

IITs, IIMs among others to submit 50 papers on impact of Smart Cities Mission

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AS THE June 30 deadline for the Smart Cities Mission approaches, the question of whether the projects have worked will soon be answered through 50 research papers being produced by the students and faculty of premier institutes, including IITs and IIMs.

In a first of its kind initiative for a national urban mission, independent assessments will look into a wide range of topics — from the beginning of the Mission, when special purpose vehicles were set up by cities to execute projects, to the final stages, when the impact of completed projects can be seen.

According to Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs sources, the work has started this month and is likely to conclude with 50 research papers by March-end. So far, 23 institutes have been brought on board, they said.

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri Friday said the Mission will “hopefully” achieve its targets in 2024.

Among the topics being studied are whether the concept of area-based development has ben-

efitted the Mission (to be done by IIT-Roorkee), impact of waste-to-energy plants (IIT-Bombay), and what role the Mission has had in enhancing the overall quality of public spaces (School of Planning and Architecture in Delhi). IIM-Kashipur will study the role of firms as design and project management consultants for Mission.

Miranda House, the only Delhi University college that is part of the initiative, will research on whether Smart Cities projects like parks are inclusive for people with disabilities, senior citizens, and children; and IIM-Bangalore on the impact of the projects on real-time tracking of criminal activities, especially against women. The institutes will be provided with Rs 6 lakh stipend for each research paper, said officials.

Smart Cities Mission Director Kunal Kumar said, “The latest initiative is part of the larger outreach by the Smart Cities Mission, to academia. There was the Smart cities and Academia with regards to Action and Research initiative in 2022... Now, we have tied up with 23 institutes to conduct independent outcome studies,” said Kumar.

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