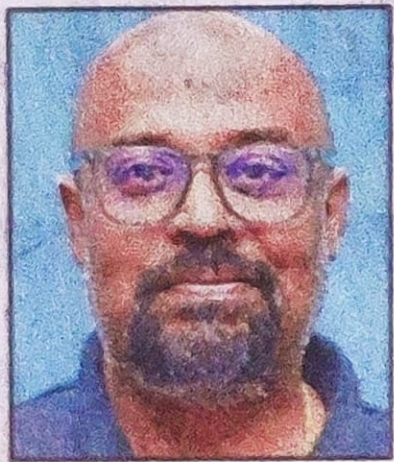


WHO's urban health guide very timely: Neeri scientist

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Nagpur: The World Health Organization's (WHO) new global guide on urban health has been hailed as a "timely and much-needed initiative" by **Dr**



Krishna Khairnar, senior principal scientist and head of the Environmental Epidemiology & Pandemic Management Division at CSIR-NEERI.

The WHO document, "Taking a Strategic Approach to Urban Health: A Guide for Decision-Makers," provides a roadmap for cities to create healthier and more resilient environments by embedding health considerations into all aspects of urban planning—from housing and transport to pollution control and digital access.

Dr Khairnar, whose division at NEERI is also a WHO-recognised reference laboratory, said the guide could help India transition from reactive responses to proactive health management. "This guide, launched on World

Cities Day (Oct 31), is extremely timely. Urbanisation in India is accelerating, and the health of our cities will determine the health of our nation. We must move beyond reacting to outbreaks or pollution episodes and start building systems that anticipate and prevent health crises," he said.

He pointed out that multiple urban challenges, including poor sanitation, overcrowded housing, air pollution, and urban heat islands, combine to heighten disease risks in Indian cities. "The guide's emphasis on governance, data-driven policies, and cross-sector collaboration is much needed in the Indian context," he said.

Dr Khairnar said India's immediate priorities should include strengthening disease surveillance, particularly in slums and informal settlements. He welcomed WHO's call for greater community participation. "People living in informal settlements are often excluded from planning processes. Their experiences are vital for building resilient and inclusive urban health systems," he said.