

# Varanasi, Detroit, Venice to participate in the Sustainable Cities Challenge

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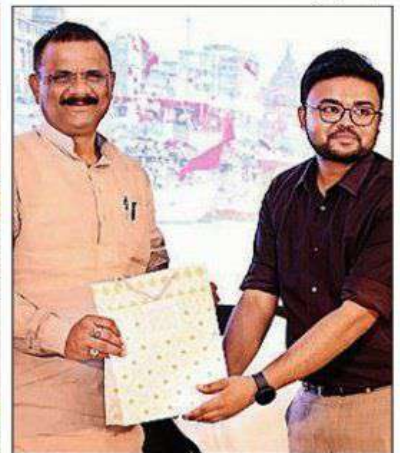
## To Get \$9 Mn To Improve Kashi Infra

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**Varanasi:** The holy city of Varanasi has been selected as one of the three cities globally to participate in the Sustainable Cities Challenge. The launch event of the Sustainable Cities Challenge, hosted by the Toyota Mobility Foundation, was held here on Thursday.

As part of the Sustainable Cities Challenge, the Toyota Mobility Foundation will provide funding of \$9 million. Varanasi, which receives over seven crore tourists and pilgrims annually, will invite innovators and startups to develop data-operated solutions to make the city safer and more accessible for visitors.

Through the Sustainable Cities Challenge, Varanasi is inviting innovators from around the world to develop crowd management solutions. This initiative aims to accommodate visitors more efficiently and make the city safer and more accessible for both local residents and tourists. Varanasi is one of three cities to host challenges along with Detroit and Ve-



The launch event of the Sustainable Cities Challenge held in the city on Thursday. (R) Mayor Ashok Tiwari and Varanasi municipal commissioner Akshat Verma during the event

nice. Over 150 cities from 46 countries around the world entered the challenge after the call to cities was first launched in June 2023.

Mayor Ashok Tiwari said that it is a matter of pride for Varanasi, a city of religion and spirituality, to be selected for the Sustainable Cities Challenge by the Toyota Mobility Foundation. He emphasized that the Varanasi Municipal Corporation and Varanasi Smart City will achieve new milestones together.

Municipal commissioner Akshat Verma said, "We are proud to be part of the challenge. Our aim is to remain committed to making Varanasi safer and more accessible for everyone. We look forward to working with emerging innovators from around the world and hope

that this challenge will help us identify technologies and solutions that will benefit the citizens, pilgrims and tourists of Varanasi. This is a significant opportunity for Kashi, one of the world's oldest living cities, to lead in participatory and holistic development through innovation."

Pras Ganesh, programme director at the Toyota Mobility Foundation, expressed happiness in working on the City Challenge in one of the world's most sacred and historic cities. He highlighted that innovators from around the world can present mobility solutions for the city. He emphasized their work under the principles of innovation, partnership and sustainable legacy and expressed confidence in the project's poten-

tial to develop human-centered crowd management solutions applicable to other cities facing similar challenges.

Cathy Nothstein, director of Cities and Society at Challenge Works, stated, "As a significant site for religious tourism, the Sustainable Cities Challenge is a global invitation for innovative solutions, allowing people from around the world to participate and help improve the city."

The event was attended by vice-chairman of the Varanasi Development Authority Pulkat Garg, chief development officer Himanshu Nagpal and representatives from the Varanasi Municipal Corporation, Varanasi Smart City, World Research Institute and Challenge Works.