

Editor's Note

July was busy. The first edition of the InfraShakti Awards, which we had planned for six months with NDTV, finally took place, in the presence of Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari and Hardeep Singh Puri. We had the third edition of InfraKatha, a monthly series of conversations; the safe highways report was finalised in collaboration with IIT Delhi; and the high speed railways study was completed. More work is underway. Happy Independence Day, everyone!

The Need for High Speed Rail Corridors

India is building its first High Speed Rail (HSR) between Ahmedabad and Mumbai, with technical and financial assistance from Japan. It is expected to be operational before 2029. Every kilometre of HSR provides about five times the capacity of conventional rail. The Infravision Foundation (TIF) study by public policy expert Ramakrishnan T. S. elaborates the economic, environmental, technological and societal case for developing HSR corridors and the way to achieve the same. It also underlines the urgency of developing HSR given India's GDP per capita is optimal for the introduction of HSR: it has a congested railway network; there are difficulties in implementing Mission Raftaar on current tracks; and there is a growing demand for faster and more convenient travel.



Event Alert

Noted author and member, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, Sanjeev Sanyal, will be in conversation with The Infravision Foundation (TIF) founder Vinayak Chatterjee, on Saraswati, The Lost River: Lessons for Today, in the fourth edition of InfraKatha on August 17, at 7 pm. InfraKatha is a monthly series of conversations in partnership with the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. See you there!

InfraShakti Awards: Making a Difference

A water conservationist, a breakout innovator and two cutting edge start-ups were among the seven winners of the first edition of the InfraShakti awards, organised by The Infravision Foundation (TIF) and NDTV. With awards given away by Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari and Hardeep Singh Puri, the event focused on extraordinary efforts by individuals and institutions who have made a significant difference to the infrastructure space, improving connectivity, livability or sustainability. An eminent Jury comprising economist Bibek Debroy, senior banker Renu Sud Karnad, image consultant Dilip Cherian, former IIM Bangalore director G Raghuram and actor as well as environmental activist Gul Panag evaluated the nominees in each category, fulfilling the five criteria of collaboration, replicability, impact, scalability and sustainability (the CRISS matrix) and identified the winners. An additional winner, for inclusive infrastructure, was chosen by popular vote.

The winners



WATER SAVIOUR Arun Krishnamurthy

For cleaning and restoring more than 460 lakes and water bodies in 18 states across India, by energizing local volunteers.



URBAN INFRA HERO Sandeep Patel, founder, NEPRA

For operating on a PPP model across India and building an organized dry waste supply chain that connects waste generators and collectors to recyclers, with five Material Recovery Facilities and an operating capacity of 560 Metric Tonnes Per Day.



RURAL INFRA PIONEER Shashank Kumar, DeHaat

For creating a digital marketplace for two million farmers and 12,000 plus rural entrepreneurs, for a one-stop solution to all their agricultural needs.



TRANSPORT TRAILBLAZER Afcons Infrastructure

For constructing the Chenab bridge, the world's tallest railway bridge, in one of the most isolated, complicated, and terrorist-prone areas of the country, with the 345 km section between the Jammu and Baramulla regions providing a critical connect to the Kashmir Valley.



RENEWABLE ENERGY STAR Pankaj Kumar and Siddhant Agarwal, Quant Solar

For creating floating solar plants, installed on water bodies such as dams and reservoirs, where they can restrict evaporation loss up to 70 per cent, while also generating electricity.



INFRAVISIONARY Sudhanshu Mani, former general manager, ICF

For battling naysayers and beating all odds to create Vande Bharat Express, a high speed train made entirely in India within 18 months, a symbol of domestic engineering prowess.



INCLUSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE ICON Swarnalatha J, Swarga Foundation

For increasing accessibility for more than 10 crore people throughout the country.

Talking About Infrastructure

The first edition of the InfraShakti Awards saw a series of informed debates and keynote addresses which shed light on the critical area of growth. There were two key panels, on future-proofing India with resilient infrastructure, and on ensuring sustainable infrastructure. Three-time Grammy winner and composer **Ricky Kej**; Adani Green Energy CEO **Amit Singh**; former IIM Bangalore director **G Raghuram** and Centre for Science and Environment Executive Director **Anumita Roychowdhury** and TIF Founder **Vinayak Chatterjee** spoke on future-proofing, while Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd CEO **Ashwani Gupta**; Head, Corporate Strategy & Special Initiatives, L&T, **Anup Sahay**; Provident Housing CEO **Mallanna Sasalu**; and TIF Co-founder **Rumjhum Chatterjee** talked about scaling up sustainable infrastructure. Rumjhum Chatterjee said the country has made significant progress in core infrastructure sectors in the last few years.



Panel discussion in progress



Panel discussion in progress

"There is a lot of effort, however, that we now need to put into looking at how we can galvanise social sectors as well," she said. **Vinayak Chatterjee**, referring to India's Sustainability Index, had two suggestions for policy makers. "India is burdened with large historical installations of infrastructure from the colonial times – be it railway bridges or dams or tunnels. We should have strong inspection teams so that railway bridges and dams don't collapse, and cracks don't appear in hill towns such as Joshimath," he said. He added: "India doesn't have a sustainable index. We at TIF have developed a 102-point sustainability index. Policy makers should now use this index."

Among many other announcements, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** said there would be GPS-based tolls on 5,000 km of roads within the next three months. He also said pollution is a significant issue and the government would be promoting the use of non-polluting energy sources to power public and private transport, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas **Hardeep Singh Puri** explained that biofuel and ethanol would be the focus for the government. "If you look at green energy, the transition, biofuels, we have done a 15 per cent biofuel blending. And we are solving the problem in agriculture."

While delivering the keynote address at the first edition of the InfraShakti Awards, **Pranav Adani**, Managing Director (Agro, Oil and Gas) and Director, Adani Enterprises, said: "Human history, whether ancient or modern, shows us that infrastructure is the fundamental key to all the progress." **Amit Singh** added that there is a need to discover innovators across the country to tap into their brand new ideas.

This was the first year of the InfraShakti Awards and the event promises to be bigger and better in the next few years. TIF and NDTV look forward to it.



Pranav Adani, Managing Director (Agro, Oil and Gas) of Adani Group



Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas



Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways

InfraKatha#3

In an elegant and insightful session of InfraKatha with noted author Gurcharan Das, anchored by TIF Advisor Dilip Cherian, the difficulty of being good, especially related to infrastructure, was discussed at great length. A packed house listened as Das talked of how the government had resolved the issue of pending payments by implementing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code in 2016. He also addressed the issue of growth without jobs, India's biggest crisis, and noted that one way out was to strengthen the manufacturing sector, of which infrastructure is a big part. "We have about 20 years in demographic terms before our population also begins to age like China if we want to raise our per capita income from \$3,000 to more than \$10,000," he said.



TIF@Union Budget

TIF founder **Vinayak Chatterjee** was busy on Union Budget day as several news channels and news outlets sought his opinion on the allocation for infrastructure. Chatterjee wrote in Financial Express, spoke to PTI, ET NOW, Moneycontrol.com. NDTV Profit India, CNBCTV18News, and India Today TV. Some links:

<https://x.com/ETNOWlive/status/1810224850226536716?t=zZnNBVjUAwS6c2TD3NG4fw&s=08>

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/budget-signals-shift-in-infra-strategy-as-govt-pushes-states-private-sector-to-pitch-in-12777120.html>

<https://x.com/IndiaToday/status/1813274659560829301?t=1HUmjcER9nB32gBNmHMuOg&s=08>

<https://x.com/NDTVProfitIndia/status/1811281284770967751?t=sOmIffAnvGBQdSfSGvB88Q&s=08>

TIF and Women Empowerment

"Improving mobility for women is not just about providing transportation; it's about enabling access to education, employment, and other opportunities." Speaking on enabling infrastructure for women's economic empowerment, TIF co-founder **Rumjhum Chatterjee** highlighted the critical role of safety and mobility at an initiative in Lucknow spearheaded by the Planning Department, UP Government, and the UDAITI Foundation, in association with The Economic Times.

TIFxAcademics

TIF CEO **Jagan Shah's** paper The Adaptation Wedge: Capacity-Building Scenarios for India's Cities was published in the Midwest Social Science Journal, the journal of the Indian Academy of the Social Sciences, USA. The paper draws on the analysis of gaps and barriers, and projects a disruptive scenario whereby cities proactively leverage networks and partnerships to augment their adaptive capacities, especially in planning and finance, partly by using city labs that form vital bridges between global expertise and local demand. For more, please click on the link: :

<https://scholar.valpo.edu/mssj/vol26/iss2/10/>

Test Your Infra Power

1. Who designed the master plan for Amaravati, the new capital of Andhra Pradesh?
2. Which city in India is to have the world's second largest ropeway?
3. Which city in India is known as the City of Bridges?
4. Which river in India has the largest drainage basin?
5. Where was the train travelling to and from where in Satyajit Ray's Nayak (1966)?



1. Foster + Partners
2. Shimla. Work is expected to start in March 2025
3. Surat, which has 120 bridges, old and new
4. Mahanadi, which drains parts of four different states: Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand
5. Kolkata to Delhi, where the actor Uttam Kumar played a star going to receive a National Award.



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