

THE SUSTAINABILITY TIMES

Reporting the world's cities, for the people who plan them

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2026

★ PUBLISHED EVERY MONDAY ★

COMPILED FROM LINKED GLOBAL SOURCES

HEADLINES

CLIMATE CRISIS - LEAD STORY

Forecasts were right, people died anyway: Europe's heat toll indicts city preparedness

Experts at Hamburg's Extreme Weather Congress say climate extremes are now outpacing adaptation even in the world's wealthiest countries - weeks before COP31 puts "resilient cities" at the top of the Antalya agenda

TST NEWS DESK - HAMBURG

HAMBURG: Experts gathered at the 2026 Extreme Weather Congress delivered a stark assessment this week: the mass heat-wave deaths recorded across Europe this summer show that climate extremes are now outpacing adaptation efforts, even in wealthy, well-prepared countries.

Speakers from local and regional governments noted that Germany's advanced climate research and forecasting delivered accurate, timely warnings. The deaths came anyway - evidence, they argued, of a persistent and widening gap between scientific

knowledge and on-the-ground urban preparedness: shaded streets, cooled buildings, heat action plans that actually reach the vulnerable.

The findings put immediate pressure on municipal governments across the continent to accelerate heat action plans, cooling infrastructure and building adaptation, and they sharpen a question that has dogged the adaptation agenda for years: the money and attention flow to prediction, while delivery on the street lags behind.

The timing gives the Hamburg verdict unusual force. Pre-COP talks open in Fiji

on October 5, with adaptation finance among the unresolved items, and the Turkish presidency of COP31 in Antalya this November has made "resilient cities" a headline priority. Whether adaptation funding and delivery mechanisms for cities are fit for purpose is now squarely on the summit's table.

The pattern repeats across this edition, from Manila's delayed quake retrofit (Page 2) to America's quietly effective small flood fixes (Page 4): knowing what is coming is the easier half of resilience. *Related editorial, Page 7.*

Source: *Inside Climate News*, Sept 30 - *The Climate Watch*

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK - NEW DELHI

Delhi's 2047 master plan, decoded for its citizens: Katha opens plain-language portal

NEW DELHI: "What will Delhi look like in 2047?" A new citizen portal, Delhi 2047 Decoded, sets out to answer exactly that - translating the Master Plan for Delhi 2047, notified on August 20, into plain language that residents can actually use.

Developed by Katha, this newspaper's publisher, with technical support from Cities Forum, the portal offers an interactive land-use map built on OpenStreetMap so Delhiites can find their own neighbourhood, documentation mapped to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the plan's headline numbers in context: a projected population of 32 million by 2047 and a need for some 4 million homes. Sections cover transport expansion, air and water quality, and the policy instruments meant to deliver the plan's promise to "foster a sustainable, liveable and vibrant Delhi." The portal is independent and not government-endorsed; the DDA has separately released a GIS-based interactive land-use map on its own site.

The DDA approved the plan on August 12 and unveiled it on August 20; the portal bets that a plan residents can actually read is a plan more likely to be delivered. *Second leader, Page 7.*

delhi2047.katha.media - DDA - ETV Bharat



A Delhi Metro Pink Line train at Anand Vihar ISBT. The 2047 plan projects a city of 32 million residents built around transit. PHOTO: KOOL NERD 123, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY 4.0

FREIGHT WATCH - BANGKOK

GIZ network unveils Asia freight decarbonisation monitor spanning four countries

BANGKOK: A new regional dashboard, the Asia Freight Decarbonisation Monitor, has gone live under GIZ's Bangkok-based TUEWAS network - the first systematic tool to compare freight decarbonisation progress across China, India, Indonesia and Vietnam.

An initiative of the TF-Green Freight Asia task force, delivered under GIZ's Changing Transport programme and commissioned by Germany's BMUKN through the International Climate Initiative, the monitor was developed by Cities Forum with IT support from katha.media. It tracks freight CO₂, fleet electrification, charging and refuelling infrastructure, market readiness and 133 policies across five domains, built on the Asian Transport Observatory national database - and every dataset goes onto the open Transport Data Commons under a CC BY licence. An "Intelligent Report" feature lets users question the data in plain language. *More on its AI layer, Page 6.*

Alongside the dashboard, the project delivers a guidance document on charging infrastructure for zero-emission freight, with India as the primary case; the monitor's figures will be refreshed through year-end.



asia-freight.katha.media - GIZ Changing Transport



Evening traffic in Bangkok, home of the GIZ regional network behind the new monitor. Freight is one of Asia's fastest-growing emission sources. PHOTO: TOMASZ SWATOWSKI, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY-SA 4.0

INSIDE TODAY

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NEWS IN BRIEF

BENGALURU: The Pink Line's first 7.5-km elevated section, Kalena Agrahara to Tavarekere, nears a mid-October opening pending final Railway Board and metro-safety clearances. [Nativeplanet](#)

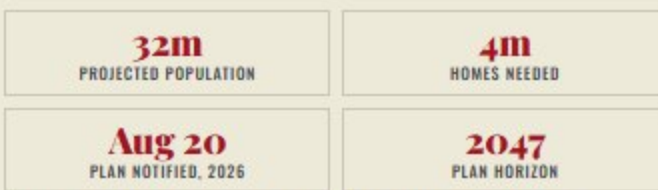
LOS ANGELES: LA Metro approved a \$337.7-million contract with ENC for 40-foot battery-electric buses - America's largest such order - targeting a zero-emission fleet by 2030 and service before the 2028 Games. [electrive](#)

CHENNAI: The Poonamallee-Vadapalani stretch of Chennai Metro Phase II has been readied for inauguration by the Prime Minister around October 11. [Metro Rail News](#)

PUNE: Metro Line 3, Hinjewadi to Shivajinagar, was prepared for opening with a likely PM inauguration, adding a key IT-corridor link. [Metro Rail News](#)

JAKARTA: President Prabowo opened a new LRT link and pledged affordable housing towers at the capital's transit hubs. [ISEAS](#)

DELHI 2047 - FACT SHEET



Source: Master Plan for Delhi 2047, via [delhi2047.katha.media](#)

ALSO IN TODAY'S EDITION

HANOI: Vietnam's first Urban Development Law takes effect, opening the door to TOD and city pilots - *Page 2*

NAIROBI: One in three people on Earth now inadequately housed, UN flagship report finds - *Page 5*

HONG KONG: An "AI City Brain" for urban management and emergencies announced in the Policy Address - *Page 6*

BRUSSELS

EU's mid-term review finds Cities Mission delivering as €220-million call opens

TST NEWS DESK

BRUSSELS: A mid-term assessment published by the European Commission on September 14 concluded that the five Horizon Europe EU Missions - spanning cities, climate adaptation, health, oceans and soil - are driving systemic change. The Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission continues to support more than 100 cities toward climate neutrality by 2030.

The verdict comes with money attached: the Mission's 2026-27 funding cycle puts €220 million on the table for the 112 Mission Cities, with the current call closing October 8 - one of the largest dedicated urban-climate funding windows in the world. City halls across the bloc are racing the deadline. *Call details, Page 8.*

EU Funding Pulse - Zabala

LAW & THE CITY - HANOI

Vietnam's first urban development law takes effect; TOD and city pilots get green light

HANOI: Vietnam's Urban Development Law, passed on August 24, took effect on October 1 - the country's first. It establishes integrated city master plans, brings underground and overhead space under management, promotes transit-oriented development linked to local rail, and lets cities pilot new development policies.

For a country whose cities are growing as fast as their exposure to climate risk - the Saigon River spilled onto Ho Chi Minh City's streets again this week (Page 4) - the law gives municipal governments a statutory basis to experiment rather than wait for national templates. The TOD provisions arrive just as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City expand their metro networks, putting station-area development rules on the table for the first time. *TOD explained, Page 10.*

SGGP English Edition

DISASTER RISK - MANILA

World Bank extends Metro Manila's \$300-m 'Big One' quake loan to 2028

MANILA: The World Bank has extended its delayed \$300 million Philippines Seismic Risk Reduction and Resilience Project from December 2026 to May 2028. The programme is meant to protect Metro Manila against a major earthquake - the long-feared "Big One" - and the extension reflects slow implementation of capital-region retrofit works.

The episode illustrates a recurring theme in this week's pages: the gap between committed resilience finance and delivered resilience works. Manila's retrofit backlog mirrors, in seismic form, the heat-adaptation shortfall European cities displayed this summer.

Manila Bulletin, Oct 3

LAND & DROUGHT - ULAANBAATAR

Mayors adopt Ulaanbaatar Declaration on land and drought resilience

ULAANBAATAR: At the UNCCD COP17 Mayors' Forum in Mongolia, local and regional leaders adopted the Ulaanbaatar Declaration on sustainable land management and drought resilience. UN-Habitat used the forum to press integrated approaches linking adequate housing, land and urban climate adaptation - a sign of how firmly land degradation has arrived on the urban agenda.

UN-Habitat Media Centre, Sept 22

NEW TOWNS - LONDON

England to name final new town sites by year's end, minister confirms

LONDON: The housing minister confirmed that final locations for the government's new towns programme will be announced by the end of 2026, following environmental assessments of seven shortlisted sites of 15,000-40,000 homes each. Bespoke planning policies for the chosen towns are to follow before construction begins - Britain's largest state-led settlement-building exercise in two generations.

Building

URBAN DIPLOMACY

Call opens to host 2028 Innovate4Cities conference

NAIROBI: UN-Habitat and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy have opened a call for cities to host the 2028 Innovate4Cities Conference, the joint urban climate research and innovation gathering - continuing the push to connect city governments directly with climate science and innovation partners.

UN-Habitat, Sept 28

CITY VOICES - EUROPE

Mayors welcome EU's first Affordable Housing Plan - with a warning on local powers

European city leaders welcomed the EU's first Affordable Housing Plan but cautioned that elements of the proposal could constrain cities' authority over short-term rentals and local housing pressures. The tension - continental ambition versus municipal control - will shape the plan's passage.

Eurocities

URBAN FINANCE

Finland prices a EUR 1-billion green municipal bond; India's green civic debt set to grow six-fold

HELSINKI: MuniFin, the joint funding agency of Finland's municipal sector, issued a EUR 1-billion green benchmark bond on September 10 - a 3.25% coupon maturing 2031, led by Danske Bank, DZ BANK, J.P. Morgan and SEB, listed on Nasdaq Helsinki.

MUMBAI: Rating agency ICRA projects Indian civic bodies will raise about Rs 100 billion through green municipal bonds by FY2030, against roughly Rs 15.5 billion issued since FY2021 - set against an urban infrastructure investment need it puts above Rs 56 trillion for FY2027-30.

MuniFin - Outlook Business

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Contact the publisher - katha.media

FACT SHEET - BRUSSELS

The EU Cities Mission at a glance**112**
MISSION CITIES**€220m**
2026-27 FUNDING**2030**
NEUTRALITY TARGET**Oct 8**
CALL DEADLINE

Zabala - CINEA

LIGHT RAIL - MINNEAPOLIS

After 15 years of delay, Southwest LRT finally gets its date: June 12, 2027

TST NEWS DESK

MINNEAPOLIS: Minnesota's Metro Transit announced on September 26 that the Green Line Extension - the Southwest LRT serving Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie with 16 new stations - will open on June 12, 2027. The announcement closes a chapter of roughly fifteen years of delays and cost overruns since the project was first approved, one of American transit's longest-running sagas.

Mass Transit

STREETS - NEW YORK

Congestion pricing's street dividend: Queens gains protected bike lanes as traffic falls



A Copenhagen-style separated bike lane in Melbourne - the street treatment New York is now extending in Queens.
PHOTO: BARRYLB, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, PUBLIC DOMAIN

NEW YORK: The city is adding a two-way protected bike lane on Thomson Avenue in Queens - a redesign made possible by reduced car and truck volumes since congestion pricing began in January 2025. Advocates frame the project as a tangible, street-level benefit of Manhattan tolling beyond its transit revenue: when traffic falls, road space is freed for other uses.

Streetsblog NYC, Sept 28

FARE WATCH

San Diego fares rise; NYC Ferry set to follow

SAN DIEGO: Fare increases took effect across San Diego County's MTS and NCTD networks on October 1 - one-way adult fares at \$3, senior/disabled/Medicare fares at \$1.50 on most services, and regional monthly passes at \$85 adult, \$28 concession.

NEW YORK: The one-way NYC Ferry fare would rise from \$4.50 to \$5 as early as October 19 under a package before the Economic Development Corporation board.

Fox 5 San Diego - Time Out NY

AERIAL TRANSIT - BOGOTÁ

Bogotá sets a 2028 date for its first metro and extends cable cars; Brazil unlocks Niterói light rail

BOGOTÁ: A century in the waiting, the city's first metro has an opening date: Mayor Carlos Fernando Galán announced that passengers board Line 1 on March 15, 2028, with the 24-km elevated line more than 80% built - even as the Line 2 tender was declared void after drawing no bids. TransMilenio meanwhile awarded a roughly US\$107 million cable car contract to extend aerial transit into more hillside neighbourhoods.

BRASÍLIA: Brazil's federal government issued a guarantee unlocking Niterói's approximately US\$294 million, five-kilometre light rail project across the bay from Rio de Janeiro.

Colombia One - City Paper Bogotá - BNamericas

GULF RAIL - RIYADH

Qiddiya high-speed rail seeks bidders as Riyadh Metro pushes to Diriyah

RIYADH: Firms have been asked to register interest by October 12 for the Qiddiya high-speed rail project - a 250-km/h line linking King Salman International Airport, the KAFD financial district and Qiddiya City. It follows the award of Riyadh Metro's Red Line extension to Diriyah to the Arriyadh New Mobility consortium.

Saudi Gulf Projects

EAST ASIA

Two Chinese cities open new metro sections in one week

BEIJING: Zhengzhou opened its 21.9-km east-west Metro Line 10 on September 26, linking the city's two main railway stations with twelve stops served by six-car Type A trains. Three days later, Harbin opened a 3.3-km northeastern section of Metro Line 3, extending the network to the city's historic Chinese-Baroque Block.

Railway Gazette

BUS RAPID TRANSIT - AFRICA

Cairo opens 40 km of BRT as Yaoundé launches its first corridor

CAIRO: Egypt began public operations on phase two of Greater Cairo's BRT on September 26 - roughly 40 km and 16 stations along the Ring Road - creating, with phase one, a 75-km air-conditioned network linked to Metro Line 3 and the LRT at Adly Mansour.

YAOUNDÉ: Cameroon's capital formally launched the preparatory phase of TransYaoundé on September 23: a 22-km north-south corridor with 28 stations per direction and 52 buses carrying 43,000 daily passengers at opening, backed by the EU and AFD, building from 2028 for completion by 2030.

Egypt Independent - Cameroon Tribune

FUNDING FIGHT - MANILA

'Keep rail funds intact': Philippine transport dept urges Congress

The Department of Transportation urged lawmakers to protect rail allocations in the national budget, arguing the country can catch up with ASEAN neighbours on subways and commuter rail - but only if funding holds through the political cycle.

Daily Tribune

DATA FOR POLICY - BANGKOK

Thailand's FE Data Portal puts vehicle fuel economy on the policy dashboard

BANGKOK: The freight monitor on Page 1 has a Thai predecessor: GIZ's IMPROVE project, the Office of Transport and Traffic Policy and Planning and the Office of Industrial Economics launched the Thai Fuel Efficiency Data Portal at a Bangkok seminar in July 2025. It integrates Department of Land Transport and OIE data to give policymakers emissions insights by vehicle type and model, with customisable dashboards and agency-specific access for the light-duty fleet - part of the same data-driven turn in Asian transport policy.

Thai-German Cooperation - Changing Transport

INDIA DESK - METRO MOMENTUM

Mumbai's Line 5 cleared, Indore doubles its network, Namoo Bharat goes to Berlin

MUMBAI: The Union Government approved the integrated Mumbai Metro Line 5 and 5A project - 34.2 km and 19 stations at Rs 181.3 billion (about \$2 billion) - extending the network into the Thane-Bhiwandi-Kalyan belt of the metropolitan region.

INDORE: Indore Metro's 11-km, 11-station priority corridor-2, built at about Rs 28.5 billion, opened in early September - growing the operational Yellow Line to roughly 17 km across 16 stations.

BERLIN: NCRTC showcased Namoo Bharat, India's first regional rapid transit system, at InnoTrans 2026 as the 82-km Delhi-Meerut corridor crossed 45 million passenger journeys, with a single-day record above 168,000.

Indian Infrastructure - Swarajya - News on AIR

RESILIENCE - UNITED STATES

Small, cheap, everywhere: distributed flood fixes speed storm recovery in US cities

TST NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Hundreds of inexpensive flood-mitigation projects installed across New York - and mirrored in Philadelphia and Portland, Oregon - are helping neighbourhoods recover more quickly after severe storms, new reporting shows. Rain gardens, upgraded inlets, small detention works: individually modest, collectively consequential.

The approach suggests that distributed micro-interventions can complement, and sometimes outperform, the large-scale grey infrastructure that dominates resilience budgets - a finding with obvious resonance for cities that cannot wait a decade for a seawall. *Editorial comment, Page 7.*

NPR, Sept 30

MEGACITY NIGHTS



Mumbai's financial district across Back Bay. Dense coastal megacities sit on the front line of heat, flood and sea-level risk - and of the adaptation financing debate heading into COP31.

PHOTO: CIDIDITY HAT, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC BY-SA 3.0

Saigon River spills onto city streets as tides and rain combine

HO CHI MINH CITY: Forecasters warned in late September that high tides combined with heavy rain would raise flood risk across the city, and on September 30 the Saigon River spilled onto urban roads. For a megacity that has long adapted to living with seasonal flooding, the episode underscores how climate change keeps raising the stakes - and how coping strategies honed over decades are being strained past design limits.

AP via ABC News

ROAD TO ANTALYA

Pre-COP opens in Fiji with adaptation, finance - and cities - on the table

SUVA: The Pre-COP, delivered by Fiji, Tuvalu and Australia from October 5-8, opens with unresolved questions over climate finance, fossil fuels, adaptation and clean electrification ahead of COP31 in Antalya this November. The Turkish presidency has signalled that resilient cities will be a central pillar of the summit agenda, raising expectations for concrete urban outcomes - and the bar for disappointment.

The Climate Watch - cop31.tr

WASTE - AFRICA

African cities' waste crisis outpacing infrastructure investment, report warns

LAGOS: Waste generation in fast-growing cities including Johannesburg, Lagos, Dakar and Accra is outpacing municipal collection and disposal capacity, a late-September report warns, with infrastructure investment failing to keep up. Uncollected waste is choking neighbourhoods and waterways - a public-health and flood-risk multiplier hiding inside a municipal-services problem.

BusinessMirror, Sept 20

CLIMATE FINANCE - ETHIOPIA

GCF and KOICA sign \$47-m nature-based resilience project for Addis Ababa and Jimma

ADDIS ABABA: The Green Climate Fund and Korea's KOICA signed a \$47-million agreement on September 17 - \$25 million from GCF, \$22 million in KOICA co-financing - to cut flood and heat risk in Addis Ababa and Jimma by restoring forests, wetlands and river corridors. It is KOICA's first GCF project.

Green Climate Fund, Sept 17

SMALL CITIES, BIG PLANS - ONTARIO

Collingwood approves 'sobering' climate adaptation plan running to 2035

COLLINGWOOD: Councillors in this Ontario town gave early approval on September 30 to a climate adaptation plan covering extreme heat, drought, shoreline erosion, flooding, freeze-thaw variability and wildfire smoke. The plan includes a warming and cooling centre and flood-planning measures, and will guide the town's climate work through 2035 - a reminder that adaptation planning is no longer a metropolis-only exercise.

Village Report

SCIENCE DESK

Sponge cities cut disease, not just flood depth - landmark Chinese study

Analysing some 4.2 million dysentery cases across China between 2005 and 2020, researchers writing in *Nature Cities* found that cities implementing sponge-city works - wetlands, permeable pavements, green space - saw flood-related disease risk fall by up to 12.2% three years on, with the biggest gains where existing infrastructure was weakest. *Full research brief, Page 8.*

Nature Cities, Sept 8

INFOGRAPHIC

The road to Antalya

"Resilient cities" - a stated priority of the Turkish presidency

cop31.tr - changing-transport.org

INDIA DESK - CLEANER CITIES

Agartala turns a dumping ground into a riverfront; Indore fields 70 electric buses

AGARTALA: Tripura inaugurated the Rs 960-million Haora Riverfront on September 22 - 1,700 metres from Steel Bridge to Dashamighat that once served as a waste dump, now carrying walking and cycling paths, viewing decks, an elevated walkway, an open gym and a food plaza, with five years of contracted maintenance.

INDORE: City operator AICTSL put 70 electric AC buses into service on October 1 under PM e-Bus Sewa and the state's Sugam Parivahan scheme, with inter-city routes to Ujjain, Bhopal and beyond and a fleet planned to reach 150.

Tripura Star News - Urban Acres

HOUSING EMERGENCY - GLOBAL

One in three people on Earth now inadequately housed, UN flagship report finds

TST NEWS DESK

NAIROBI: At least 3.4 billion people face some form of housing inadequacy, UN-Habitat's World Cities Report 2026 finds, up from 2.8 billion estimated in 2023, with around 1.1 billion urban residents in slums or informal settlements. The report's argument: the problem is not informality but inequality, service gaps and regulatory failure - and housing is climate policy, with buildings carrying roughly 34% of global energy use and 37% of CO₂ emissions.

The arithmetic is stark. A global deficit of 251 million homes in 2010 grew to 288 million by 2023, even as an estimated 64 million people were displaced from informal settlements by urban development itself. The report's prescription is reform - compact, connected and climate-resilient planning - rather than clearance, and it lands in a week when governments from Sacramento to Nairobi were rewriting housing rules on this very page. *Research pages, Page 8.*

UN-Habitat

HOUSING FINANCE - DHAKA

ADB approves \$100-m for collateral-free housing microloans in Bangladesh

TST NEWS DESK

DHAKA: The Asian Development Bank has approved a \$100 million concessional loan for the Inclusive Affordable Housing Finance Project, channelling long-term, collateral-free microloans through the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation and partner microfinance institutions. The financing targets low- and middle-income households - particularly women - for construction, repair and upgrading of homes, treating incremental self-build as the asset class it has always been.

Outlook Bangla, Sept 27

LEGISLATION - UNITED STATES

California signs 30-plus housing bills; Maryland and New York move on delivery

SACRAMENTO: Governor Newsom signed a package of more than 30 housing bills on September 29, cutting regulatory reviews, streamlining factory-built housing approval and strengthening starter-home laws for townhomes and condominiums. The governor's office cites a 6.8% drop in unsheltered homelessness.

ANNAPOLIS: Maryland Governor Wes Moore signed executive orders on October 2 removing administrative obstacles to housing approval and construction, building on the state's transit-oriented development legislation.

NEW YORK: The Mamdani administration placed 12 neighbourhoods on an accelerated track for affordable housing - an early signal of the new city government's delivery-first intent.

Gov. of California - Maryland Matters - NYC Mayor's Office

AFFORDABILITY - NAIROBI

Kenya raises affordable housing prices by up to 20 per cent

NAIROBI: The State Department for Housing announced revised prices across the national Affordable Housing Programme: affordable units up 20%, market units up 10% for new applications from October 1 - as much as KSh 600,000 more per unit. Existing applicants under the previous structure are unaffected, but the rise sharpens questions about who "affordable" housing is priced for.

Kenyans.co.ke, Oct 1

ACCOUNTABILITY - SOUTH AFRICA

R1-billion to fix failed housing projects as rights watchdog opens probe

MAHIKENG: South Africa's North West province is to spend about R1 billion rectifying stalled and defective state housing projects that have left families in shacks despite years of spending. The Human Rights Commission announced on September 23 an investigation into the human-rights impact of delays in developing and upgrading the province's informal settlements.

GroundUp

SENIORS - OTTAWA

Ottawa breaks ground on federally backed senior rentals

OTTAWA: Construction began on 38 federally supported rental homes for low- and medium-income seniors, backed by CA\$6.9 million in CMHC funding - small in units, indicative in direction as Canada leans back into non-market delivery.

CMHC

ADVERTISEMENT - FROM THE PUBLISHER

What will Delhi look like in 2047?

The Master Plan for Delhi 2047, decoded in plain language. Find your neighbourhood on the interactive land-use map. Free for every citizen.

delhi2047.katha.media - a Katha portal, with technical support from Cities Forum

FACT SHEET

The global housing gap, in four numbers

3.4bn
INADEQUATELY HOUSED

1.13bn
IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

288m
UNIT DEFICIT, 2023

64m
DISPLACED 2003-23

UN-Habitat World Cities Report 2026

INDIA DESK - HOUSING

PMAY-Urban 2.0 sanctions cross 1.88 million homes

NEW DELHI: The Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee approved around 29,000 more houses under the Beneficiary-Led Construction and Affordable Housing in Partnership verticals, spanning Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh - taking total sanctions under the revamped urban housing scheme to roughly 1.88 million.

News on AIR, Sept 12

POLICY ADDRESS - HONG KONG

Hong Kong to build an 'AI City Brain' for urban management and emergencies

TST NEWS DESK

HONG KONG: In his 2026 Policy Address, Chief Executive John Lee announced an "AI City Brain" for urban management and emergency response, steered by a task force under the Chief Secretary that takes in the Security, Transport and Logistics, Development, and Innovation and Technology bureaus.

Phase one integrates the Security Bureau's Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre, while the Transport Department will study an AI traffic-management platform using real-time traffic data for extreme-weather and major-event contingency planning - one of the most ambitious city-scale AI programmes announced anywhere this year, and a test case for how far algorithmic coordination of a metropolis can go.

Hong Kong Free Press, Sept 16

DIGITAL TWINS - BRNO

Czech city gets an AI traffic twin that sees 60 minutes ahead

BRNO: Aimsun and Yunex Traffic have delivered an AI-enabled traffic digital twin to the Traffic Information Center of Brno, combining traffic modelling, historical and real-time data, and short-term forecasting up to 60 minutes ahead to support decisions at signal-controlled intersections and congestion management. (Disclosure: sourced from the vendor's announcement, not independent reporting.)

Aimsun, Sept 30

INDIA DESK - DELHI

Delhi clears Rs 17.9-billion AI traffic overhaul with 2,500 smart cameras

NEW DELHI: Delhi's cabinet approved a Rs 17.9-billion (about \$215 million) Intelligent Traffic Management System that will deploy some 2,500 AI-enabled cameras across the capital for real-time monitoring, adaptive signals and automated enforcement - one of the largest single investments in AI-based urban mobility by any Indian city government.

Business Standard, Sept 30

GOVERNANCE - LONDON

London sets out a four-layer 'city innovation stack' for AI and digital services

LONDON: Chief digital officer Theo Blackwell outlined a city-wide approach covering digital infrastructure, collaboration, AI deployment and public trust, intended to stop London's 32 boroughs, NHS bodies, TfL and the emergency services duplicating technology procurement. The stack builds on the Data for London Library - now some 20,000 urban datasets - and forms part of the London Growth Plan.

THINK Digital Partners, Sept 29

PRAGMATISM - UNITED STATES

'People, process, technology - and the order really matters': cities test small before scaling AI

DENVER: At Smart Cities Connect 2026, municipal innovation leads described piloting small AI and analytics experiments before committing to large deployments - Trenton, for instance, used a limited trial to fix its inconsistent disposal process for abandoned city-owned properties, roughly 10% of its building stock. The emerging doctrine: validate value and manage risk first, scale second.

StateTech, Oct 2

PERMITS & SIGNALS

Busan wires AI into signals and flood sensors; Honolulu makes AI permit checks mandatory

BUSAN: The metropolitan government completed a 2.9-billion-won intelligent transport project on September 23, delivering real-time intersection information, AI-assisted signals and flood detection on city roads, with further expansion planned.

HONOLULU: From September 1, every residential permit application must pass through CivCheck, the AI pre-check tool the city credits with roughly halving decision times on its notorious backlog - software also used in Seattle, Denver and San Jose.

Seoul Economic Daily - Hawaii Public Radio

PLANNING TECH - ENGLAND

Councils test AI for biodiversity in planning; citizens get open-source sensors

LANCASTER: Lancaster joins 11 English councils piloting AI-powered biodiversity assessment from high-resolution satellite imagery under MHCLG's PropTech Innovation Fund, helping planners decide where development should go while protecting habitats.

CINCINNATI: A University of Cincinnati researcher is building a low-cost, open-source system letting residents gather hyperlocal environmental data on their own terms - community-governed sensing as a counterpoint to top-down smart-city deployments.

Lancaster Guardian - Phys.org

GULF - UAE

Ras Al Khaimah opens a browser-based digital twin of the emirate

RAS AL KHAIMAH: Master developer Marjan launched the "Marjan Digital Universe", an interactive online twin rendering the emirate's coastline, masterplans and individual plots in one navigable 3D environment - built to make large-scale masterplans legible to residents, tourists and investors alike.

Smart Cities World

STREETS & SENSORS - UNITED STATES

Delivery robots hit Hoboken's sidewalks; Dallas's garbage-truck AI draws a backlash

HOBOKEN: The New Jersey city launched a 12-month pilot on September 3 with Coco Robotics and Avride - 20 low-speed electric delivery robots serving DoorDash, Uber Eats and Grubhub orders, with effects on traffic and double parking to be assessed.

DALLAS: AI cameras on 50 sanitation trucks, under a \$2.5-million contract with vendor City Detect, have flagged over 3,700 code violations and issued nearly 4,000 courtesy notices and 57 citations - assigning homes a "blight score" and prompting privacy and equity concerns in lower-income neighbourhoods.

NJBIZ - Fox 4 Dallas

IN OUR OWN PAGES

Ask the freight data in plain language

The Asia Freight Decarbonisation Monitor (Page 1) ships with an "Intelligent Report" layer: users question the four-country freight dataset in plain language and receive cited answers, explained charts and an exportable report - a working example of the retrieval-grounded, source-cited pattern cities are converging on for public data tools.

asia-freight.katha.media

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"People, process, technology - and the order really matters."

A municipal innovation lead at Smart Cities Connect 2026, on why cities now pilot small AI experiments before scaling them.

StateTech

RANKINGS - AFRICA

Rabat leads Africa in the 2026 IMD Smart City Index

RABAT: Nine African cities feature in this year's IMD Smart City Index, with Rabat ranked highest on the continent and Abuja the only African city to climb the global table - a snapshot of how unevenly urban digitalisation is advancing across the region, even as smart-city programmes multiply.

Africa AI News

LEADER

Cities know exactly what is coming. They are still not built for it.

The most damning detail from Hamburg's Extreme Weather Congress was not the death toll from Europe's summer heat waves. It was that the forecasts were right. Germany's warning systems worked; the science performed precisely as designed. People died anyway - because the gap that kills is no longer between knowledge and prediction, but between prediction and pavement.

This should reframe how the urban profession talks about adaptation. For two decades the field has invested in better climate models, finer-grained risk maps, earlier warnings - the comfortable, fundable end of the problem. The uncomfortable end is retrofit: shading streets, cooling buildings and homes, rewriting building codes, and finding money for maintenance rather than ribbon-cuttings.

This week's evidence elsewhere in this edition points the same way. Reporting from the United States shows hundreds of small, cheap, distributed flood fixes outperforming expectations (Page 4); the sponge-city study in *Nature Cities* finds drainage investment quietly cutting disease risk, with the largest gains precisely where infrastructure was weakest. The tools that work are unglamorous, incremental and local.

COP31's Turkish presidency has made "resilient cities" a headline theme for Antalya. The temptation will be another declaration. The better outcome would be duller: adaptation finance that flows to municipal balance sheets, measured in retrofitted buildings and shaded streets per year - not in pledges. Cities have run out of excuses built on uncertainty. The thermometer is no longer surprising anyone.

THE OTHER VIEW

The strongest case against today's leader: adaptation spending without better science risks maladaptation - seawalls that displace flooding onto poorer districts, air-conditioning mandates that raise emissions and strain grids during the very heat waves they answer. Prediction and delivery are not rivals for the same money; coarse risk maps are exactly how retrofit funds get misallocated. And the "unglamorous local fixes" argument can let national governments off the hook: rain gardens are no substitute for the structural finance only treasuries and development banks can move. Knowledge investment is not the comfortable end of the problem. It is the precondition for spending the hard money well.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Sustainability Times welcomes letters from readers - planners, engineers, students, residents. Responses to this week's leader, corrections and field notes from your city are all fair game. Selected letters will run on this page from Edition No. 2.

Write via the publisher - katha.media

SECOND LEADER

A plan the people can read

Master plans fail in two ways: they are not implemented, or they are not understood. The second failure is cheaper to fix, and this week offers a template. Delhi's 2047 plan runs to statutory language and land-use schedules; the Delhi 2047 Decoded portal (Page 1) turns it into maps and plain sentences a resident can interrogate. Disclosure compels candour: that portal is this newspaper's publisher's work. The principle stands regardless of who built it - a plan that 32 million people cannot read is not yet a public document, and every planning authority should treat translation as part of notification, not a courtesy that follows it.

CHART OF THE WEEK

BUILDINGS CARRY THE CLIMATE LOAD



Buildings' share of the global total - UN-Habitat, World Cities Report 2026

THIS SPACE IS AVAILABLE

*Did you know? In Trenton, roughly **one in ten buildings** is an abandoned city-owned property.*

Op-ed sponsorships and institutional messages run beside the leader. Contact the publisher - katha.media

FROM THE JOURNALS

Sponge cities cut flood-linked disease: 4.2 million cases, one clear signal

TST RESEARCH DESK

Chinese researchers analysed roughly 4.2 million cases of bacillary dysentery recorded between 2005 and 2020 to ask whether the sponge-city programme - wetlands, permeable pavements and green space designed to absorb and filter stormwater - delivers health benefits on top of flood protection. Using case-crossover and quasi-experimental methods, they found flooding sharply raises dysentery risk, especially for school-age children and older adults - but cities with sponge-city works saw flood-related disease risk fall, by up to 12.2% three years after implementation, with the biggest gains where existing infrastructure was weakest. Drainage, reframed as public health.

Nature Cities, Sept 8, 2026

FROM THE JOURNALS

The housing crisis, counted: 288 million homes short

UN-Habitat's World Cities Report 2026 tallies the global housing deficit at 288 million units in 2023, up from 251 million in 2010, and estimates 64 million people were displaced from informal settlements by urban development processes between 2003 and 2023. Its prescription: compact, connected, climate-resilient planning reform - because buildings carry roughly 34% of global energy use and 37% of CO₂ emissions, housing policy is climate policy.

UN-Habitat, 2026

FROM THE JOURNALS

Migration raised US rents 1.4-1.6% - and wages rose more

Brookings finds the early-2020s US immigration surge pushed metropolitan rents up by about 1.4-1.6%, but native-born renters' wages rose at least 1.6% net of the increase - so native-born residents on average came out ahead. For city audiences the lesson is that migration-driven housing pressure is real but modest, shifting the policy question toward housing supply responsiveness rather than migration itself.

Brookings, Sept 23, 2026

OPEN CALLS - APPLY NOW

R&D funding windows for urban science

Horizon Europe Cities Mission (HORIZON-MISS-2026-04-CIT): EUR 85.5 million across three topics - energy-efficient public transport and shared mobility; low-temperature heating and AI-based urban planning; circular construction. **Deadline October 8** - this week. [CINEA](#)

Driving Urban Transitions (DUT) Joint Call 2026: the 25-country European partnership funds Positive Energy Districts, the 15-minute City and Circular Urban Economies. **Stage-1 deadline November 17, 13:00 CET.** [DUT/FFG](#)

NSF Smart and Connected Communities: community-engaged smart-city research; next preliminary proposals due the second Monday of January 2027. [NSF](#)

Wellcome Climate Impacts Awards: up to £2.5 million per award for transdisciplinary teams making climate-health impacts, including urban heat, visible to policy. 2026 round closed; the scheme runs annually - watch for the next window. [Wellcome](#)

RESEARCH AGENDA

Where the field is heading

Threads running through this quarter's calls and papers: adaptation delivery rather than risk mapping (Hamburg, Page 1); health co-benefits of blue-green infrastructure (*Nature Cities*, above); AI-based planning tools entering mainstream funding lines (the Horizon call's urban-planning topic; England's PropTech pilots, Page 6); and open, comparable city data as research infrastructure - from the Transport Data Commons to London's 20,000-dataset library. Expect COP31 to add measurable adaptation-finance metrics to the list.

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SITUATIONS VACANT - URBAN PRACTICE WORLDWIDE

Junior Associate, Healthy Streets - ITDP IndiaPune, India - see [itdp.in](#) vacancies for details and closing date**Senior Associate, Public Transport - ITDP Africa**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - check posting for closing date

Inclusive Urban Mobility Associate and Transport Intern - ITDP Indonesia

Jakarta - rolling applications

Grant and Finance Specialist II, Ross Center - WRI

The Hague or London, hybrid - open at press time

Multiple positions, climate, resilience and mobility - C40 Cities

London - Delhi - Nairobi - Johannesburg and others - deadlines vary by role

Urban development specialist streams, Water & Urban Development Sector Office - ADB

Manila HQ and resident missions - postings recur; recent rounds closed early October

Urban planning and programme roles - UN-Habitat

Nairobi and field offices - rolling; search "UN-HABITAT" on UN Careers

Consultant Grade-II (Environment Planning) and specialist streams - NIUANew Delhi - deadlines vary by post; see [niua.in](#)**Transport and urban project roles - GIZ**

Bonn/Eschborn and country offices - new postings recur on the GIZ jobs portal

Urban Fellows Programme - IIHS Bengaluru

9-month, fully residential, scholarship-based - applications open

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ADMISSIONS DESK - CLASS OF 2027

Master in City Planning - MIT DUSP**Deadline December 15**, 11:59 PM ET - confirm 2027 cycle on page**MSc Urbanism track - TU Delft**Opens Oct 15 - **non-EU deadline Jan 15**; EU/EFTA Apr 1**Urban School masters - Sciences Po**Opens Oct 2026 - two-year masters close **Feb 21, 2027**; one-year Apr 4, 2027**MSc Regional and Urban Planning Studies - LSE**

Rolling admissions, opens each October - apply early

Bartlett School of Planning MScs - UCL

Applications open - check programme pages for 2027 deadlines

Master of Urban Planning - CEPT University, Ahmedabad

2027 cycle - applications open, GATE or CEPT PG Test accepted; check page

UNIVERSITY ADVERTISING

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CALLS FOR PAPERS

IJURR Methods & Writing Workshop, Delhi

"The Non-Metropolitan as Sites of Southern Urban Theory" - Nov-Dec 2026 - travel support

Urban Research & Practice - policy papersManuscripts by **Nov 30, 2026**

CUT OUT AND KEEP - THE DEADLINE BOARD

Oct 8	Horizon Europe Cities Mission call closes
Oct 13	UN-Habitat Latin America resilience tender
Nov 17	DUT Joint Call 2026, stage 1
Nov 30	Urban Research & Practice policy papers
Dec 15	MIT DUSP applications
Jan 15	TU Delft non-EU applications
Feb 21	Sciences Po two-year masters close

FULL-WIDTH BANNER - PREMIUM POSITION

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CONCEPT OF THE WEEK

Transit-Oriented Development: the city built around the station

Transit-oriented development concentrates housing, jobs and daily amenities in compact, walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods around high-quality public transport - so that daily life can run on walking, cycling and transit rather than the private car. It is the planning idea behind half the metro announcements on Page 3 of this edition, and it is written directly into Vietnam's new Urban Development Law on Page 1.

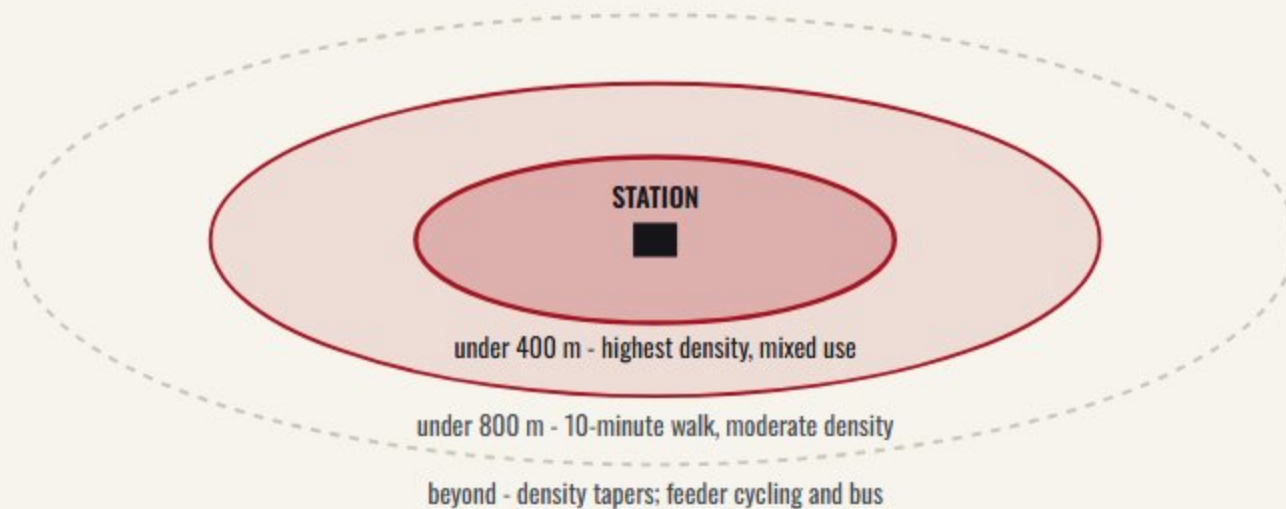
The conventional TOD catchment is 400-800 metres from a station - a five-to-ten-minute walk - with density highest at the station and tapering outward.

Researchers note the half-mile radius is more historical convention than analytically derived threshold, but it remains the de facto standard for rail TOD worldwide.

ITDP's TOD Standard distils practice into eight principles - walk, cycle, connect, transit, mix, densify, compact, shift - scoring station-area development on everything from block sizes to parking caps. The last principle, "shift," is the politically hardest: reclaiming road and parking space from the car to make the rest viable.

Sources: ITDP Eight Principles - TOD Standard 3.0 - Guerra et al., JTLU

WALK	CYCLE	CONNECT	TRANSIT
MIX	DENSIFY	COMPACT	SHIFT



The TOD catchment: density and land-use mix taper with walking distance from the station.

CASE STUDY - HONG KONG'S RAIL + PROPERTY

Hong Kong's MTR funds railway construction by capturing the land value it creates: the corporation develops homes, offices and malls at and above stations and depots, and property profits finance new lines - the self-financing "Rail + Property" formula.

Property development, rental and management contributed more than half of MTR's total profit over 2000-2015; over 2000-2012, property development alone brought about 38% of corporate income against 34% from running trains. The urban result: roughly 42% of households, 43% of the employed population and about 75% of commercial and office floor area sit within 500 m of a rail station. In the TOD new town of Tseung Kwan O, more than 80% of residents live within five minutes of the MTR.

The model still pays: MTR's 2025 net profit roughly doubled to HK\$15.8 billion on ridership and property.

McKinsey - World Bank/PPIAF - IDOS - MTR 2025 results

READING LIST

ITDP - TOD Standard 3.0. The field's working rubric for scoring station-area development.

UN-Habitat - World Cities Report 2026. The year's definitive housing-crisis evidence base.

"Rail villages in Hong Kong". How Rail + Property shaped a city of station neighbourhoods.

INFOGRAPHIC - LIFE WITHIN 500 M OF RAIL



Share within 500 m of an MTR station - Cervero & Murakami 2009

THIS SPACE IS AVAILABLE

Did you know? In Hong Kong's Tseung Kwan O, more than 80% of residents live five minutes from the metro.

Schools, courses and publishers: this page teaches - teach with it. Contact the publisher - katha.media

EVENTS DIARY - OCT TO DEC

- OCT 5-9** **Transport & Climate Change Week**
GIZ-convened global exchange on transport decarbonisation - sessions span policy, freight and finance
- OCT 5-8** **Pre-COP talks, Fiji**
Delivered by Fiji, Tuvalu and Australia - adaptation finance and cities on the agenda before Antalya
- OCT 15-16** **Latam Mobility Summit**
Mexico City - the region's main sustainable mobility investment gathering
- OCT 23-25** **19th Urban Mobility India Conference & Expo**
Bhubaneswar - MoHUA's flagship, held with the 17th UMI Research Symposium
- NOV 3-5** **Smart City Expo World Congress**
Fira Barcelona Gran Via - Tomorrow.Mobility World Congress runs alongside, Nov 4-6
- NOV 9-20** **COP31, Antalya**
Antalya Expo Center, Türkiye - Australia presiding; "resilient cities" a presidency priority
- DEC 2-3** **Annual POLIS Conference**
Brussels - Europe's city-and-region transport innovation network

EVENT ADVERTISING

Running a conference?

List your event in the Diary with a highlighted entry and reach delegates before registration closes.

Contact the publisher - katha.media

TENDERS & NOTICES

UN-Habitat - Urban resilience & DRR capacity programme, Latin America

Academic partner sought, 8 countries - **Deadline Oct 13, 17:00 EST**

Horizon Europe Cities Mission - €220m call, 2026-27

112 Mission Cities - **Deadline Oct 8**

C40 Reinventing Cities - EOIs, four urban sites

Close Oct 5, 14:00 CET - Belo Horizonte separate

UNDP Nepal - Urban ecosystem-based adaptation RFP

Notice UNDP-NPL-00484 - deadline per UNDP portal

DUT Partnership - Joint Call 2026

PEDs, 15-minute City, circular economies - **Stage 1 Nov 17, 13:00 CET**

Urban Research & Practice - call for policy papers

Manuscripts by **Nov 30, 2026**

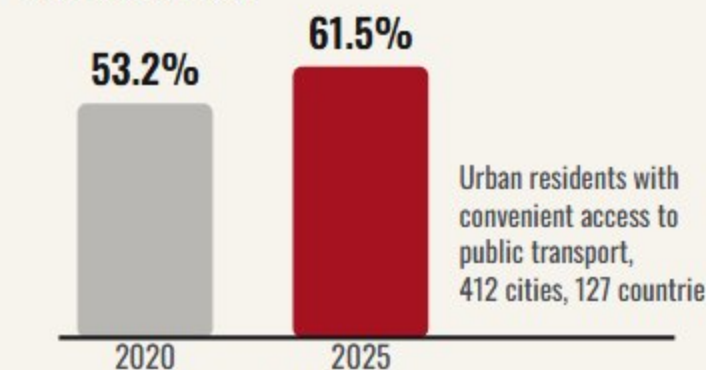
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*Did you know? A single Saudi metro contract awarded this week was worth up to **US\$900 million**.*

Agencies and consortia: announce your tenders where bidders read. Contact the publisher - katha.media

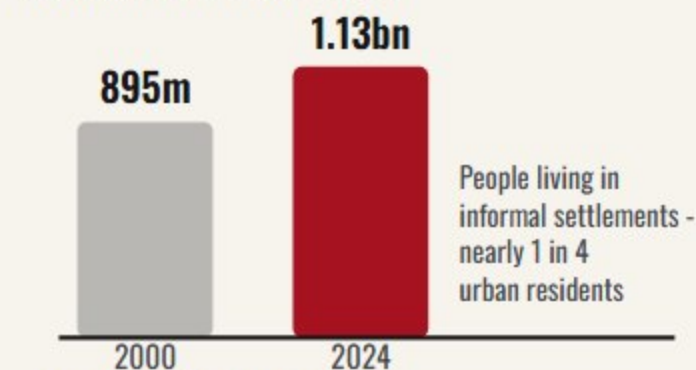
THE WEEK IN NUMBERS - GRAPHED

TRANSIT WITHIN REACH



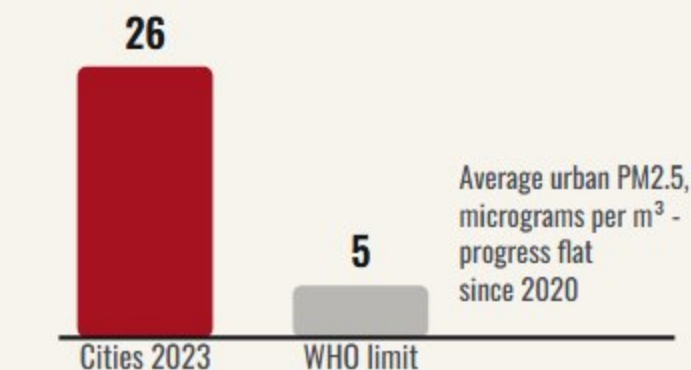
Source: UN SDG 11 Report 2026

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS KEEP GROWING



Source: World Cities Report 2026

URBAN AIR, FIVE TIMES OVER THE LINE



Source: UN SDG 11 Report 2026

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