

# India to get seven new cities by 2018

## First of 24 planned, they will be on Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor

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India's official cartographers will add seven more cities by 2018 to the map of India, in what could be the country's biggest town-planning effort in years.

The seven, which are the first of 24 new cities planned, will come up on the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, a joint collaboration between India and Japan aimed at pushing growth and developing the manufacturing sector here.

The corridor will stretch for 1,480km through six states located between Delhi and Mumbai.

The creation of the new cities is seen as crucial for accommodating people who are expected to move from rural areas to the cities in search of employment, with 350 million more Indians set to do so by 2030.

"Around 350 million Indians will get into the urbanisation process, so if you don't create new cities, you will create slums," said Mr Amitabh Kant, chief executive of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation.

"The dream of every villager is to come to the city."

Dholera in the state of Gujarat is one of the seven new cities being added. With an area of 540 sq km, it will be smaller than Singapore. It is expected to house about two million people and will be developed as a hub for agro-processing and auto manufacturing.

Even though the cities are being developed as manufacturing hubs, the corporation wants to integrate green and eco-friendly features into the cities.

Neighbourhoods in Dholera, for instance, will be planned around a high access transport network connected to cycle paths and pedestrian walkways.



## AVOIDING SLUMS

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**Mr Amitabh Kant, chief executive of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation**

The idea is to discourage people from using private transport, said Mr Kant.

"Cities are the biggest polluters. So when you plan urbanisation, cities should be energy-sensitive. Today's cities need to be compact and evolve around public transport," said Mr Kant.

So houses will have solar panning on their roofs and rainwater harvesting. The other six cities coming up - Dadri in Uttar Pradesh, Manesar-Bawal in Haryana, Khushkhera-Neemrana in Rajasthan, Pithampur-Dhar Mhow in Madhya Pradesh,

Sinnar and Dighi in Maharashtra - will boast gas-based power plants and industrial waste recycling facilities.

While India has always looked towards the West for town planning tips in the past, it is drawing lessons from the East for this industrial corridor.

Singapore, for instance, has an excellent water management system, said Mr Kant.

Six consultants have been brought in to draw up plans for new cities.

One of them is Jurong International, which is working on the masterplan for the Manesar-Bawal industrial region in Haryana. A host of Japanese companies, including Toshiba, Mitsubishi, Hitachi and Itochu, are involved in developing the cities.

Also to be set up are investment areas, a railway line dedicated to high-speed freight trains, two airports, three ports and six-lane expressways connecting the cities.

Funding for the corridor - at US\$90 billion (S\$118 billion), it is one of the largest infrastructure projects to be undertaken in India - will come from the government, Japanese loans, investment from Japanese companies and the Indian private sector.

The government is hoping to develop the cities via private-public partnership, with more than 60 per cent of the funds coming from the private side.

According to official calculations, once the industrial corridor region is up and running, the government hopes it will sustain 13 to 14 per cent of India's industrial growth, for the country to continue growing at 8 to 9 per cent annually.

With most cities in India sprouting up in a haphazard manner with scant attention to town planning, the development of the seven cities is likely to be watched closely by environmentalists and town planners.

"India has never been prepared (for urbanisation). We have never been able to think or prepare ourselves for this scale of things. In places like Delhi and Mumbai there have been attempts. But if you look at the smaller cities, the growth is pretty spontaneous," said Mr Ravi Agarwal of Toxic Links, a non-governmental organisation.

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