



National Urban Conclave 2026 concludes with actionable recommendations to strengthen urban governance, planning and service delivery towards Viksit Bharat 2047

“The intent of the Conclave is to deliberate on the future challenges of our cities”: Shri Manohar Lal, Hon’ble Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs

Seven technical sessions outline key reforms for building inclusive, resilient and future-ready cities

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National Urban Conclave 2026 concluded in Bhubaneswar today with actionable recommendations to strengthen urban governance, planning and service delivery towards Viksit Bharat 2047 .

Delivering the closing remarks, Shri Manohar Lal, Hon’ble Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs reflected on India’s historical urban development trajectory and the Government of India’s continued efforts to strengthen urban infrastructure and services. Stating that “the intent of the Conclave is to deliberate on the future challenges of our cities”, he highlighted the progress achieved through national missions, including AMRUT, Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban and PM SVANidhi, in expanding water and sanitation services, improving waste management, strengthening urban mobility and promoting financial inclusion. He emphasised the importance of affordable housing near employment centres and public transport, circularity in construction practices, and the scientific remediation of legacy waste. Noting that over half of the country’s legacy waste has been remediated, he stressed the need to sustain these efforts and prevent the accumulation of new waste, ensuring that India's urban transformation remains inclusive, sustainable and future-ready.

Delivering the welcome address at the valedictory session of the National Urban Conclave 2026, **Shri Satendra Singh**, Secretary, Department of Urban Development, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, reflected on the key outcomes of the seven technical sessions and emphasised the need to translate policy deliberations into practical, implementable

urban solutions. He noted that “success should be measured by the quality of services, not merely by project completion”, an indication of the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, inter-agency coordination, municipal finances and accountability to improve service delivery. Highlighting the spirit of cooperative federalism, he reaffirmed the Ministry’s commitment to working with states, cities and partner institutions to take forward the Conclave’s recommendations, and advance the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Delivering the special address,, Shri Rajiv Gauba, Member, NITI Aayog emphasised the need for comprehensive reforms in urban governance, planning and municipal finance to manage India’s accelerating urban transition. Stating that, “we cannot run cities from our state capitals. We need to empower our smaller cities”, he called for greater devolution of powers and finances to urban local bodies, empowered city leadership and stronger municipal accountability. He stressed the importance of strengthening own-source revenues, reforming conventional land-use planning and promoting higher densities, mixed-use development and transit-oriented development to improve housing affordability and economic productivity. Highlighting initiatives such as the Urban Challenge Fund and City Economic Regions, he urged states to undertake structural reforms and called for linking funding under national urban missions to their implementation, enabling cities to realise their potential as engines of growth towards Viksit Bharat 2047.



The second and concluding day of the National Urban Conclave 2026 focused on translating policy deliberations into actionable recommendations for strengthening urban governance, planning, infrastructure and service delivery. Building on discussions across seven technical sessions, the Conclave brought together representatives from the Union and State Governments, urban local bodies, industry, academia and knowledge institutions to identify practical solutions for India's evolving urban challenges and advance the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Takeaways from Technical Deliberations

The session on ‘Right to Walk’ addressed fragmented pedestrian spaces, poor accessibility, inadequate planning integration, unclear institutional responsibilities and funding gaps. The session recommended institutionalising the ‘Right to Walk’ in statutory plans, securing pedestrian right-of-way, strengthening ULB capacity and accountability, prioritising infrastructure quality and maintenance, adopting inclusive, community-led design,

integrating pedestrian facilities into all street projects, and establishing dedicated financing mechanisms.



The session on 'Water, Waste and Resource Efficiency' recommended integrating water, wastewater and solid waste planning, shifting towards outcome-based service delivery, strengthening performance monitoring and lifecycle maintenance, promoting water reuse and circular resource recovery, developing markets for recovered resources, improving institutional accountability, and enabling sustainable financing through PPPs, municipal bonds and climate finance.

The session on 'Affordable Housing - Demand and Supply Dynamics' recommended reserving land for affordable housing, integrating housing with transit and employment centres, developing viable rental and transit housing models, introducing single-window approvals, leveraging FAR and TDR incentives for cross-subsidisation, strengthening government participation through housing boards and PPPs, and ensuring long-term affordability through quality construction and maintenance.

The session on 'Integrated Urban Development and Infrastructure Delivery' recommended integrating spatial and infrastructure planning through shared GIS-based databases, promoting corridor-based and transit-oriented development, aligning investments across sectors and agencies, implementing targeted, citizen-informed urban interventions, leveraging land-based financing mechanisms, strengthening municipal creditworthiness, and improving institutional coordination.

The session on 'New Paradigms for Urban Service Delivery' recommended shifting from asset creation to outcome-based service delivery, integrating municipal agencies around clearly defined responsibilities, strengthening digital monitoring and citizen feedback systems, institutionalising performance-based contracts, developing specialised municipal cadres, improving own-source revenue mobilisation, and establishing a national framework for accountable, citizen-centric urban services.

The session on 'Model Building Bye-Laws' recommended simplifying building regulations and approvals through integrated digital platforms, introducing risk-based scrutiny and self-certification, rationalising FAR, density and parking norms, enabling mixed-use and transit-oriented development, incorporating climate resilience and disaster safety standards, incentivising green construction, and improving regulatory transparency and ease of doing business.



The session on 'Model Municipal Law' recommended empowering Mayors with five-year tenures and clearly defined executive powers, strengthening devolution of municipal functions, improving coordination with parastatal agencies, enhancing fiscal autonomy and own-source revenues, ensuring adequate technical staffing, empowering Ward and Zonal Committees, and revising the Model Municipal Law, 2003, through state-level consultations and implementation frameworks.

Launches and Releases

Several initiatives and publications were launched during the second day of the Conclave:

Used Water Marketplace under AMRUT 2.0

A digital platform that connects urban local bodies (ULBs) with potential users and investors in the treated used-water ecosystem. ULBs can list the quantity and quality of treated water available for sale, enabling industries, institutions, and private entities to identify and access procurement opportunities.

UCF Portal

The portal is a key digital initiative that enables transparent, efficient and streamlined implementation of the Urban Challenge Fund. It serves as a common digital interface for states, Union Territories, ULBs and implementing agencies with project submission, tracking, appraisal and monitoring, and supporting decision-making.

Online Interactive Municipal Finance Data Hub

The multipurpose portal will connect the community of practitioners of municipal finance for two-way interactions via online discussion forums. It will also enable municipal reforms like enhancement of municipal revenue, and the availability of real-time digital data on

municipal revenue and expenditure of ULBs.

Street Food Hubs under PM SVANidhi

An initiative to formally commence the development of the 18 selected Street Food Hubs under PM SVANidhi. The release of the first tranche of funds indicated the formal commencement of project implementation.

Swachhata Ke Superheroes

A book for children, created to instill the values of swachhata, waste segregation, and responsible waste management among young readers.

CPWD Nirman

A web and mobile application designed to enable digital monitoring of CPWD projects from initiation to completion. The platform will facilitate real-time progress tracking, milestone monitoring and inter-agency coordination, enhancing transparency, accountability and data-driven decision-making.

CPWDway

A digital capacity building platform offering short instructional videos on CPWD specifications, construction practices, project case studies, building services and architectural innovations. Integrated assessments will support continuous learning and practical skill development among government engineers and other engineering professionals.

Internship Scheme through the National Internship Portal

An initiative enabling undergraduate engineering and architecture students to access internship opportunities with CPWD through AICTE's National Internship Portal. The scheme will provide practical exposure to government infrastructure projects, construction technologies, project management and quality assurance, strengthening industry-academia collaboration.

Technical Cooperation between JICA and CPHEEO

A Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO) to strengthen technical cooperation in promoting the circular use of treated used water.

Conclusion of the Conclave



The recommendations emerging from the two-day National Urban Conclave 2026 will inform the next phase of urban reforms, with emphasis on stronger institutional capacity, integrated planning, sustainable financing and accountable service delivery.

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