Collector, Amethi, Uttar Pradesh to know the district's action plan to curb the epidemic in the city.

by every passing day. At every point, we created shelters for migrants and our medical team started checking them. If some symptoms were found, we put him in our quarantine centres", Mr. Kumar added.

Further, Mr. Kumar said, "We started providing food and ration to migrants. First, we put the people in quarantine centres and then provided them with medical facilities." Moreover, all the migrants, poor people were provided with ration at their doorsteps. We also started community kitchens for them to provide hygienic food. At one time, we were running 20 community kitchens and over 10,000 people were fed daily through these kitchens."

Talking on technology he said, "IT has played an important role in this pandemic. With the help of technology, we were able to store all the data of people who are coming to the district."

Addressing the unemployment of daily wagers Mr. Kumar said, "People who are under MGNREGA, registered with the labour department are given free rations. We are also providing free food to people who are not registered in any department."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Citing preparations, Mr. Kumar started by saying, "We are upscaling our health care facilities in the district to tackle the crisis. We are in talks with private hospitals, to provide more health care facilities to people." People under home quarantine are being monitored regularly, he added.

Further, "We are in talks with many more industries and trying to woo them to invest in our district", Mr. Kumar said.

Speaking on the post-COVID era, Mr. Kumar said, "In the coming days, there will be a lot of changes. We have to change our strategy, lifestyle, work culture to cope up with the pandemic." 

IEC: Significance & Use Amidst Lockdown



NAVEEN JAIN

Chairman and Managing Director
Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AMIDST PANDEMIC

Speaking on the initiatives taken in times of Coronavirus pandemic, Mr. Jain said, "Information, Entertainment and Communication (IEC) is crucial in these times as there is a need to spread awareness among citizens. Various mediums are being used like TV, Radio, social media, etc. to serve the purpose." Adding on IEC, he said, "Social media is the cheapest and the best medium to propagate information. I believe that to connect people and spread awareness, social media is one of the most effective media.

IEC in the pre-lockdown period, Mr. Jain said, was seen when the caller tunes were changed and whenever people used to call someone, the caller tune used to highlight symptoms of Coronavirus infection and preventive measures need to be taken. "Such was the role of IEC to educate people about the virus." Especially considering the lockdown situation, social media played a very important role in engaging people by spreading awareness, regular updates, key messages, precautions and more. Also, Bollywood movie scenes and popular dialogues were modified to spread awareness among people, added Mr. Jain.

IEC strategies, social media has been at the forefront in educating people, especially during the lockdown. Government has been using IEC techniques to sensitise people on the Coronavirus. To know more on the role of IEC and its implementation, Elets Technomedia organised a webinar with **Naveen Jain**, Chairman and Managing Director, Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation.

Further, Mr. Jain said, "We also used social media and other IEC strategies to keep people away from fake news and regularly updated right information, news, updates and more on our handles."

CHALLENGES

"Initially, people were not serious about taking precautions but with time when the number of COVID positive cases rose, preventive measures became a norm...A big challenge is to bring a behavioural change and a change in people's habits if we want to stop the transmission further," told Mr. Jain.

IEC STRATEGIES: PRE & POST-LOCKDOWN

Talking on preparations, Mr. Jain said, "IEC is prepared as per guidelines, feeds, and presentations from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, World Health Organisation (WHO), and other such institutions. Two aspects were emphasised in the IECs - symptoms and precautions." This was the pre-lockdown story, he added.

Mr. Jain, highlighting the significance of social media, said, "Social media is flexible and we can update it every minute...During the lockdown, IEC changed and focus was laid on making people aware of 'quarantine' and 'isolation' terms. What facilities are available during the lockdown. What services are available during the lockdown. What are the specific guidelines people need to follow, Key messages, etc."

Mr. Jain added, "As people were made aware of the community spread of the Corona pandemic, people abided with the lockdown norms and made physical distancing and masks a priority. IEC strategies were crucial here as our advertisements told people that the lockdown is for their own safety." 

KSRTC's Take on COVID Crisis



SHIVAYOGI C KALASAD, IAS
Managing Director, KSRTC

INITIATIVES TAKEN

On initiatives, Mr. Kalasad said, "We had to come up with regular cleaning and disinfecting buses. We also had to ensure that the confidence of people is kept."

The major touchpoints, water tanks and other areas which are vulnerable to touch were disinfected. Besides this, other preventive measures were also strictly implemented to ensure that our measures are in line with the guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Government of India, he added.

"Also, employee protection measures were taken to ensure the health and safety of employees. Mask protection system was introduced in our bus depots. As the depots were lying defunct, we appointed them the task of stitching the masks as per the requirement", he said.

For passengers' safety, said Kalasad, "We started thermal checks of the passengers. Also, COVID awareness messages were printed on the tickets, and free masks were distributed to passengers. Further, adequate information was also being disseminated to passenger on the bus stands as well as through different social media as well."

Tourism and transport sector is one of the most affected sectors by the Coronavirus pandemic. However, state transport corporations are coming forward to help the authorities in controlling the pandemic. Discussing the efforts by Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), **Shivayogi C Kalasad, IAS**, Managing Director, KSRTC joined a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Mr. Kalasad said, "COVID has certainly changed the way we think, the way we live and the way we operate. The economy of any country is very important and the transport sector, especially roads, is one of the major sectors. A few challenges as I quote would be - operational challenge, financial challenge, impact on the staffing patterns, impact on security measures, and also the assessment at demand and service level, etc. In addition, crew management issues, the fleet management issues and behavioural changes in the commuters will also be a challenge in times to come."

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

Citing preparations he said, "In March when we came to know the Coronavirus spread is highly contagious, we cut off our interstate bus services and restricted the operations of our inter-district buses as well. However, when the lockdown was announced the whole transport sector nose-dived. However, we were prepared for that."

Social distancing is being ensured and people are themselves now in a habit of following physical distancing. Moreover, "we have almost 20 mobile fever clinics which are being operated by our own staff through PPP mode. This received a lot of appreciation in the state as well as across the country", added Mr. Kalasad.

Testing equipment has to be escalated and Karnataka has the highest number of tests being conducted per million persons in the entire country. Testing is the key and also the other protocol has to be followed to contain the virus effectively, he said. [egov](https://www.egov.gov)

Chhattisgarh Transport Dept Leading in Contactless Service Delivery



SHAILABH SAHU

Assistant Transport Commissioner
Government of Chhattisgarh

INITIATIVES TAKEN

Mr. Sahu said, "We are one of the state which is doing 100 percent digital transaction. In Chhattisgarh, we do not accept cash we only take the money digitally. Already we are way ahead in contactless transaction."

"Also, we are providing most of the transport services through the national online portals Vaahan and Saarthi. We are delivering transport services online. We are also using e-challans. Our vision is to reduce the interaction of customer to officer the most we can. And in times like COVID pandemic, this is the need of the hour. Technology is the best medium to reduce the person to person interaction and yet get the functioning done appropriately", he added.

Adding on he said, "Our Police department is also using e-challans and no cash is accepted. Contactless is the key for Chhattisgarh transport department." Citing an example he said, "In Raipur, we have implemented ITMS where we have a camera-based challan system", Mr. Sahu added.

The transport sector is one of the worst-hit sectors by the Coronavirus outbreak. Though the state transport departments have taken significant steps considering the pandemic the contactless service delivery and using online platforms are the most crucial ones. Highlighting steps by Chhattisgarh, **Shailabh Sahu**, Assistant Transport Commissioner, Government of Chhattisgarh joined a webinar with Elets Technomedia.

CHALLENGES

Talking about challenges Mr. Sahu said, "In Chhattisgarh, we do not have state transport undertaking. So it is challenging for us to provide contactless travel for bus or taxi but we are trying that bus ticketing should be online so that contactless ticketing can be done."

In the post COVID era, the transport sector needs to work with the private sector so that PPP projects can be taken up and by the transport sector can be brought back on track, he added.

PREPARATIONS FOR PANDEMIC

On preparations, Mr. Sahu, "Transport department can be divided into different sections - First is the office system where RTO is setup. So most of the services there should be contactless. Second is enforcement, we should use e-challans to reduce paper-based system or human to human interaction. We, in Chhattisgarh, is also planning to install an integrated border check post. Also, we will have the weighbridge challan system wherein the weighbridge will take the weight of the vehicle, smart systems will capture the vehicle number and integrate the data with Vaahan database and an automatic challan will be generated if the vehicle is overloaded and the weight exceeds the safety standards."

"Further, talking about record keeping, many documents are mandatory to be kept as per the law and records needs to be kept. Hence, we are trying to amend the act so that the uploaded document can be considered equally important as a physical file. This will help to reduce the issue of files getting misplaced", he added. 

CHENNAI OVERCOMING WATER WOES



PRABHUSHANKAR T GUNALAN

Executive Director, Chennai Metropolitan
Water Supply and Sewerage Board

INNOVATIVE MEASURES & TECHNOLOGY TO MITIGATE WATER ISSUES

On the measures taken, the Government of Tamil Nadu has been very responsive in considering rainwater harvesting as an effective measure. As a result, 90 percent of the households in Chennai have a functional rainwater harvesting system, said Mr. Prabhushakar.

Further, he mentioned that the Chennai Metro Water is working on an 'ultrafiltration' project in the water going to the lakes will tertiary treated and then the water will be used for various other purposes.

Talking about technology, Mr. Prabhushankar said that we are using technology to track water usage. "Under the smart city mission, we are installing AMR meters to keep a check on water consumption and water wastage. As of yet, in around 13,000 commercial establishments the new meters have been installed. We will further extend the installation process by covering domestic establishments as well", he added.

Mr. Prabhushankar also mentioned, "We started using abandoned mine quarries as a water source. We noticed

Water woes of Chennai are quite infamous, especially the most recent drought in 2019 which prompted a dire need for an effective water management system. Emphasising on the measures taken by the authorities to address the issue, **Prabhushankar T Gunalan**, Executive Director, Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board talks in a webinar organised by Elets Technomedia.

that the abandoned mines had groundwater and can also act as a reservoir. But, such water can be harmful so we tested the water for various parameters including radioactivity. And, it was found that the water was fit for drinking."

IMPACT OF CORONA ON WATER MANAGEMENT

Mr. Prabhushankar, on the impact of COVID-19, said, "We have to carry our jobs to ensure safe and adequate water to every household in the city, especially in this time of COVID-19 when everyone is washing hands regularly and are concerned about their hygiene."

"Usually, it is really hard to manage the crowd aggregating around the water tankers, but, we are taking strict measure to make people stand in a queue to get their daily supply of water", he added.

Furthermore, "We have also equipped the people involved in sanitation work with proper safety gears", he added.

CHENNAI ON PATH OF IMPROVEMENT

Wrapping up the session, Mr. Prabhushankar concluded by saying that though there are a lot of issues considering water management in the city, currently we are water positive and this year and the next year we can manage. "The Greater Chennai Corporation is working on desilting all the waterbodies in Chennai. We are also working on groundwater use management. We have a very good rainwater harvesting system in place. And, in coming years Chennai will be in a better position", said Mr. Prabhshankar. 



IGNITING MINDS. CHANGING LIVES



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