Sabarmati River Front Development Project

Why in news?

Recently Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation set aside Rs 1,050 crore for the phase-2 of the Sabarmati River Front Development project (SRFD).

How much land has been reclaimed for the development?

- In the first phase of the project, 204 hectares have been reclaimed along the 11-km stretch of the Sabarmati Riverfront.
- This land excludes the Central Business District (CBD) area of 126 hectares and the reclaimed land includes road and the land to be developed.
- The main considerations in allocating the reclaimed land are the use of existing land along the river, location and configuration of land available, its potential for development.
- The development will witness pedestrian-friendly roads by requiring buildings to align with the road side.

How will Sabarmati Riverfront Development (SRFD) act as a catalyst for the CBD?

- The SRFD offers incentive of a higher (three times more) Floor Space Index (FSI) that will change the skyline of the city.
- The plots under SRFD phase 1 will permit buildings from 6 to 22 floors that will offer a total of 16.4 lakh square metre of saleable area in phases.
- But the permissible height of buildings in the CBD would depend upon the road width.
- The Local Area Plan proposes to revive this central area by leveraging citywide connectivity through Bus rapid Transit System, proposed Metro and the development of the SRFD.
- Further, with increased street connectivity, the public transportation coverage is expected to double from the existing 25%.
- The green cover will also be doubled from 20 % to 40%.

Which part of the Riverfront is the Central Business District?

- The 5-6 km stretch along Ashram Road from Usmanpura to Ellis bridge on the west bank and the east bank from Gandhi bridge to Dadhichi bridge will become new commercial hub.

- Out of the 204 hectares reclaimed land, 85 % will be for public amenities and 14% will be for commercial development which will be done through auctioning.
- The project will be self-financing in nature where the resources are recovered through the portion of the reclaimed land which then will be sold for commercial development.
- The private development on the riverfront will be in harmonious with environment.

How far the phase 1 fared in terms of commercial development from private players?

- In May 2017, the tenders were floated for only two plots but they were withdrawn because the market was low due to demonetisation.
- There were also fears of flooding in the event of heavy rains but SRFDCL claims the project will sustain flood levels of 4.75 lac cusecs without spillage into the city.
- For the phase 2, the response from the Expression of Interest was positive and monetising the land would depend upon existing real estate market.

How will the Sabarmati be different from riverfronts abroad (Austin, Singapore, S Korea)?

- Sabarmati being a rain-fed river which dries for most of the year hence the banks provide huge canvas to developers.
- The river front has spaces for the traditional activities - dhobi ghat and Gujri bazaar -which are lifelines for hundreds of city dwellers.
- To keep the river along the riverfront flowing with water, the Gujarat government feeds it waters of the Narmada river.
- The government is also working on a more sustainable alternative to divert the treated sewage from the treatment plants into the Sabarmati river.

Source: The Indian Express

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