

'People in cities gain least in infrastructure growth'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Chetan Bhagat on Tuesday said that people living in cities benefit the least when it comes to development of infrastructure.

"The voting population of Bangalore is just 2% of Karnataka's population. Chennai is in a similar position. Our voices aren't heard by politicians as we do not form their vote bank. In the end, poor cities are left behind," he said.

The author's observation came a day after the state government allotted ₹300 crore for metro rail, ₹500 crore for the Chennai Mega City Development Mission and another ₹750 crore for the Integrated Urban Development Mission in its budget for the financial year and ₹16,600 crore for the first phase of mono rail.

C. Suresh Kumar



NOVEL IDEA? Chetan Bhagat during a discussion on "Building Sustainable Cities" on Tuesday

Speaking at a seminar organized by Inno Group, Bhagat said, "We need to demand world class infrastructure from the government. We are satisfied even when the government does little good work," he said.

Bhagat wants to appeal to every government official to "exit their jobs with a bomb". Referring to recent media ar-

ticles about army chief General V K Singh coming out in the open on being offered ₹14 crore as bribe, he said, "I know it's practical to be worried about your job but at least when you retire, you should do so with a bang," he said. "So what if they fire you?"

He also believes that an independent body like the Lokpal will work to check corruption. "Hong Kong used to be a very corrupt city. But a independent commission was set up and it is one of the best cities in the world now," he said. The novelist however did not dismiss government officials altogether. "It is very difficult to clear IAS exams or to get a government job. Officials can do their job but cannot change the system. They are forced to surrender their intelligence," he said.