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Resurgent Rajasthan – New Roadmap for Economic Growth



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The Resurgent Rajasthan Summit held in November 2015 in Jaipur was a grand success. Along with colleagues, I had participated in the same. The energy, which existed at the meeting was great and thus pregnant with huge possibilities of garnering new investments in the state. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was expected to open the event but he could not come. Instead the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley came. Several other Cabinet-level Ministers from Delhi also attended the event, as they do at other similar events in other states: 'Cooperative federalism in practice'.



For nearly one year, the state government had conducted smaller investor meetings as a run up to the main event in many cities of India and abroad. That was smart and worked well in attracting investors to visit Jaipur for the Summit. Some had already signed up their own Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to invest well in advance.

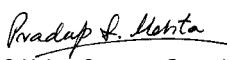
Additionally, a well-designed publicity campaign was done on TV and print medium, including in the world business daily London-based Financial Times. Perhaps it was also done in other foreign newspapers, which I might not have seen. The noted actor: Jaipur-born Irrfan Khan was the model used in the advertising. This was very smart considering that advertisements usually use some beautiful actor or even the Chief Minister of the state. What a relief? In fact, Irrfan also spoke beautifully at the opening session of the Summit. Large number of business honchos attended and spoke at the long opening session.

Mind you it was not only Rajasthan, which organised such a grand event, but many other states were also doing it. Hence, there is tough but healthy competition among the states, for the first time in India, which has been a result of the present Government. They are also competing against each other in lowering barriers to do business under a scheme fostered by the Government of India, led by a dynamic officer Amitabh Kant, who recently moved to the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog.

That said, it was announced that 295 MoUs worth ₹3.3 lakh crore were signed. The Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Vasundhara Raje said that it will generate 2.5 lakh new jobs in the state. In addition, the Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister announced an investment of ₹10,000 crore. Raje said: "Now we have to convert the MoUs signed before and during the Resurgent Rajasthan into achievements on ground".

Importantly, the proof of the pudding lies in eating it. That is to say, converting the MoUs into actual investments resulting in job creation. In Rajasthan, figures of 30 to 50 percent are being speculated as the likely conversion rate. Many such state Summits have generated similar figures. The state of Gujarat was an outlier with promises of ₹20 lakh crore made over time. However, the opposition Congress in Gujarat said that between 2003 and 2011 only 9 percent had fructified. The problem is that states do not share such data, which they should do voluntarily under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

After all, MoUs are statements of intent and conversion would depend highly upon several collateral factors, including the speed of myriad clearances. In spite of the 'ease of doing business' competition among states, there are many things, which depend upon the *babus* responsible. Afraid, they have been brought up in the culture of socialism and that profit is a dirty word. One does hope that this situation changes over time.


Pradeep S. Mehta, Secretary General

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200 Year Old Manuscript

The discovery of *Jaisamand Prashasti*, a manuscript written in April 1819 by poet and Jain monk of India, Yati Gyanchandra, at the Royal Asiatic



Library, London (UK) recently has elated historians and writers of Mewar region of Rajasthan.

The manuscript illustrating the glory of Mewar kingdom and the world famous Jaisamand Lake of Udaipur had been compiled for Colonel James Todd of East India Company who took them with him in 1828 to the British land.

The script of *Jaisamand Prashasti* had gone missing, and hence the stone inscription had not been possible at the lake sides. The transcript, which constitutes of 18 chapters containing more than 1500 shlokas gives a detailed account of the massive water body.

(Tol, 02.11.15)

World Record Breaking Memory

A 21-year-old student has set a Guinness World Record by memorising 70,000 post-decimal digits of Pi, beating a Chinese, who had held the record for 10 years. Rajveer Meena, a resident of Mohocha village in Swaimodhapur district of Rajasthan, had in March set the record by reciting post-decimal Pi values up to 70,000 digits in 9 hours and 27 minutes.

He was awarded the certificate of Guinness World Record for memory on October 01, 2015. Earlier, the record was held by Lu Chao. He had recited post-decimal Pi values up to 67,890 digits in 24 hours and 7 minutes in 2005.

(TH, 06.10.15)

Desi Attire for Convocation

The word 'convocation' conjures up an image of jubilant students in those trademark black ceremonial robes,



flinging their black scholars' hats into the air. Those black robes have been a staple of college and university convocations across the country for years. The universities and colleges in the State of Uttar Pradesh (UP) are increasingly doing away with the traditional black gowns in favour of more colourful and vibrant attire.

While some are merely experimenting with the colours and designs of the robes, there are institutions that are ditching the convocation robes altogether in favour of more desi attire. (Tol, 01.11.15)

A Medicinal Chocolate

Scientists claim that they have developed a chocolate that is so healthy



that it could be taken as medicine. The key ingredient in chocolate is cacao, which contains antioxidants and minerals, and can even help lower blood pressure while increasing 'good' cholesterol.

Chief scientist Gregory Aharonian of Kuka Xoco, which is developing the chocolate, said: "Using micrograms of coca plant extract, we can de-bitter unsweetened cacao. This eliminates the need for sugar, sweeteners and much of the fat in chocolate, unleashing the medical benefits of cacao". (BL, 06.10.15)

Fine on Fairness Cream

In a judgment that might cause ripples in the cosmetics industry, a consumer court has imposed a penalty of ₹15 lakh on Emami Limited for 'misrepresenting' to the public about its fairness cream for men. The company's advertisements claim the cream makes skin fairer.

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum (Central), Delhi, held that Emami had adopted unfair trade practices by claiming through its advertisements that its product 'Fair and Handsome Cream' would give men fairer skin in three weeks.

Nikhil Jain had purchased the cream on October 08, 2012. "After using the cream for three weeks, I did not see any difference on my face", he stated in his complaint. The Consumer Forum has directed Emami to withdraw the advertisements. (TH, 07.11.15)

E-Driving Licence

For those living in Hyderabad, can safely leave their driving licence, vehicle insurance and registration papers at home. Instead, they can carry certified electronic copies in their smart phone or tablet and show it to the traffic cops on demand. Hyderabad traffic police is doing a pilot in Cyberabad, the IT-hub of Hyderabad, to test the efficacy of the service.

"After the pilot, we will expand the service to the whole of Hyderabad", IT and Panchayat Raj Minister, K T Rama Rao of the newly formed state Telangana stated. The Government is also planning to digitise the health records of people in the state. (BL, 07.10.15)

Trip for Hygiene Lessons

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has decided to send a group of *safai karmcharis* (sweepers) and *beldars* (diggers) on an official trip to Japan and South Korea, so that they can learn about sanitation, cleanliness, waste disposal as well as upkeep of local markets, residential colonies and townships.

The week-long trip has been approved by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). "We were surprised when we saw the list of group members. I am seeing such a proposal to send ground-level staff for the first time – otherwise most foreign trips are taken by senior officials", said an MEA official.

(IE, 13.11.15)

Fascination for Injections

Cambodia is known for its rich culture and history, natural beauty, exquisite temples like the Angkor Wat, the Vietnam war, the Khmer Rouge, land mines, and more. But not many people are aware of this Southeast Asian nation's quirks and eccentricities – like this particular obsession that locals have with needles.



While most people in other parts of the world would do anything to avoid getting injected, things are quite the opposite in Cambodia, where citizens have a fascination for injections and intravenous (IV) drips. (OC, 18.12.15)

The Real Santa

Hilcorp, a private oil and natural gas exploration and production company based in Texas (US), is in the news for its unprecedented generosity towards employees. To celebrate an excellent year, Chief Executive Officer Jeff Hildebrand gave the entire company staff



huge bonuses – US\$100,000 to each of the 1,381 workers. It seems Santa is real after all.

“It is just a true gift”, said receptionist Amanda Thompson, who has worked at Hilcorp for the past 10 years. “And I think myself, as long as everyone else is not going to give any less than one hundred percent each day”.

With this kind of rewards, it is really no wonder that the company was included in the Fortune list of 100 Best Companies to work for, the third year in a row.

(OC, 14.12.15)

Healthy Positive Emotions

A new research has suggested that people who inculcate positive emotions and maintain positivity are less likely to develop any heart disease than those who tend not to be happy.

The research conducted by Penn State (US) examined 1,000 patients with coronary heart disease over the course of five years and observed that the patients who reported higher positive psychological states were more likely to be physically active, sleep better and take their heart medications and were also less likely to smoke, compared to patients with lower levels of positive states.

(TH, 07.10.15)

Zero-Waste Town

A small Japanese town – Kamikatsu, with a population of just over 1,700, is on a mission to become the country's first 'zero-waste' community by 2020. Kamikatsu has already recycled about 80 percent of its trash, with the last 20 percent going into a landfill.

In 2003, Kamikatsu declared its 'zero-waste' ambition after the town gave up

the practice of dumping trash into an open fire for fear of endangering both the environment and the population.

There are no garbage trucks, so each resident of the town has to wash, sort and bring their trash to the recycling centre. A worker oversees the sorting process at the centre, making sure trash goes into the right bins.

(<http://www.citylab.com/09.12.15>)

Dust and Smog Brick

Have you ever imagined air so thick that you could literally vacuum the dirt out of it? Well, believe it or not, a Chinese artist known as Nut Brother has actually gone and done that in a bid to raise awareness about environmental protection. He used an industrial vacuum cleaner outdoors during smoggy days in Beijing and eventually made a brick out of all the dust he collected.

In his 100 day 'Dust Plan' he got a 1,000 Watt vacuum cleaner that absorbed 100 gm of a mixture of 'dust and smog' from the amount of air inhaled by about 62 people in just four days.

(OC, 03.12.15)

Legal Trial over Koh-i-noor

Lobby group made up of Indian businessmen and actors is mounting a legal challenge against Queen Elizabeth II demanding the return of the world famous Koh-i-noor diamond to India. The 105-carat stone, believed to have been mined in India nearly 800 years ago, was presented to Queen Victoria and is presently set in a crown belonging to the Queen's mother on public display in the tower of London.



David de Souza, co-founder of the Indian leisure group Titos, is helping to fund the new legal action and has instructed British lawyers to begin high court proceedings.

“The Koh-i-Noor is one of the many artefacts taken from India under dubious circumstances”, De Souza stated.

(Tol, 09.11.15)

Gastric Balloon Pill

People with obesity can now avoid painful gastric bypass surgeries to curb their appetite by means of a swallowable gastric balloon pill, which can be swallowed in the form of a pill that

inflates, once it enters the stomach filling a portion of it and creating the sensation of fullness that helps to eat less.

Developed by Allurion Technologies, a Massachusetts-based company, the pill touted as a 'safe and effective weight loss tool' that 'empowers overweight and obese individuals to reclaim their health'. The balloons are placed in the stomach endoscopically, left in there for several months, and are then removed endoscopically.

(OC, 29.12.15)

Youngest to Make Robot

Greek teenager Dimitris Hatzis has become the youngest person in the world to build a 3D printed life-size functional robot. 15-year-old Dimitris's feat was a part of 'InMoov', an open source project run by French sculptor and designer Gael Langevin.



The project provides a design that is replicable on any home 3D printer with a 12x12x12 cm area. Using these instructions, Dimitris spent over 1,400 hours planning, experimenting, printing, and assembling the robot.

Dimitris is the youngest of only six people in the world who have been able to follow Langevin's design and successfully complete the project.

(OC, 05.12.15)

Households to Lose LPG Subsidy

The Union Government is actively examining discontinuation of subsidies, such as the one given on domestic Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders to all households having an annual income of ₹10 lakh and above. It could happen in the near future as indicated by Union Minister for Urban Development, Housing and Poverty Alleviation M Venkaiah Naidu.

He also said that the government was also planning to give other subsidies like the one on urea directly to farmers, instead of giving it to fertiliser companies.

“By doing so, the government is planning to maintain a financial equilibrium in society”, Naidu said.

(TH, 15.11.15)

Injury Research Centre

With ever increasing road injuries caused each year in India, a Centre for Injury Research (CIR) will be set up to design and conduct research studies, capacity building and intervention projects in the area of injury and accidents.

For this, Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) University, Jaipur, with its core area in Research, Academics and Training, has signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with the Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit to set up the CIR in Jaipur.

Over 10 lakh vehicles are registered alone every year in Rajasthan and their number is increasing. This requires a proper road traffic planning for intercity roads and national highways in Rajasthan.

(DNA, 21.10.15)

Bureaucrats Not to Inaugurate Events

Owing to repeated complaints against bureaucrats allegedly undermining the authority of public representatives, the Rajasthan government has issued strict instructions to bureaucrats not to inaugurate public works or even wear garlands on such occasions and to let public representatives do the same.

In a circular issued, Chief Secretary, Government of Rajasthan, C S Rajan said that in government programmes, campaigns, inauguration of public buildings and other such events, bureaucrats should not wear a *Mala* (garland).

Instead, the bureaucrats should ensure that such inaugurations are carried out by public representatives.

(IE, 09.10.15)

Replicating Jodhpur's Model

Impressed with the initiatives taken by the Jodhpur Municipal Corporation (JMC) towards cleanliness, Rajasthan's Social Justice and Welfare Minister Arun Chaturvedi said that Jodhpur is the only city in the state, which has taken up the task of cleanliness on its own level by coming up with the concept of 'Smart Colony-Smart Ward'.

This model of JMC would be replicated in the entire state, according to Chaturvedi. He added

that the government alone cannot do anything significant unless there was public contribution in the initiatives taken by the government.

(Tol, 03.10.15)

PNB's Women Special Branch

Punjab National Bank's (PNB's) Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Usha Ananthasubramanian inaugurated the lender's first special women branch in Rajasthan at Vidhyadhar Nagar in Jaipur. The PNB chief also made e-inauguration of 51 outlets in the state.



On the occasion, she called upon women to save money in banks, so that they could talk of their economic progress. Women should stand up in saving money, and for this PNB has initiated the move in the pink city, she said.

During the event, altogether 101 Mudra Loan worth ₹1.51 crore was approved and distributed. (BS, 26.11.15)

Pvt Ambulance at Govt. Rates

The private ambulances will now operate at fixed government rates. Sanjeev Gupta, programme coordinator, said that the rates have been fixed by the transport department. He also stated that the fixed rates will prevent instances of overcharging from the patients for ambulance services.

The rates will remain the same throughout the day as well as at night. Moreover, toll tax will not be collected from the patient. The rate list will be displayed at the private hospitals and also on the private ambulances.

(DNA, 15.10.15)

Self-Reliance Scheme

With an objective to make the best use of water accumulated from various resources locally, Rajasthan Government will launch *Jal Swavlamban Yojana*, a self-reliance water scheme soon.

The scheme aims to utilise the water that comes in the state from various water resources and is then stored in the state for consumption of the population. Moreover, the scheme would make the state self-reliable with the help of the local water resources.

A budget of ₹1500 crore has been sanctioned for the scheme, the Minister said that support and cooperation from all sectors, including the corporates, would be sought to ensure its successful implementation.

(ET, 17.12.15)

Helping the Homeless

In order to provide shelter to the homeless poor in Jaipur, the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) is planning to set up night shelters and refugee centres in all the 91 wards. Based on the availability of the land, a temporary or permanent Centre for homeless will be established in the wards of the city.

The JMC engineers have also been ordered to prepare a plan as soon as the proposal for setting up such centres is received. Besides, every year, the civic body installs temporary night shelters for helpless poor who are forced to spend nights on roads.

(DNA, 16.11.15)

Smart City Plans

Rajasthan has become the first State in the country to submit smart city plans for three selected cities to the Union Government. In this regard, the state government has submitted smart city proposals of Udaipur, Kota and Ajmer to the Union Ministry of Urban Development.



Under the proposal, the investment outlays proposed by the state government for developing these three cities as smart cities are Kota: ₹1,493 crore, Ajmer: ₹1,300 crore and Udaipur: ₹1,221 crore respectively.

Besides, the state government is also forwarding smart city proposal for Jaipur with an investment proposed ₹2,403 crore prior to December 15, 2015 deadline.

(Tol, 14.12.15)



Funds from the Centre

After the visit of Union Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu, the state government is expecting financial assistance from Centre soon for the Jaipur Metro Phase-I (B) project.

The government will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the joint venture. An official said that the Jaipur Metro Rail Corporation (JMRC) is looking at getting some financial assistance from the central government in the form of equity for the Metro Phase I (B).

As part of the joint venture, the Centre is expected to fund 20 percent of the project in the form of equity. "The central government will provide ₹627 crore in the form of equity. As per the norms, the Centre will have a 20 percent stake in the project", said a JMRC official. The Central assistance would be useful for operations and maintenance.

(Tol, 23.10.15)

Best Mass Transit Award

Adding another feather to its cap, the Jaipur Metro bagged the title of 'Best Urban Mass Transit Project'. The Union Minister of State for Urban Development Babul Supriyo presented the award to the Jaipur Metro team in New Delhi.

N C Goel, Chief Managing Director, JMRC informed that as the project was completed in four years

and a quarter, the Jaipur Metro is one of the fastest implemented projects in the Metro sector. Besides this, the land acquisition process for the project also took place smoothly, Goel added.

The prize is awarded as the project is designed and planned to connect various modes of transport on the route. In terms of planning Jaipur Metro, it is set to become a good example of multimodal integration. (Tol, 28.11.15)



All Women Staff

The Shyam Nagar Metro Station is a first of its kind. From running the operations of the Metro to supervising customers and passengers at the station, taking care of the upkeep and cleanliness at the station, everything is handled by women staff.

"The entire staff here is female. It is easy to work and coordinate with them...I have faced no problems at all", said Neha Budhwar, the station supervisor at Shyam Nagar Metro Station.

Among the 23 drivers that the Jaipur Metro has, six are women. "I feel great that I am able to do something different", said Monika Mittal, a Metro engine driver. For Jaipur Metro, this is not merely a coincidence. They have made it a policy to hire as many women as possible as at present, 30 percent of its staff are women. (DNA, 24.11.15)

Shifting of Temples

The seven temples causing hindrance in the construction of Jaipur Metro in Walled City area would be shifted soon. The administration and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) have shown mutual consent to shift the temples on a land situated behind Manak Chowk.

The protesters have also raised the demand to construct temple structures before demolishing them. The decision has been taken as there is no scope for change in the route of Metro project. Sources in the Metro department said, "Out of seven temples, four would be reconstructed at the old place following the completion of metro station".

After facing RSS's wrath, since long the JMRC officials were in a fix how to go ahead with Metro's construction work without demolishing the remaining temples at Badi Chaupar.

(Tol, 16.11.15)

Hope for Phase II

The JMRC has received positive response from Korea Rail Network Authority (KRNA), which is among the six companies who were invited to construct Jaipur Metro Phase II under public-private partnership (PPP) model.

After examining the detailed project report, the KRNA has submitted the study. It is considered to be at preliminary stage and could not be considered as go ahead signal from the foreign firm. However, it is a positive sign as other participants have entirely backed out.

The estimated cost for Phase II is ₹10,000 crore and it has been proposed that the state government will provide 40 percent as viability gap funding to the awarded company. The remaining 60 percent, will be borne by the state government and the company. (Tol, 27.11.15)

No Hike in Metro Fares

In a bid to encourage more commuters to travel by Metro, the JMRC has decided not to increase the fares for the following three months.

The decision was taken in the 25th board meeting that fares will be revised in a meeting scheduled on March 31, 2016. Earlier, it was proposed to increase the fares every six months, however, after witnessing the low ridership, the JMRC is apprehensive of increasing the fares.

A senior official informed, "Jaipur Metro is still the cheapest mode of transportation in terms of fares. The fares would remain same and minimum fare for plying in Metro would be ₹5 while maximum fare has been fixed at ₹15 by the JMRC".

(Tol, 23.12.15)

Municipalika 2015 Echoes Integrated Approach towards Sustainable and Smart Living



With the need to accommodate rapid urbanisation of the age, development of smart cities has emerged as the need of the hour. Cities, contributing to nearly 70 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), are presently in want of adequate and sustainable housing, sanitation and infrastructure to ensure an improved quality of life. Drawing on the global immediacy, the Union Government of India has embarked on a mission for developing 100 smart cities in the country.

For this, the respective state governments have geared up to help the Centre realise its goal. Rajasthan has set an example through earnest involvement in the Centre's initiatives, such as Swachh Bharat Mission, Smart Cities, Atal Mission of Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Housing for All and Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) for better governance and ensuring quality life for the residents. This was stated by Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje in the inaugural session of Municipalika 2015, the 13th International Conference and Exhibition on Sustainable Habitat and Smart Cities, in Jaipur, which took place from December 09-11, 2015.

The three day event welcomed over 1,600 delegates from all over India and abroad, that had as its participants a large number of urban and housing sector officials comprising representatives of 176 local bodies, 40 Mayors and Chairpersons and Municipal Commissioners, Secretaries from 24 states and 300 cities, over 500 Municipal Counsellors, international delegates from seven countries, private industry and professionals. Along with national and state-level government participation, the programme witnessed active support from UN-Habitat, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as many other national and international urban stakeholder institutions.

Vasundhara Raje made a fervent appeal to the people at large to extend their active support to the government in building clean, liveable, sustainable and smart cities. She urged the citizens and mayors and representatives of the local

municipal bodies to motivate their fellow men for working hand in hand to materialise the vision for smart living. She also said that the state government has taken a decision to significantly bring down the carbon footprint cutting across, such as tree plantation, water conservation and recycling. In this context, all 33 districts of the state will be competing in reducing the carbon footprints.

With regard to mass migration of the rural population to the cities, Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Government of Rajasthan, Rajpal Singh Shekhawat stated that the *Mukhyamantri Jan Awas Yojana* has been launched. He announced that the state would get an investment of ₹40,000 crore in the urban sector alone.

The Economic Adviser to the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, K V Pratap praised the role of the state in building smart cities. He further added that for the cities, to be clean and sustainable, smart solutions were required and core infrastructure needs to be bolstered.

V Suresh, the Convenor of Municipalika and Advisor of Good Governance India Foundation opined that in addition to the policy support from the government, the Swachh Bharat Mission can be successful only with complete participative involvement of the citizens. There is need for making toilets for all, linked with water for all, as an integrated approach. Smart Cities and AMRUT cities should be developed with integrated and holistic approach to bring in smart elements and service delivery for the city development. Efficient water management system including waste water recycling has to be introduced compulsorily.

Undoubtedly, Municipalika 2015 will leverage the huge opportunities in the state, in the area of housing and urban infrastructure, sustainable built environment and good urban governance, and will be a platform to showcase the challenges and opportunities arising out of the recent developments in local and urban governance issues.

(This article has been abridged from <http://municipalika.com/09-11.12.15>)

Sources: BL: The Hindu Business Line; BS: Business Standard; DNA: Daily News and Analysis; ET: The Economic Times; IE: The Indian Express; OC: Oddity Central; TH: The Hindu; Tol: Times of India