

Editor's Note

Hard work never killed anyone. Especially if the work one does makes a difference. The Infravision Foundation (TIF) is a great upholder of that belief, and the month of August was testament to that. There was a Champions Lab in collaboration with the World Bank in Mumbai; an informative edition of InfraKatha with the redoubtable economist and historian Sanjeev Sanyal; and a roundtable on warehousing infrastructure, sparked by TIF's study on mainstreaming warehousing. October, here comes TIF.

Understanding Land Value Capture in Urban India

The Infravision Foundation hosted the second Municipal Finance Champions Lab at the Indian Institute of Management, Powai, Mumbai, focusing on Land Value Capture for Public Transport Projects. Supported by the World Bank, this capacity-building event brought together administrators, policymakers, industry experts, and researchers to explore innovative financing mechanisms for urban transport infrastructure. The focus of this full-day workshop was on Land Value Capture (LVC) for public transport projects, a critical topic for India's rapidly urbanizing landscape. The event emphasized peer-to-peer learning and practical experiences from across India. Key outcomes included showcasing exemplary projects, exploring methods to replicate success, improving project preparation, and discussing how LVC projects can attract climate/green finance. TIF continues to play a crucial role in facilitating such critical dialogues, driving forward the agenda of resilient and financially sustainable urban growth across India.



Participants at the Champions Lab; TIF CEO Jagan Shah; and Prof Sandip Chakrabarti of IIMA addressing the participants



Roundtable on Warehousing: Opportunities and Challenges

The Infravision Foundation (TIF) and the National e-Repository Limited (NeRL) jointly organized a roundtable at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi to discuss the opportunities and challenges related to warehousing of agri-commodities and the use of e-NWRs (electronic negotiable warehouse receipts) to secure the farmers' future. The participants represented key senior stakeholders from the public sector, including NeRL, NCDEX (National Commodities & Derivatives Exchange), NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, which established the Warehouse Development & Regulatory Authority (WDRA) to regulate the financial, legal and operational issues related to warehouses. Stakeholders from the private sector included banks, warehouse owners and farmer producer organizations.

All speakers affirmed the common goal: to relieve stress on India's farmers, who are forced to cope with market fluctuations and a perennial shortage of cash, often resulting in distress sales.



Panelists at the roundtable



TIF Founder Vinayak Chatterjee

"We have to create a system that is trustworthy when it comes to receipts. It can then revolutionise the way our farmers market their produce."



Additional Secretary, Agriculture, Faiz Qidwai

"We need a complete agri framework and we need to make it competitive."



Former WDRA chairman BB Pattanaik

"The entire process of registration and inspection is online but there are still complaints about the long wait"



Former Agriculture Secretary Siraj Hussain

"The Government is not short of storage capacity. The problem is how to maintain a decent price for farmers."



Prof G Raghuram, Former Director, IIMB

"Registration process of warehouses. needs to be simplified on multiple dimensions of registration costs, insurance, and security deposits."



Arun Raste, MD, NCDEX

"WDRA needs to be moved from the food ministry to agriculture or finance. And all warehouses should be declared mandis."

Saraswati's Lesson for Today

Saraswati is the river that gave birth to Indian Civilization. What is she telling us today? That was the topic of the fourth edition of InfraKatha with noted economist and historian Sanjeev Sanyal. After tackling questions about its existence, he proceeded to explain why it disappeared. He pointed to how by the time the Mature Harappans appeared, the Saraswati river was already losing its glacial connection but was still a significant rain-fed river. According to him, worldwide droughts in 2000 BC led to the Saraswati drying up and the collapse of the Mature Harappan cities. So how did the Harappans deal with climate change--they invested in water storage. "We see this in Dholavira, in particular, where large storage reservoirs were built. Eventually even these too failed," he said. "They abandoned the great cities and dispersed into smaller settlements closer to the Himalayan foothills, or migrated to the Gangetic plains," he added.

So what are the learnings for today?

- We will have to change our cropping patterns. The excessive emphasis on growing wheat and rice needs to be revisited (especially in Northwest India) because they lead to wasteful use of water. We need to bring back millets into our diet.
- Urbanization is inevitable with development, but we should look at a greater dispersal of settlements across the country (and not ever larger mega-sprawls). This means investment in medium and smaller towns, especially in water-rich eastern India.
- Preservation of water-bodies and waste management has to be a priority for the next round of infrastructure investment. Indian urban planning needs to break away from the obsession with Cartesian geometry and pay greater attention to natural contours and drainage, he said.



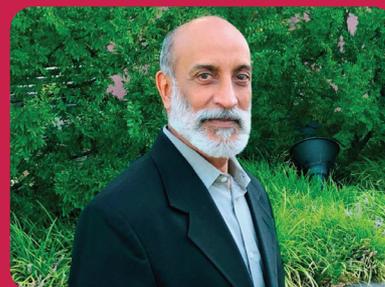
Sanjeev Sanyal addresses the gathering



Sanyal in conversation with TIF Founder Vinayak Chatterjee

InfraKatha #5 Sneak Peek

He's one of India's premier heritage restorers and hoteliers. And he spoke at length at the fifth edition of InfraKatha at Gulmohar, India Habitat Centre on September. **Aman Nath**, Co-founder and Chairman, Neemrana Hotels, was in conversation with senior media executive **DN Mukerjee**. From being a child of refugees to his passion for revitalising dead buildings, the conversation covered a swathe of issues. More on it next time.



1. **TIF Founder and Managing Trustee Vinayak Chatterjee** wrote at length in Business Standard on the case for allowing tax consolidation for Special Purpose Vehicles under Infra Group Holding Companies, a matter of substantial national interest.



2. **TIF Distinguished Fellow Akhilesh Tilotia** spoke at the Energy Finance 2024 conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Unlocking Green Energy Investments in South Asia: Addressing Credit and Forex Risks. The conference was organised by the Institute of Energy Economics and Financial Analysis. Its intention? To accelerate the energy transition in Asia.



3. **TIF CEO Jagan Shah** was in discussion with Senior Visiting Fellow, CSEP Professor Om Prakash Mathur on his latest book Changing Paradigms of Urbanisation: India and Beyond at the India Habitat Centre. M. Ramachandran, former secretary, Ministry of Urban Development, Govt. of India, and Bhaswati Mukherjee, president, India Habitat Centre, and former Ambassador, also spoke.



Test Your Infra Power

1. What is the name of India's first regional rapid train set to make its debut in Delhi, with a trial run on the 6.5-km section from Sahibabad to Anand Vihar in November.
2. Who is the Navi Mumbai International Airport named after?
3. When did the cell phone make its debut in Hindi cinema?
4. Which river in India is home to a small, endangered population of Indus river dolphins?
5. How many bridges in Mumbai has BMC asked devotees not to gather on while taking out Ganesh Chaturthi processions?



1. Namoh Bharat
2. The late Dinkar Balu Patil, a leader of the Peasants and Workers Party of India. He worked with the farmers of Navi Mumbai to get the right price for their land which was to be purchased to build the new planned city.
3. 1996, a year after it was introduced in India. The film, Tere Mere Sapne, starred Chandrachur Singh and Arshad Warsi.
4. Beas
5. 12 bridges, of which many are a century old.



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