



INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH HIS EXCELLENCY FREDDY SVANE  
AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK TO INDIA

**MEDIA DOSSIER**

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Interactive Session with His Excellency Freddy Svane  
Ambassador of The Kingdom of Denmark to India

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# TIMES CITY

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## Urban living lab plan for social experiments in Kol

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kolkata:** Bengal Chamber is keen to collaborate with Denmark Embassy to set up an urban regeneration lab in Kolkata on the lines of India's first urban living lab in Panaji, Goa, to conduct social experiments and chalk out alternative ways to plan interventions and address urban challenges in the city. Urban labs became popular in Europe in the late 1990s and helped bring about urban regeneration in cities like Barcelona, Helsinki and Manchester.

"Urban living lab is a bottom-up approach to planning and implementation instead of the highly centralised top-down development planning that we have now. This will help address local issues and ground-level challenges. The Chamber would like to engage with the Embassy of Denmark in India for learning and best practices in this area and is willing to take up exchange programmes on resource efficiency and other related capacity building with the embassy to facilitate this mission," Bengal Chamber president, Deb A Mukherjee, said.

Urban living labs are "early experimentation gardens" embedded in neighbourhoods and cities, in which residents, governments, private actors and knowledge institutions interact to design, test and fine-tune social and technical interventions in real-time. This collaborative arrangement marks a shift from incumbent efforts based on government-industry partnerships. At its heart is the idea that urban sites can provide a learning arena within which the co-creation of new ideas and solutions can be pursued. "There has been a growing uptake of the living lab method for partici-

### POPULAR IN EUROPE

- ▶ Urban living lab has roots in the Scandinavian participatory design movements from 1960s and 1970s
- ▶ Notion of living labs associated with Prof William J Mitchell at MIT's School of Architecture and Planning
- ▶ Mitchell conceptualized a purpose-built lab where routine activities and interactions of everyday life could be observed and analyzed
- ▶ Urban labs provide insights into the kind of solutions that are likely to work in a particular context
- ▶ In Kolkata, the regeneration lab will help build pilot projects and business models on energy, water and resource security

patory urban initiatives since, focusing on four key functions: experimentation; engagement; co-creation; and learning to help reverse the degeneration of urban settlements and bring about urban regeneration," pointed out Denmark ambassador to India Freddy Svane.

Through testing and fine-tuning, urban lab experiments provide insights into the solutions that are likely to work in a particular context and be supported by societal actors. These experiments are embedded in real places at manageable scales. For instance, the Climate Adaptation Living Lab is focused on improving the climate adaptability of Copenhagen; the Smarter Labs project aims to develop low-carbon mobility solutions for Bellinzona, Brussels, Graz and Maastricht.

# The Telegraph

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## Danish lesson for city's water use

SUBHAJOY ROY

**Calcutta:** Only about 4 per cent of water pushed into the distribution system in Denmark is unaccounted for, the Danish ambassador said. The figure stands in stark contrast to that of Calcutta, where unaccounted for water is nearly half of what is injected into the network.

"Only 4 per cent of the water that is pushed into the distribution network in Denmark is unaccounted because of leaks and other factors, whereas in most Indian cities it is about 50 per cent," ambassador Freddy Svane told Metro on the sidelines of an interaction with industry leaders at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce on Thursday.

"Our endeavour is to reduce the volume of unaccounted water. We would love to work with Indian cities. We can share our knowledge in reducing the waste of water."

The Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC) sends 488 million gallons of water into the city's distribution system every day, officials said. But nearly half of it goes to waste or is unaccounted for.

Water resources experts said about 250 million gallons of water should be adequate to meet the daily needs of Calcutta.



Freddy Svane, the Danish ambassador to India, at Thursday's programme.

Picture by Sanat Kr Sinha

Unaccounted for water is the volume that is lost because of leaks in pipes. It is also the water that overflows from a reservoir.

Experts have warned that non-judicious use of water will reduce the scarce resource sooner. "We are very fortunate that we have the Hooghly next to the city, which is why we are still not feeling water scarcity in a way cities like Chennai are facing. But if we keep wasting water, we will soon lose this advantage," said Asis Majumdar, a professor of water resources engineering at Jadavpur University.

A project undertaken by the CMC has revealed that Calcuttans consume abnor-

mally high volumes of water, far surpassing the limit set by the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation. The limit is 150 litres per person per day in metropolitan cities.

As part of the project, the CMC installed water meters in wards 1 to 5 in north Calcutta to read the volume of water entering into houses. It was found that households were consuming up to 900 litres per day.

"A person does not need 900 litres a day. It can only happen if water is wasted abnormally," said a CMC engineer.

Majumdar said the turbidity of the Hooghly water had increased over time.

"The water that is collected from the river is more turbid and saline than before. It is pushing up costs of treatment. A time will come when the treatment costs will become so high that the government will find it difficult to increase production. That will lead to water scarcity. So it is time we stopped wasting water and use it judiciously," Majumdar said.

### Honour

Smita Bajoria, the honorary consul general of Denmark in Calcutta, will be conferred the Order of Danneborg on Saturday. The medal will be handed over to Bajoria by Svane.