

Editor's Note

The General Election has been announced so we're in for two months of rallies, counter rallies, promises and pledges. But while the politicians are busy trying to retain or regain power, The Infravision Foundation continues to labour on. The work on road safety and high-speed railways is coming to fruition while the Ministry of Jal Shakti has decided to use the learnings from TIF's analysis of the first national water bodies census. Field work on the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) has begun with TERI. TIF hopes when the new government comes in, it will have a full slate of policy interventions worth examining.

Sustainability Ratings is the Buzz in Mumbai

TIF and CII jointly organized a roundtable on sustainability ratings for infrastructure projects in Mumbai. Attended by 25 senior industry professionals, the roundtable discussed a TIF study done by Envint on a new architecture for sustainability ratings in India. Among the issues discussed was how a new sustainability framework can help manage such risks and help financial institutions make more informed decisions for lending. The key speakers who offered informed insights were Vinayak Pai, Chair, CII National Committee on Roads & Highways; Shikhar Jain, Executive Director, CII; Ashwini Kumar Tewari, Managing Director, SBI; Jaicy Paul, Head, ESG & Climate Finance, SBI; and Ashok Sharma, Head, Project Finance and Structuring Strategic Business Unit, SBI. TIF and Envint will be using the learnings from the roundtable to finesse the ratings.



Speakers at the roundtable



All the participants



Envint co-founder Anand Krishnamurthy



TIF CEO Jagan Shah

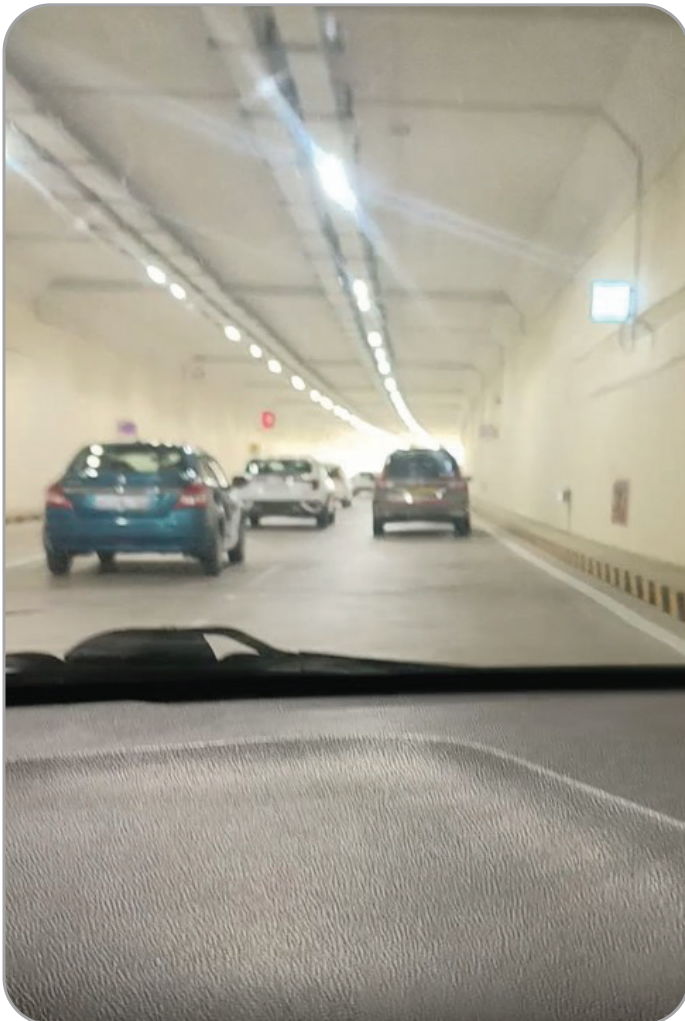
TIF Updates



- TIF is launching InfraKatha at the India Habitat Centre in May, a series of lectures every month, on infrastructure and related topics. Await your invitation. There are some exciting speakers lined up.
- The InfraShakti Awards on NDTV have been postponed with the Code of Conduct being enforced by the Election Commission. Watch this space for the new date.
- TIF has started work on the Municipal Champions Lab in collaboration with World Bank. Land Value Capture for public transport and wastewater reuse will be the key issues in capacity building workshops held under the aegis of this venture. The contract has been signed and planning has begun. Workshops are scheduled for May.

Mumbai Journeys: Through the Under-Sea Tunnel and On Atal Setu

The Sustainability Ratings roundtable gave Team TIF an opportunity to witness the changes in the Maximum City's infrastructure. TIF COO and IIT Powai alumnus Nitin Zamre recorded his journey through the undersea tunnel under Malabar Hill connecting Worli to Marine Drive, and then was driven on the Atal Setu, India's longest trans-harbour bridge, which is 21.8 km long with a 16.5 km sea-link. For someone who has been following Mumbai's Infra over the last 35 years, the experience was amazingly different.



TIF Founder Vinayak Chatterjee wrote a powerful piece in Business Standard arguing for cities to have an Urban Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA). As far back as 2006, he noted, the Central government, through the Ministry of Urban Development, released the National Urban Transport Policy, which recommended the creation of UMTA for all cities with a population above 1 million. According to the 2011 Census, there were 53 such cities. But the 16th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs (2021- 2022), commenting on the subject of metro rail projects, said it was “dismayed to note that despite a lapse of more than four years... States are yet to constitute UMTA.” Indian cities, too, need to put commuters at the centre of their transportation decision-making, adds Chatterjee.

Indian cities cry out for UMTA

As far back as 2006, the Central government, through the Ministry of Urban Development, released the National Urban Transport Policy, which recommended the creation of a Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA) for all cities with a population above 1 million. According to the 2011 Census, there were 53 such cities.

In August 2017, the Union Cabinet cleared the new Metro Rail Policy, which laid down a framework for cities seeking to introduce and expand the role of their metro rail systems. Whilst many cities have committed to new metro rail projects, there has been little attempt to understand how any metro rail system fits within the overall public transport requirements of a city and its commuters. This policy made it clear that if a city wants central assistance for its metro rail project, its state government will have to commit to operationalising UMTA — a body that would then be responsible for all forms of urban transport. This would then enable an integrated approach to mobility in the city. Further, cities where metro projects are already under implementation have to consider setting up the UMTA within a year.

The 16th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs (2021- 2022), commenting on the subject of metro rail projects, highlighted that it was “dismayed to note that despite a lapse of more than four years... States are yet to constitute UMTA.”

To come to grips with the prevalent situation, The Infravision Foundation commissioned two focused sets of research — one by Geetam Tiwari of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and another by Sandip Chakrabarti of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad — both renowned transportation experts.

Dr Tiwari's report titled “A Framework for Selecting an Appropriate Urban Transport System in Indian Cities” concludes with five clear recommendations:

1. Different public transport systems are suitable for different travel patterns as determined by the trip length.

Differentiated travel demand should guide the choice of public transport system to ensure that the majority of the citizens can access a high-quality public transport system. An integrated system can ensure high ridership of public transport, with all social benefits linked to realising a high ridership of the public transport system.

2. High-capacity systems like metro rail are very attractive for long trips. In large cities with populations exceeding 8 million, it's feasible to have 300-400 km of metro lines. However, it must have a robust, reliable network of bus systems operating on all arterial and partially on sub-arterial roads, totalling about 800-1,000 km. Last-mile connectivity can be facilitated through walking and intermediate public transport options such as autos. Integrating the three systems at a policy, planning, design and regulatory framework level will ensure a high-quality public transport system. Feeder bus routes can effectively serve as a means of connecting passengers to metro stations, eliminating the need for special feeder buses.

3. Travel demand in cities with 4-8 million population can be well-served by a bus system running on all arterial and sub-arterial routes. For about 20 per cent trips longer than 10 kms, light rail transport (LRT) or bus rapid transit systems (BRTS) can be introduced to complement the bus network. Last-mile connectivity can be achieved by walking and intermediate public transport. Cities with more than 1 million population should start planning high-capacity systems like BRTS/metro lines as an integrated system.

4. In cities with lower populations (less than 1 million), it is advisable to invest in a high-quality bus system to meet travel demand effectively. Planning for high-capacity systems like metro should be considered only if the city is projected to grow beyond 1 million and is expected to reach a population of over 24 million within the next 10 years.

5. Travel demand in cities with less than 5,00,000 population can be met by improved intermediate

public transport services and a small bus route running on arterial and sub-arterial roads.

Dr Chakrabarti's report titled “Strategies to Improve the Financial Performance of Metro Rail System in India” harps extensively on the UMTA as a clear line of attack. In summary, he advocates a four-pronged move, which is:

- The UMTA should take over ownership, operations and maintenance of all non-privatised transportation infrastructure in the city, including roads and all modes of public transit. Consequently, all city or metropolitan area-specific transportation-related functions, such as policy formulation, strategic planning, project appraisals and approvals, project implementation, operations and maintenance, funding, and research should be the responsibility of the UMTA.

- The UMTA can appoint contractors for any of the functions and enter into equity partnerships with private sector entities when required or feasible. It will also be responsible for managing, regulating and licensing the private transportation service network layer (app-based ride-hailing), micro-mobility layer (shared bicycles and electric scooters) and the city logistics layer (e-commerce deliveries, goods movement, warehousing, etc).

- Traffic control, integrated mobility payment systems (example, transit smart cards), multimodal system data collection and real-time travel information provision should also be the UMTA's responsibility.

- The UMTA would be required to initiate major institutional changes and systematic transfers of ownership of transportation assets and functions across cities.

Many international cities cited as models for public transport have such an overarching body to plan, execute and run all aspects of urban mobility. These include the New York City Transit Authority, Transport for London, and Singapore's SBS Transit and SMRT.

Indian cities, too, need to put commuters at the centre of their transportation decision-making. A unified metropolitan transport authority is an inescapable and urgent precondition.

The writer is an infrastructure expert. He is also the founder and managing trustee of The Infravision Foundation



INFRATALK
VINAYAK CHATTERJEE

Cruising with CRUT and LAccMI

Prof G Raghuram, Member, Council of Advisors, TIF, wrote in [moneycontrol.com](https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/odisha-in-transformation-innovations-in-public-transport-raises-hopes-of-a-new-dawn-12498631.html) on Odisha's public transportation initiatives. The urban initiative operates under a Special Purpose Vehicle, called Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), while the rural initiative has been launched under the Location Accessible Multimodal Initiative (LAccMI) scheme. As Raghuram writes: The primary objective of CRUT is to ‘provide safe, reliable, accessible, user-friendly and sustainable public transport to cities and further setting up a mechanism to deliver public transport that keeps up pace with demand’. The objective of the LAccMI scheme is to ‘provide multi-modal public transport connectivity for the Gram Panchayats (GPs), Block Headquarters (HQ), District HQ along with the connectivity to major economic hubs, educational and medical hubs, and transport nodes across the state.’ For more, click on the link (<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/opinion/odisha-in-transformation-innovations-in-public-transport-raises-hopes-of-a-new-dawn-12498631.html>).



Capital Region Urban Transport
Bhubaneswar • Cuttack • Puri



Improving Functioning of Discoms

TIF COO Nitin Zamre was quoted extensively in Renewable Watch magazine on ways discoms can improve their financial performance as well as the potential for solar rooftop energy. For more please click on this link (<https://renewablewatch.in/2024/03/28/discom-performance-strategies-for-improving-finances-and-renewables-uptake/>).

Infra@TheMovies

Meel Patthar

Director: Ivan Ayr

Cast: Suvinder Vicky

A truck driver running away from his personal problems, being asked to undertake one last trip before he hangs his boots. This 2020 Netflix movie by Ivan Ayr put Punjabi theatre actor Suvinder Vicky on the map, and how. The difficulties of long distance driving, the terrors of the road, the drinking, the chronic back pain, the tight-fisted owners. Everything is falling apart in Meel Patthar which takes the romance of the road, as seen in Imtiaz Ali's movies, and stamps it out quietly but forcefully. Vicky's truck driver, Ghalib, has just lost his wife, and it seems will soon lose his job just as he has passed a company milestone, of driving 5 lakh kilometres, which comes with the threat of a younger driver getting ready to replace him. The movie is a metaphor for life and its essential and eventual loneliness. Punctuated by long silences, the movie is a study on the numbness of grief.

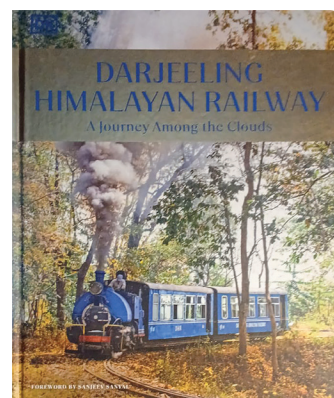
Why watch it: For its poetic camerawork and near silent hero, for whom the road is the journey and the destination.



TIF@Books

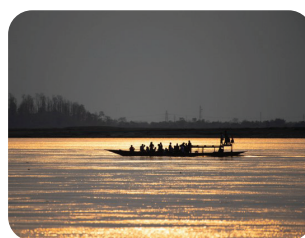
TIF got an opportunity to celebrate the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in a book published by Dorling Kindersley. With a foreword by Sanjeev Sanyal, Darjeeling Himalayan Railway: A Journey Among the Clouds has essays by Bibek Debroy, Gillian Wright and Aishwarya Tipnis.

TIF Head of Advocacy Kaveree Bamzai also has an essay on the railway as it has been seen on the big screen, from Rajesh Khanna serenading Sharmila Tagore in Aradhana (1969) to Saif Ali Khan dreaming about Vidya Balan in the gorgeous Parineeta (2005).



Test Your Infra Power

1. What was the name of the ship that crashed into Baltimore bridge in the US?
2. Which is the longest highway in India?
3. Which is India's only "male" river?
4. How old is the Ahmedabad-Vadodara Expressway?
5. What was the name of the train in the 1980 multi-starrer The Burning Train and where was it going?



1. Dali
2. NH44, Srinagar to Kanyakumari
3. Brahmaputra
4. 20 years. It was inaugurated by the late prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.
5. Super Express, from Delhi to Mumbai



Editor: Kaveree Bamzai

Find me @9810707314,

Email: Kaveree.bamzai@theinfravisionfoundation.org;

Follow us on social media:

on **twitter**@TheInfravision, on **Instagram**@InfraVision and on **LinkedIn**@TheInfravisionFoundation



To receive a free copy of this newsletter, scan this QR code.