**20 SMART CITIES DECLARED IN PHASE 1**

In an exclusive press conference held at New Delhi, chaired by the Minister of Urban Development Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, 20 urban areas of the country have been declared to be revamped into future Smart Cities. Out of the 98 cities declared back on 25th June, 2015, 97 cities had made it to the ‘Smart City Challenge Mission’ out which 20 have been finally chosen in its phase 1. On the basis of the ‘marks’ achieved, 20 declared cities in the descending order are as follows:

* Bhubaneshwar, Odisha
* Pune, Maharashtra
* Jaipur, Rajasthan
* Surat, Gujarat
* Kochi, Kerala
* Ahmedabad, Gujarat
* Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh
* Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
* Sholapur, Maharashtra
* Davangere, Karnataka
* Indore, Madhya Pradesh
* New Delhi Municipal Council
* Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
* Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh
* Belagavi, Karnataka
* Udaipur, Rajasthan
* Guwahati, Assam
* Chennai, Tamil Nadu
* Ludhiana, Punjab
* Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

The next two years will see the inclusion of 40 and 38 cities, respectively or, 40 and 40 cities in case the final two cities get declared. Also, an investment of Rs. 50, 802 crore has been proposed for the 20 winner Smart Cities and towns for the five-year tenure. There are 5 capital cities among the 20 winner cities announced. To qualify for the competition, states and local administrations had to provide ‘smart answers’ to a model with 43 questions. Factors for the same included, feasibility, cost effectiveness, citizen participation, result orientation, strategic planning and several others that accounted towards the ‘100 marks’.

**Industry Reacts:**

**Mr. Kushagr Ansal, Director, Ansal Housing**

Smart India Mission is finally underway, and it is good to see that through a tough series of competition, first 20 deserving future Smart Cities have made out. The capital region of the country, NDMC is also amongst the phase 1 list. With this announcement, there will now be a need of Smart Infrastructure to complement the Smart Cities, and the announcements of Union Budget are much more eagerly awaited.

**Mr. Deepak Kapoor, President CREDAI-Western U.P. & Director, Gulshan Homz**

With the first set of Smart Cities list declared, the competition for the next set is definitely underway. Uttar Pradesh’s cities missing out this time is quite a setback as there is already a lot of scope for Smart development. But for the next set, Uttar Pradesh’s shortlisted cities will certainly make it there. Overall, the work on the promises and announcements of the last year has begun and very soon, India will become Smartly visible on the global map as well. To complete this dream, the government must now take this Budget Session very seriously for the real estate sector, as Smart Cities Mission will heavily rely on private sector’s contribution.

**Mr. Rupesh Gupta, Director, JM Housing**

The dream of next level infrastructure and standards of living is not much out of reach now with Smart Cities Mission becoming reality. Phase 1 has given a set of 20 cities which will now strengthen the competition for the remaining cities. All eyes are now fixed on the Union Budget as the decisions during the same will somewhere directly affect the development of Smart Cities. Land acquisition, Single window clearance and GST have become more crucial now, as proper and timely Smart development will require the passage of these.

**Mr. Vikas Bhasin, MD, Saya Group**

For the country in general, it is a huge news as many were not anticipating promptness and seriousness of the government towards this. But still, somewhere we felt that Uttar Pradesh’s cities should have been a part of the first phase, as it acquired the most cities shortlisted during the announcement last year. The focus now shifts towards the upcoming Union Budget where government’s decisions for the realty sector will play the most vital role for Smart development of the cities in future.

**Mr. Rakesh Yadav, Chairman, Antriksh India**

The declared cities in future will be well equipped with basic infrastructure, efficient urban mobility and public transport, IT connectivity and e-governance mechanisms. The standards of living will be enhanced drastically which will promote sustainable development as well. The government must now work diligently for upbringing of the private sector through important decisions in the Union Budget such as, Industry Status, Single window clearance and execution of RERA for the realty sector.

**Mr. Rajesh Goyal, Vice President CREDAI-Western U.P. & MD, RG Group**

With this news, finally the much awaited Smart India Mission is underway albeit, it is disheartening that none of the U.P. cities made it to the top 20 list. Now, since the list is out and the proposed budget announced, it is even more important that real estate sector gets into the deserving limelight in the Union Budget 2016-17 through Industry Status, Single window clearance and GST, as these bills will hold key to the proper implementation of the Smart India Mission.