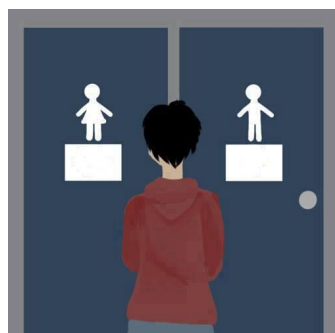




# CityMatters



## Inequality and Disparity in Providing Toilet Facilities



www.google.com

Other day I was about to enter the security area at the Jaipur airport to board a flight, when, for the first time in my life, I spotted three eunuchs ahead of me. I wondered through which frisking station they will go through. They proceeded in the women's queue, without any trouble. I have never seen them at public toilets but imagine that they would use women's facilities.



Therefore, I was quite surprised that the University Grants Commission has reportedly sent out a notice to all colleges and universities in India on February 12, 2015 that separate toilets should be built for transgenders to 'fast track their mainstreaming within the campuses and society at large'. Speaking to a transgender activist, I gathered that women feel uncomfortable seeing transgenders using the same toilets.

As it is our approach to building toilets in many rural and urban areas is so poor that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had to launch the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*. Indeed, building toilets as an essential facility can do many helpful things such as promote good health and hygiene, and protect women from sex offenders, and so on. However, getting the people to use the toilets is another story.

That said, our approach to building toilets in public places is gender-blind. The other day at the Diggi Palace during the Jaipur Literature Festival in Jaipur, I found a long queue of women outside the women's toilets but none at all of men. It then struck me that wherever you go, work, shopping malls, movies, restaurants, hotels, fairs, festivals, the public toilet facility for men and women are of the same size. Is that fair and sensible?

Research has shown that women need more time than men when visiting wash rooms. For the record, men take 35 seconds to use a urinal, while women take a minimum of 60 seconds to use a loo, i.e. nearly twice. In many older buildings, little or no provision was made for women because few would work in or visit them.

But potty parity laws and ever changing plumbing codes promise relief. It says that equal and equitable provision of washroom facilities for women and men should be provided within a public space. It does not always mean that there will be the same number of toilets for women and men but is measured by waiting times. As, women take double the time as men do, hence a 2:1 or 3:1 female-male ratio of toilets is required.

Therefore, in order to deal with these issues the government should take reform action. Under the *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, it could make it mandatory for companies, which show interest in constructing, repairing and maintaining community toilet centres in lucrative areas, to also do the same in slum, rural and resettlement areas. Women should demand safe and hygienic toilets and lastly, places of public assembly have two women's toilet fixtures for every one devoted to men to offset the extra time women take in the restroom and to slowly undo decades of male-dominated design and construction.

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*Pradeep S. Mehta*  
Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

## Gender Quota in Boardrooms

Germany, Europe's most industrialised country became the latest and most significant nation to commit to enhance representation of women on corporate boards. It passed a law urging some of the country's biggest companies



to give 30 percent of supervisory seats to women on corporate boards in the year 2016.

Fewer than 20 percent of the seats on corporate boards in Germany are held by women, while some of the biggest multinational companies in the world are based in the country, including Volkswagen, BMW and Daimler – the maker of Mercedes-Benz vehicles as well as Siemens, Deutsche Bank, BASF, Bayer and Merck.

Moreover, the supporters of this historic move stated that the measure has the potential to substantially alter the landscape of corporate governance and to have repercussions far beyond Germany's borders. (Tol, 08.03.15)

## Flexible Work Schedules

Giving employees more control over their work schedules might help curbing sleep deficiency, according to health researchers. "In the absence of sufficient sleep, one is not as attentive or alert and processes information quite slowly, might miss or misinterpret social and emotional cues and thereby impairing decision-making", said Orfeu M Buxton, Associate Professor of bio-behavioural health, Penn State University serving Pennsylvania in the US.

About 30 percent of the US adults were reported of not getting a sufficient



amount of sleep regularly, according to a 'Disease Control' survey. Sleep deficiency has been linked to increased

risk of automobile crashes, chronic diseases and early mortality.

Enhancing adequate sleep within the population is a goal of 'Healthy People 2020', a federal initiative that sets national objectives and monitors progress concerning the health of the nation. (PSN, 27.03.15)

## Power Napping Club

A Connecticut High School teacher in Greenwich, London, UK after deciding his students needed some down time, formed an after school 'Power Napping Club' to give teenagers 20 minutes a week to just sit back and relax.

Over-packed schedules and 12 hour days were draining already sleep-deprived teenagers. In high schools,



where most students go on to college, the pressure to excel inside and outside of the classroom leaves students with little time to relax.

Anton Anderson, an English teacher at Connecticut High School decided to contribute something to help the waves of weary teens that he was seeing everyday. In 1998, he founded the 'Power Napping Club', which allowed the students to nap for about 20 minutes, at the end of the day before going on to extra-curricular activities. (ew, 27.03.15)

## Socialise for Greener Earth

Socialising with the neighbours can be a boon for the environment, claims a new study. The study finds that socialising with the neighbours leads to more planet-friendly behaviour than spending time with friends or family. Neighbours lead to more planet-friendly behaviour than spending time with friends or family.

"Neighbours could be important role models. Backyard conversations, sidewalks, exchanges and neighbourly visits might be some of the best ways to learn about environmentally-friendly practices", stated the study author

Thomas Macias of the University of Vermont (UVM) of Burlington in the US.



Besides, the study also stated that the people who visit neighbours are more likely to 'keep up with the Joneses' on green behaviours, including water and energy conservation, buying organic fruits and vegetables and driving less. (HT, 13.02.15)

## Walking out of the Wedding

An Indian bride has walked out of her wedding ceremony after her groom failed to solve a simple mathematic problem in Rasolabad village near Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh (India). The bride tested her groom's mathematical skills and when he got the given sum wrong, she walked out of the wedding.

The groom's family tried persuading the bride to return, but she refused. She said that the groom had misled them about his education. "The groom's family kept us in the dark about his poor education", stated the bride's father.

Furthermore, local police mediated between the families and both sides returned all the gifts and jewellery that had been exchanged before the wedding. (HT, 14.03.15)

## Unboiling an Egg

There is a popular saying, 'you cannot unboil an egg'. Usually, this illustrates cause and effect – one cannot turn back time, or what is done is done. But the scientists have invented a way to unboil an egg.

An international team of chemists have accomplished this feat – an innovation that could dramatically reduce costs for cancer treatments, food production and other segments of the US\$160bn global bio-technology industry, according to the findings.

Likewise, many researchers, Gregory Weiss, Professor, Molecular Biology and Bio-chemistry, School of Biological Sciences, University of California of the US has struggled to efficiently produce or recycle valuable molecular proteins. These proteins have a wide range of applications but which frequently 'misfold' into structurally incorrect shapes when they are formed, rendering them useless. (DNA, 29.01.15)



## Taking Vacations Mandatory

The Japanese Government plans to submit a legislation to the country's Parliament that would make it mandatory for the workers to take at least five days of paid vacation, in a year.

The move reflects the desire of the administration of the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to curb Japan's



notorious work culture, where office workers are known to log long hours and often work overtime for no additional compensation.

The cause for roughly one-third of suicides in Japan, in 2011 was attributed to overwork. A survey by the country's Labour Ministry in 2013 found that employees only took nine out of an average entitlement of 18.5 days of paid vacation. Another poll, according to the 'Japan Times', found that one in six workers took no paid vacation whatsoever. (TWP, 05.02.15 & NN, 17.02.15)

## Record Breaking Surgery

Doctors in India have extracted 232 teeth from the mouth of a 17-year-old boy in a seven-hour operation. The boy from Buldhana in Central India was brought in with a swelling in his right jaw, stated Sunanda Dhiware, Head of Mumbai, (India) J J Hospital's Dental Department.

The teenager had been suffering for 18 months and travelled to the city from his village after the local doctors failed to identify the cause of the problem. Doctors have described his condition as 'very rare' and 'a world record'.

"The patient's malaise was diagnosed as a complex composite odontoma where a single gum forms lots of teeth. It was a sort of benign tumour", added Dhiware. (DNA, 02.01.15)

## Plant Extract for Brain Tumour

Scientists of New York have discovered that a harmless plant extract can be applied to treat Cushing Disease (a human hormonal disorder) in cell cultures, animal models and human tumour tissues. (HT, 13.02.15)

## 66 Wild Tigers Lost

About 66 wild tiger deaths were reported in India, in the year 2014. Two tiger deaths occurred on the last day of the year. It was in fact the only day in 2014 when two wild tiger deaths were reported. One was at Bandipur in Karnataka and the other at Tadoba Andhari in Maharashtra in India.

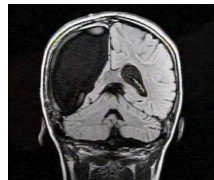


As per the statistics provided by 'Tigernet', the official database of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the highest number of wild tiger deaths was reported from the forests of Tamil Nadu-15, followed by Madhya Pradesh-14.

Furthermore, it was also found that the majority of wild tiger deaths was caused by poaching. Although the data did not give a clear figure on the number of tigers but it was estimated that about 50 tigers could have been killed in such a manner. (TH, 03.01.15)

## Living with Half a Brain

Is it possible to live with half a brain? There have been cases about people with chunks of their brains missing or damaged and still alive. All such cases tell a story about the mind that goes deeper than their initial shock factor. There are large gaps in even one's basic understanding of the brain.



The important functions carried out by the brain are not farmed out to single distinct brain region, but instead supported by multiple regions, often in similar but slightly different ways. If one structure breaks down, the others can pick up the slack.

Moreover, it is natural to see the brain, as a piece of naturally selected technology, and in human technology, there is often a one-to-one mapping between structure and function. (NN, 14.02.15)

## Selecting Smart Cities

Only 'deserving cities' would be eligible for Central aid, under flagship programmes, such as the 'smart city' initiative, Union Urban Development

Minister of India M Venkaiah Naidu stated at a consultative workshop for Municipal Commissioners from nine Indian states.

Naidu also stated that financing would be based on the ability of urban local bodies to reform urban governance and giving rise to new challenges. He also said that the Ministry was currently working on a 'City Challenge' framework, which would help identify the right cities for participation in schemes to build 100 smart cities and develop 500 cities and towns.



All cities and towns seeking to participate in these schemes would be profile based on specific parameters that had a bearing on their ability to address the issues of governance reforms, resource mobilisation, execution etc., added the Minister. (TH, 17.01.15)

## Ensuring Transparency

The Ministry of External Affairs of India has started posting all Right to Information (RTI) queries, and its replies to them, on its web site [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in), aiming at ensuring transparency.

This makes the information public, robbing the journalists of exclusive news. A quick look at the RTI queries posted on the web site shows while a number of them relate to professional matter such as transfers and postings. Besides,



there were some random and funny queries too.

For instance, one applicant asked about the number of countries in the Asian continent and the contact details of shops in Delhi that sold flags of these countries. (BS, 19.02.15)

## Launch of Third Year of 'My City'

A launch programme of the third year of 'MyCity' project of CUTS was held on January 16, 2015 in Jaipur. Justice V S Dave, former Chairperson of the Empowered Committee appointed by Supreme Court and Manish Pareek, Ex-Deputy Mayor of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) were the special guests and shared their views on urban governance and 'MyCity' project.



The main objective of the inception meeting was to discuss the objectives of the project and to understand the proposed intervention and provide the participants an opportunity to ensure their active participation during execution of the project in a better way.

Moreover, a monograph of 'MyCity' project and pamphlets for awareness generation prepared by CUTS were also released in the event by the dignitaries. About 100 participants took part in the programme comprising representatives of local civil society organisations (CSOs), councillors of various wards, JMC officials and media persons.

### Powers of Babus

To reduce the anomalies about contractual powers, Rajasthan Government, for the first time, has released scheduled powers of officers and engineers working in municipalities across the State.



The Government has kept with itself the entire power of approval to BOT (build, operate, transfer) system. The Directorate of Local Bodies (DLB) had issued orders, in this regard.

Most of the powers have been delegated to the municipal officers and councillors. For instance, the DLB chief engineer consulted with the municipal engineer and financial consultant in the decision of accepting tender works up to ₹7 crore.

Furthermore, the State Government has kept with itself the entire power to approve projects on Public-Private-Partnership like BOT.

(DNA, 01.02.15)

### Broken away from Bimaru Tag

Seeking a mandate for Chief Minister of Rajasthan Vasundhara Raje, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2013 had said that if people want to see Rajasthan shed its *Bimaru* (sick) tag, they need to oust Congress.

Nothing much seems to have changed on the ground in the space of a little over one year, but the recently appointed Deputy Chairman of NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, Arvind Panagariya said that Rajasthan has already broken away from that acronym that used to describe the backward states in the country.

He also said that a lot has changed in the State and there are 11 states below Rajasthan in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The State has certainly broken away from the *Bimaru* tag.

(Tol, 23.01.15)

### Power Tariff Hike

Having pushed back the revision of power tariff due to elections, the State Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) Government would soon announce a hike in the tariff. The revision of tariff, an annual hike, was expected to be announced in September 2014.

However, the BJP Government, which had strongly opposed the tariff hike imposed by the previous Congress Government, avoided taking

a decision in 2014. The delay in the revision was largely to avoid any backlash that the party might have



to face by the consumers during elections.

The revision was expected in the first quarter of the financial year 2014-15 but the Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission (RERC) is yet to announce the hike, despite the fact that the proposal for the same was sent to them, months back.

(Tol, 03.02.15)

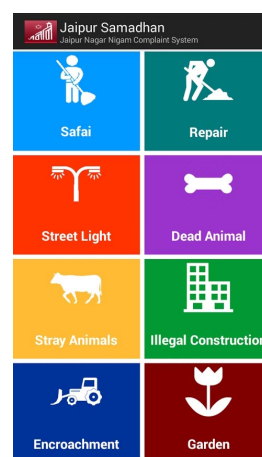
### App to Lodge Complaints

Jaipur Mayor Nirmal Nahata has launched an app 'Jaipur Samadhan' – by downloading which in one's android phone the users can register complaints related to the civic issues. It is first of its kind initiative introduced by a civic body wherein applications would be received and disposed off with the help of smart phones.

Launching the application, Nahata said that it was a small effort by the JMC to facilitate people of the city. After receiving complaints via this mode the JMC would dispose it while monitoring the same. The app could be downloaded from the website of the JMC "http://jaipurmc.org/", Nahata stated.

Besides, he also explained that the app provides options of different civic issues related to which complaints could be filed.

(DNA, 12.02.15)



## Progress in Sectors

Prior to the State budget, Rajasthan Government has released the statement of half-yearly review of the financial year 2014-15 (April-September). Among all the macro indicators, except agriculture, most sectors have shown immense improvement as compared to the previous year.

As per advance estimates total sown area under *Kharif* crops for 2014-15 is likely to be ₹57.63 lakh hectares. For the financial year 2013-



14, it was ₹60.67 lakh hectares, registering a dip of about 5 percent.

Furthermore, Rajasthan has also witnessed a drop in the proposals, under Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandum (IEM) in the first six months of the financial year.

(Tol, 23.02.15)

## Sorry State of Affairs

Rajasthan Government has not spent a single penny from the Union Government's fund for *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan* (RMSA) in the financial year 2014-15 till September 30.

The State's performance is lowest

in spending, since its inception in 2009, stated a report prepared by 'Accountability Initiative', an non-government organisation (NGO) working for education. The fund is meant to be utilised for spread of information and communication technology (ICT), teachers' training and inclusive education for disabled, improving learning levels and infrastructure facilities.

RMSA is the second biggest fund component, which every state receives annually after *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* (SSA). In 2015, the Union Government has allocated ₹3,565 crore budget for the year 2015-16 for RMSA.

(Tol, 16.03.15)



## Metro Updates

### JMRC Announces Fare Structure

The Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation (JMRC) has announced the Metro train fare structure having special discount for commuters subscribing to smart cards.

The JMRC Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Nihal Chand Goel has announced that the revenue operation of the Jaipur Metro would commence on or before March 31, 2015, for which the board has finalised the fare matrix.

Goel also informed that the fare structure has been kept between minimum of ₹5 and maximum of ₹20 and it would vary from peak hours and non-peak hours to the number of stations. He also stated that the smart card (for daily commuters) users would be given at a discount of 10 percent on a ticket of ₹10 or more but less than ₹20 and 15 percent on ticket of ₹20 or more. (NDTV, 21.02.15)

### Drinking Water for Commuters

Rajasthan Government and JMRC have decided to provide free drinking water to metro passengers. This facility, which is not available at Delhi Metro stations, would be a feature of all the nine Jaipur Metro stations of phase 1A from Mansarovar to Chandpole.

This decision was taken after considering Jaipur's blistering summers. Many officials had already proposed this and Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) has agreed to give separate drinking water connections at all the nine Metro stations. (Tol, 25.02.15)



### Launch Ride Hits a Stonewall

All hopes of seeing the Jaipur Metro commercial run by March 31 came crashing down on after the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS) Chetan Bakshi failed to complete the trial run, which is mandatory before providing the final statutory certification.

After completing four days of safety trial, Commissioner CMRS, admitted, "Minimum time required to complete the trial is seven days. We have attempted to complete it in four days. However, it could not happen. Half of the trial has been completed and I have to visit once again for the remaining trial".

The CMRS will be visiting after April 15 for the final trial. As per the CMRS, there are various trials remaining, such as speed test, rescue operation trial in case of an emergency, signaling etc. (Tol, 19.03.15)

### Check for Preparedness

In order to ensure that Jaipur Metro passes its final assessment of inspection by the Commissioner of rail safety, the Chairman and Managing Director of the JMRC visited Metro stations of the phase 1A to check the preparedness.

Furthermore, Nihal Chand Goyal along with the team of officials inspected all safety aspects relating to the Jaipur

Metro as safety issue is very important for clearance of the maiden run of the Metro for commercial purpose.

Besides, Goyal also visited Metro stations at Mansarovar, New Aatish Market, Vivek Vihar, Shyam Nagar, Ram Nagar, Civil Lines, Sindhi Camp and Chandpole stations and reviewed the final progress at these stations. (Tol, 04.03.15)



### State Budget: An Ideal Document to Assess State's Vision on Competitiveness

An annual budget of a state is an ideal document to assess state's vision on competitiveness. The Rajasthan State budget for new fiscal (2015-16) has emphasised on construction of roads for connection between villages and also making land banks available for industries. To adequately focus on labour issues, the Rajasthan Government has proposed establishment of a non-resident labour cell, and a dedicated skills and employment department. Moreover, infrastructure and skill development must not happen only on papers, but also in reality. Assessing the home-market demand, local demand is dependent on the standard of living of consumers. The budget focusses on the construction of model schools, e-teaching and training and formulation of a higher education development plan. A 28 percent increase in expenditure, on medical health and education has been proposed over the previous year.

Moreover, to aid the development of supporting upstream and downstream industries, the budget proposes to establish a Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) facilitation centre and introduction of price preference policy for MSMEs. Besides, restructuring of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), under small scale *khadi* and village industries department has also been proposed, which are certainly welcome steps.

As far as the ease of doing business is concerned, the budget proposes computerisation of approval process and minimal human interface, establishment of dealer facilitation centres, simplification and rationalisation of registration and stamp duty-related procedures.

What is required is that Rajasthan must learn from its past mistakes of unsuccessful implementation of single window clearance mechanism and must not shy away from learning from best practices in other states.

*(Excerpts from an article written by Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International co-authored with Amol Kulkarni, Sr. Policy Analyst of CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation. This was published in DNA on March 11, 2015)*



*Budget is not politics, but inspired by 'raj dharma'. People would feel satisfied as the Government has put up a roadmap for the State's all-round development and it would be pursued in the coming three years.*

*Vasundhara Raje  
Chief Minister, Rajasthan*

### Businesses Invited to Partner in India and Rajasthan's Progress

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised its flagship international investors' meet 'The Partnership Summit' in association with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India in Jaipur from January 15-17, 2015. With over 20 years of active engagement and collaboration of India at the global level, the Summit attracts 1200-1500 delegates every year with over 40 percent participation from overseas.

The Summit provides a common platform to leaders from all walks of life to closely examine the synergies that spark the next phase of global growth and play a proactive role in building new bridges to the emerging world by fostering links globally.

Inviting businesses to partner in Rajasthan's progress, Vasundhara Raje stated that her State was undertaking a slew of economic reforms. She highlighted the reforms that her State was undertaking on the labour front by amending old outdated legislations. She observed that this had become a model for the rest of the country and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called on other states to follow the Rajasthan model.

#### CII Delegates Impressed by State Government's Reforms

In addition, the top CII officials mentioned that the decision to hold the event in Jaipur was influenced by the new Government's progressive reform measures that caught attention of global trade and business community and also raised the curiosity about the opportunities in the State and its supporting policy framework. Admitting that the State bagged the event because of its recent measures, Chandrajit Banerjee, the Director General of CII said that after coming to power the new Rajasthan Government stole the limelight in the country by overhauling the decade-old rules and regulations and this in fact generated a lot of interest among the global community, domestic enterprises and policy-makers.

Furthermore, to attract investment from the private sector, the Government of Rajasthan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CII to plan a sustained investment promotion campaign, which would include investor meets, events, conferences culminating into Resurgent Rajasthan Partnership Summit 2015, a global investor's meet to be held on November 19 and 20, 2015 in Jaipur. The MoU for Resurgent Rajasthan Partnership Summit 2015 was signed by Samit Sharma, Commissioner, Bureau of Investment Promotion and Pikender Pal Singh, Regional Director, CII, Northern region.

*(DNA, 10.03.15)*

*Sources: BD: Business Standard; DNA: Daily News Analysis; ew: education world; HT: Hindustan Times; NDTV: New Delhi Television; NN: Nafa Nuksan; PSN: Penn State News; TH: The Hindu; Tol: Times of India; TWP: The Washington Post*