

## **Symposium on Public Transportation in Indian cities organized by DIMTS and UITP**

**January 2010, New Delhi:** Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS) and the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) organized a two day **Symposium on 'Public Transportation for Indian cities with special focus on Bus Rapid Transit Systems on 20-21 January 2010 at the India Habitat Center. The Symposium was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi Smt. Sheila Dikshit and was attended by the Chief Secretary of Delhi Shri Rakesh Mehta, among others.**

Around 150-200 national and international delegates apart from senior government officials from both Delhi and other states of India attended the symposium. The delegates included academicians, experts from the field of urban transport and related areas, who had come together to discuss, understand, analyze and find solutions to implement an integrated and efficient public transport system in Indian cities.

With the unprecedented and rapid pace of urbanization, the majority of the million plus cities in India are facing serious problems of traffic congestion and pollution. City planners are now realizing the limitation of creating endless road space to accommodate the ever increasing private vehicles as well as the adverse impact of such vehicles on the climate. Public transport is being seen as not only cost effective and convenient but also as having significant social and environmental impact. The need of the hour is to plan for an efficient, comprehensive and integrated network of major, intermediary and feeder services of different modes of transport along with an integration of the ticketing system and other intelligent transport systems like intelligent signaling, GPS-based vehicle tracking and automated fare collection systems.

Speaking on the occasion the Chief Minister said, "Together with BRT, Metro and Mono rail, the objective is to encourage public transport and provide people with an efficient, reliable, safe and comfortable mode of transport."

She also said, "We in near future are going to face more pressure with commonwealth games being organized in Delhi. It becomes our responsibility to cater to the projected requirements. This symposium is very important in this regard and could provide us with guidelines which could enrich us to make our city more mobile and safe."

The Director of UITP Brussels, Mr. Tony Dufays, gave a bird's eye view of the mission, goal and the activities of UITP and also the objectives behind this symposium.

One of the highlights of the inaugural session of the symposium was the UITP Youth Parliament. The youth of Delhi came together at the first ever **UITP Youth Parliament** being organized in India, to present to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi and other politicians and senior government officials their '**Smart Green Solution**'.

This was organised within the framework of the UITP Youth Project, which believes that the participation of the youth is important for the success of the transport sector. The Youth Parliament session had the participants present to the guests through a video, a report and a power point presentation on which they had been working for one week, their ideas and thoughts on how to promote public transport in our cities. The youth had been guided in this project by Ms. Alessandra Gorini, the Youth Parliament coordinator. Their ideas and efforts were appreciated and applauded by all

present including the Chief Minister, who welcomed all the ideas and congratulated the students for preparing excellent videos.

The sessions discussed the BRT being implemented in a big way in Europe, Latin America, China and now also in many cities in India. The seminar had experts from various countries talking about their challenges and experience while implementing BRT and also about the different models of the BRTS in operations. These came in as important lessons for cities which are planning to implement BRT in India. The symposium also included discussions on the technology solutions such as Intelligent Signalling, GPS based vehicle tracking and Automatic Fare Collection System, which form an integral part of an efficient BRT system.

The Highlights of the sessions:

1. The initiatives of central government for Urban Transport Planning and Capacity Building to promote better practices along with the standard service level benchmarks in Urban Transport were discussed by Mr. Lohia, Joint Secretary MoUD.
2. Mr. Tony Dufays, Director, Regional Offices & Services, UITP Brussels pointed out that public transport make efficient use of roads in comparison to private vehicles. He promoted BRT as a 'way of life' and said that citizens should to understand that the system is an affordable, reliable and safe mode of transport and also cheaper than other modes of transport system like metro and rail.
3. Mr. Alok Bhardwaj, Head Transport Planning, DIMTS suggested that the transport plan requires master planning for rail as well as road based systems. Modern signalized systems, smart card corridors and at grade connections are need of the hour. We need increase the BRT trips for higher mobility of people.
4. Mr. Kangming Xu, Senior Advisor, 3E Transportation Systems, China said that if a city decides to implement a BRT project, it is more likely that the city will adopt other sustainable development measures.
5. Talking about the success factors of the BRT system, Mr. Richard Mejia, Manager BRT Transport Planning, Daimler Buses (Mercedes-Benz), Germany said that the vision and prime goal for the system is to integrate land-use changes into transport models.
6. Explaining the advantages that have come about since the introduction of the BRT system in Delhi, Prof. Geetam Tiwari, TRIPP Chair, Associate Professor Transportation Planning, TRIPP IIT Delhi, said that the bus speed has increased to 20 km/hr whereas the car speed has decreased to only 12-15km/hr. This has resulted in an increase in public transport and para transport users. The traffic has got channelized and disciplined resulting in a holistic development and urban rejuvenation. The BRT corridor has also given easy accessibility to disabled people. The most important change after the introduction of the BRT system are the zero fatal accidents and of course the reduced emissions.
7. Jorge Minteguiaga G, Tecno Accion, Santiago, Chile, said that the BRT system should be taken as a catalyst in triggering development and connecting people and fulfilling the mobility needs of people. Hence, we must Think Global Act Local
8. Prof. Geetam Tiwari while making her presentation on the importance of NMT and preparation of the cycle master plan for the city said that networking of cycle corridors is essential because

origin and destination are spread all over urban area. Radius of 3 km around major work centres – destinations for bicyclists could cover the whole city.

9. Ms. Anvita Arora, Transport Planner and CEO, Innovative Transport Solutions, TBIU, Delhi, explained how cycle rickshaws can act as taxi feeder service. eg - Ecocab initiative – Fazilka. She further suggested that cooperatives for rikshaws could be formulated.
10. Mr. Mohammad Kader, Head of Sales (Asia), VIX ERG, highlighted the benefits of the unified fare collecting systems – like revenue, better priced and better transit data, passenger benefits, boarding and disembarking as well as environmental benefits like less pollution.
11. Ms. Kiran Bapna, New Business Development Manager, Goggle India, showed how Google transit helps the riders by providing them with complete information, to plan a trip using public transport. She talked about the about its various features like integrating Google map along with public transport availability and access data including making it available for the cell phone users. She further highlighted the various benefits of Google mapping like increased ridership, opportunity for public and private sector to work together and easy access.
12. A panel discussion on ‘Public Transportation solutions for small and medium sized cities covered under JnNURM’ addressed many issues like
  - A comprehensive mobility plan emphasizing the need for urban transport reforms
  - Promotion of public transport system for small, medium as well as large sized cities.
  - Public transport need not be technology driven. It should complement the public transport system
  - Top priority needs to be given to pedestrian and NMT users and plans and designs for the same need to be made.

The closing session saw a valedictory address by the Hon’ble Minister of Transport Shri Arvinder Singh. Mr. Hans Rat, Secretary General, UITP and Shri Sanjiv Sahai, MD, DIMTS were also present on the occasion.

Highlighting the need to promote environment friendly public transport in cities, keeping in mind the global climate concerns, the Hon’ble Minister congratulated DIMTS and UITP for taking initiative to organise this symposium - the first ever organised by the UITP in Delhi, “Biggest challenge which one faces today is of mobility and the solution is to promote and strengthen public transport. This symposium is very crucial for us to learn lessons and find better solutions. Delhi has already pioneered in the usage of public transport like Metro, BRT.” Talking about public transport he said, “Innovative technological solutions are being devised and are going to be soon implemented which will provide the riders with safe, reliable, efficient and comfortable modes of transport. One is even trying to increase the fleet of buses plying on roads and the figures will reach 10,000 mark. Enforcing taxes on the use of private vehicles are also being contemplated.”