



CITY OF JOY... FINALLY!

WITH PLANS TO TAKE SHAPE IN THE COMING FEW YEARS, KOLKATA WILL SEE UNPRECEDENTED INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT, HELPING TO SOLVE SOME OF THE AGE-OLD CIVIC PROBLEMS

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Travellers landing at Netaji Subhash Bose International Airport, Kolkata, have noticed the subtle change in urban transport being brought about by a modern bus fleet recently inducted in the city's transport system. In another two years time, two more lanes will be added to the EM Bypass, which brings travellers to the city. A Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) shall concurrently be implemented, the first leg of which will connect Uttaranga to Garia. This shall consist of

CAPTURING NEWER HORIZONS

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dedicated bus lanes on the median, which shall make public transport more effective, efficient and less time consuming. Travellers will be able to take the newly-constructed flyover at Ultadanga crossing, cross the widened EM Bypass and zip past Paroma island to Victoria Memorial in a few minutes to reach down town Kolkata.

At the other end, the first phase of a major transport intervention across north Kolkata is under implementation. The Vivekananda Road Flyover when completed next year shall take visitors coming from Howrah to Girish Park in a few minutes. The next phase to connect Girish Park to Ultadanga is being planned. The biggest urban transport project is the East West Metro, which shall connect Howrah to Salt Lake. It will also be the first subway line in the country, which shall be partially underwater. Kolkata and its suburbs would thus have a truly multi modal transport network by 2012.

It has been projected that in the next 20 years, 590 million people will live in Indian cities, a number which is twice the population of the US today. It has been estimated that between 700 and 900 million sq m of commercial and residential space shall need to be built up, that's a Chicago every year! Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) has already chalked out detailed plans for the Kolkata Metropolitan Area. A new township covering 500 acres is coming up at Baruipur. It shall also comprise an R&D hub consisting of the major Indian players in this space like DRDO and TERI. The master plan for another township has just been approved at Uttarpara. Plans are under way to connect the new urban centres at Maheshtala and Budge Budge. To prepare for the urban millennium, KMDA has started work on revising the masterplan for the Kolkata Metropolitan Area.

The revised vision document for Kolkata 2035 shall be unveiled next year. Planners are also intensively studying the peri urban areas to understand how urban infrastructure could be provided in these

areas too.

The Kolkata Metropolitan Area is undergoing a quiet revolution as far as the basic need of drinking water is concerned. There are 22 large projects covering an investment of several thousand crores in different stages of implementation to provide surface water.

People of greater Kolkata will no longer be dependent on water from deep tube wells with heavy iron and arsenic content. Not only will the quality of water improve but also the national norm of 165 litres per day of water availability per person shall be achieved. Kolkata will see a large increase in water availability with the completion of the Akra project this year. The added areas of Howrah and Sector V in Salt Lake will also get new water pumping stations in the next few months.

Sewerage and drainage has been another major area of focus in greater Kolkata. More than \$100 million are being spent on cleaning, renovating and relining both the man entry sewers and non man entry sewers in Kolkata. Flooding

and water logging would soon be a thing of the past. Another major project being implemented for Jadavpur, Behala and Garden Reach is the Asian Development Bank supported Kolkata Environment Improvement Project (KEIP), which is laying sewer lines of several kms length. It is also setting up or renovating three Sewerage Treatment Plants and rehabilitating Canal Bank dwellers to ensure that the canals which drain water away from Kolkata remain encroachment-free. Projects in several Municipal areas in greater Kolkata have recently been inaugurated for primary collection of solid waste, its transportation to land fill sites and making of compost. These include Bally, Garulia, Kanchrapara and so on. All satellite towns will be covered in the next couple of years. Soon Kolkatans would be even more proud of their warm and wonderful city!

(Bharadwaj is CEO, Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority)



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