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NDA govt's GIFT to India

Smart cities in Gujarat & Kochi will drive the ambitious 100 self-sustainable city project

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New Delhi: The 100 smart cities project, which defines the grand ambition of the Narendra Modi government may not fully come to fruition but about 10 projects are likely to start during the tenure of this government. The target is to have 30 cities in 15 years. The project itself is conceived as a bypass to cut through the morbid mess that cities like Mumbai have become. The finance ministry has earmarked Rs7,000 crore for smart city projects this fiscal.

To ensure that every states gets a share, the ministry will pick up sub cities inside the state capitals to develop into smarter models. Besides state capitals, cities that have a religious pilgrimage circuits including Shirdi, Varanasi, Amritsar, Allahabad and Tirupati will also be given the smarter design. Some of the industrial towns will also be included in the smart city project. While all the states have been lobbying to get a bigger scoop of cities for themselves, the ministry has received a concrete proposal from the West Bengal government to create New Kolkata as a smart project.

Kochi smart city being developed by Smart City Dubai in partnership with the government of Kerala is slated to be the first operational smart city in the country and the Dubai company is likely to develop another smart city in Madhya Pradesh after chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan met top officials of the company in Dubai on Friday.

"The smart city model has to be self sustainable with civic infrastructure. The city will also have its own IT network linking every resident of the city," said a senior officer of the urban development ministry. Aspects of energy management, water management, transport and traffic, safety and security and solid waste management will be covered. The smart cities will have its own health care facility with education hub and community service centres.

Not all cities will be new cities. Several old cities will be brought into the smart circuit. In the case of bigger cities like Delhi, Mumbai or Bhopal, sub cities in a radius of 15km will be developed into smart cities.

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This is a series on the NDA government which completes 100 days on September 2. Read here in the coming days progress cards on ministries, perspectives and interviews which evaluate the performance of the government

NDA's GIFT to India

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The ministry of urban development is yet to finalise the design and definition of a smart city, but at level 1, Gujarat's GIFT looks like the ideal Indian smart model. The GIFT city of Gujarat was conceptualised by Narendra Modi during his tenure as chief minister. The greenfield project is being constructed on 500 acres of land between Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

Divided into three phases, the city will have a global IT hub, a Special Economic Zone and a residential township. IL&FS has invested close to Rs900 crore so far in GIFT City, according to RK Jha, the CEO & MD of GIFT City. He also said that the remaining Rs600 crore were raised by GIFT through internal accruals and debt. "We have sold some 10 million sqft space in GIFT City project so far. The funds received are being invested in the

project," he said.

"We have plans to develop 62 million sqft of built up area in GIFT City in three phases by 2023. We were targeting 10-12 million sqft in the first phase of the project, which we have already achieved. The second phase of the project will commence in March next year," Ramakant Jha, CEO & MD of GIFT City Limited, the project developer, told dna.

The project aims to create 1 million direct and indirect jobs on completion in 2023. GIFT City Limited is a equal joint venture between Gujarat government and IL&FS. Jha said that they have invested Rs1,500 crore in the project so far. "The total investment will be to the tune of Rs50,000 crore, which includes Rs10,000 crore in infrastructure development and Rs30,000 crore in construction of buildings," he said. On completion, GIFT City will be home to 120 buildings, which will be 70 metre to 250 metre tall.

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— Ramakant Jha, CEO & MD of GIFT City Ltd