

B.I.C. ORGANISES “CITIZENS’ CONCLAVE” ON REPUBLIC-DAY

Bhopal International Centre organised a “Citizens’ Conclave” on Republic Day as part of its third anniversary celebrations. Founder of B.I.C, Shashidhar Kapur noted that Republic Day is about Citizens and Institutions. They need to be strengthened. B.I.C plays a role in both by public advocacy and citizen engagement.

While welcoming the guests Co-Founder of B.I.C., Preeti Tripathi screened a video showcasing how various sections of citizenry have been engaged in public affairs in the by past 3 years.

The conclave was Coordinated by Environmentalist Dr. Pradip Nandi who introduced the theme of “Citizens Vision: Metropolitan Bhopal 2047”. Mr. M.N. Buch had first advocated the idea of formulating a vision for Bhopal in 2010.

Speaking on the occasion, Independent Urban Expert Dr. H.M. Mishra said that there is a sort of unplanning in current approach wherein there is little or no inclusion. Also, overemphasis on infra is a cause of concern, he added. Furthermore, he was of the view that data in public domain is fuzzy and could be improved.

TNCP expert Ms. Varsha Naolekar opined that each of the 5-6 districts in the proposed Metropolitan region have different characters. Some are tribal dominated while others are agricultural. This ought to be taken in account while making rules. According to her, the current planning is limited to Physical features and structural planning is needed

Urban Town Planner Dr. Vinay Shrivastava said that the cities run the country as growth engines. In the era of global urban chaos Bhopal must realize that it can only be a service led urban space and not try to be an industrial city.

Noted environmentalist Dr. Subhash Pandey noted that Bhopal now is more like a “City of Gutters” than a “City of lakes” as all its lakes barring the upper lake are highly polluted. The last remaining less polluted lake too is on the borderline of becoming a gutter. He added that the claim of supplying “A” Grade water is false

which can be easily be verified independently. He asserted that you can clean lakes to a great extent without STP plants, He noted that almost the entire groundwater of the city is now contaminated.

Senior Landscape expert Dr. Savita Raje said that since Bhopal's identity is landscape hence all planning should be designed around it. There is an underground network of water which should be taken into account. Not only Hills and lakes but also slopes need to be protected.

SPA Faculty Saurabh Popli spoke about the role of Political economy as status quoist which makes it difficult to bring meaningful change. He stressed upon the need of regenerative economy to sustain .Popli was disturbed by the fact that Union Transport policy of 2014 is not being followed .Consequently , there were hardly any footpaths in the city.

Ankit Anand and Anushka Singh of Makhan Lal University gave a presentation on the transport issues and solutions in Bhopal. They have published an in- house supplement titled “ Vikalpa” which suggested initiating Public transport to Bishankhedhi Educational area and removing encroachments on the approach road.

In the penultimate comment Shashidhar Kapur summed up saying that there is unanimity in the fact that some things are non- negotiable. Namely skyline and shore line cannot be touched, air and water purity is a must besides making inclusion as well as participation mandatory.

Ms. Preeti Tripathi concluded the programme with an announcement to Publish the “ Citizens' Metropolitan Vision :Bhopal 2047” on June 1st Bhopal DAY in print ,visual as also digital format.
