

Hyderabad must fix water and waste issues

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Isher Judge Ahluwalia

Hyderabad: Noted economist Isher Judge Ahluwalia said that Hyderabad was doing “extremely well” in urban planning and public transportation, but had to improve its solid waste management and drinking water supply.

During an informal chat with the media here on Thursday, Ahluwalia, who earlier headed a panel on urban infrastructure, said that urban planners from the state led in unlocking land value in urban areas. Projects like the Outer Ring Road, internal approach roads and the upcoming Metro Rail were best examples for urban transportation, she said.

Ahluwalia called on chief secretary Dr P.K. Mohanty, who is a co-author for her book *Challenges of Urbanisation in India*. She said that several cities in the country have been doing well and the book will chronicle the best practices in every sphere of urban development.

Ahluwalia said that the country would need Rs 60 lakh crore in the next 20 years to maintain existing urban infrastructure and to build new ones. The panel, which looked into ways of mobilising funds, recommended greater financial autonomy for all local bodies.

On the increasing burden of user charges, she said a study should be conducted to assess whether the increase was aimed at covering inefficiency or to really improve infrastructure to meet the growing needs of urban areas.