

# Time to paint the town green

There is need for policy framework for urban greening to improve environment: NBA ex-secretary

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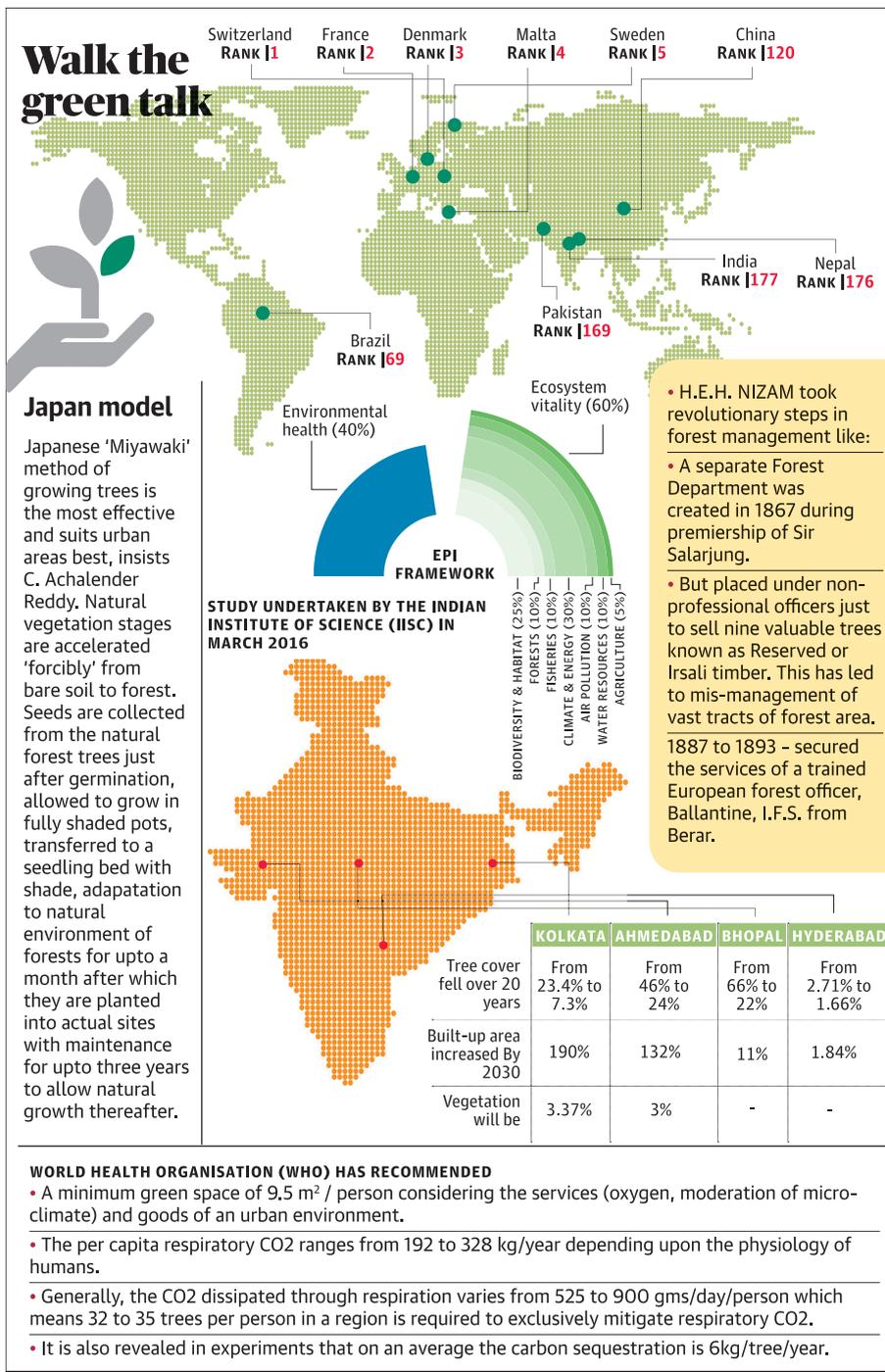
The country has shown improved ranking in the World Bank's 'Ease of doing business index', going from 130 to 100 with policy-makers and governments expressing their determination to push it up further.

Alas, what did not generate similar 'heat' was the 'Environment Performance Index (EPI) Ranking-2018, where India was ranked 177th among 180 countries, while Brazil and China were 69th and 120th respectively, as per a study jointly conducted by Yale and Columbia Universities with World Economic Forum.

"This is a cause for concern which governments should take up seriously. There is a need for a comprehensive policy framework for urban greening and agriculture to help improve the environment and countering adverse effects of climate change," says C. Achalender Reddy, in-charge director of Centre for Innovations in Public Systems, Administrative Staff College of India. The framework should have a 'realistic' picture of the physical target to be achieved, funds, human resources and indicators to assess progress to take up mid-course correction, he says. Urban planning integrated with greening can contribute to more sustainable human settlements. Strategic placement of trees in urban areas can cool the air between 2°C and 5°C.

## Energy saving formula

Trees properly placed around buildings can also reduce air conditioning needs by 30% and save energy used for heating by 20% to 50%, explains the former Secretary of the National Biodiversity Authority who had presented a paper in the



GRAPHICS: SUBYENDU GANGULY



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C. ACHALENDER REDDY,  
In-charge director of Centre for Innovations in Public Systems, ASCI

green spaces, greening of residential colonies, home-steads and roof-top gardening, greening of institutional lands, industries, roadsides, alongside canal banks, river and lake fronts.

Apart from in-situ preservation of natural undisturbed habitats located in and around urban areas, old trees should be designated as heritage trees for preservation with a credible measuring, monitoring and evaluation framework in place.

## Seedling supply

He advocates supply of seedlings to people at their doorstep as per demand through nearest schools, colleges, community centres, petrol pumps, religious places, etc.

The technique of raising tall-cum-robust seedlings should be developed for high survival rate and instant forest look.

A green cess, setting up of an urban forestry and environment wing in all urban bodies, uniform schedule of rates, strong legal framework to protect greenery and urban spaces, an independent agency to evaluate and improve success rate of greening programmes and certification process are all necessary, adds Mr. Reddy.

recently held State-wide environment meet.

He points out that Hyderabad's tree cover fell from 2.71% to 1.66% over 20 years. Therefore, he calls for ensuring adequate green areas by

incentivising sustainability of urban greenery through 'green' certification, enforcement of regulations, inventory of urban public lands along those taken up for plantations and enforcement

of land use zoning regulations by ULBs.

At a time when the government is planning 'Haritha Haram', Mr. Reddy seeks mandatory maintenance of inventory of open/