'India should consider making 100 existing cities smart'

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Singapore: India should consider making 100 existing cities smart instead of building new ones, an India-based American architect has said here in Singapore.

Prof Christopher Benninger said he feels that Indian planners should design the country's new cities using the knowledge of local culture and economics as well as understanding of the appropriate infrastructure requirements.

He called on authorities to consider making 100 existing cities smart cities instead of building 100 new cities.

"We have about 300 cities, each with more than half a million population. My argument is that let's make even 100 of those 300 cities smart," said Pune based Benninger, 72, who was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Singapore-based Business Excellence and Research Group (BERG).

"I feel that Indian planners should be planning Indian cities as we know the culture, the economics and the most appropriate infrastructure for India," he told PTI last night.

US-born Benninger, who has spent most of his life designing projects in India, welcomed Singapore's design for Andhra Pradesh new capital city of Amaravati.

He is now designing the Institute of Technology at Hyderabad and Bajaj Institute of Technology near Nagpur.

"India will always have enough engineers and there were a lot of applications for civil engineering courses at the universities. We definitely have a lot of applicants for civil engineering courses. India is a huge country with a lot of huge aspiration," he said.

After receiving the award, he said, "It is a great honour to be given a life-time achievement award by friends in a country like Singapore which we all look up to. It is a country which is very good at urban plans and designs."

The Singapore awards, held annually, recognised the contribution of developers, architects and interior designers in India.

"The (Indian real estate) sector plays a critical role for managing India's rapidly urbanising population. BERG aims to provide an international thought leadership platform in this process," Chairman of BERG Advisory Board Thomas McMahon said.

The second BERG Real Estate Awards 2015 attracted participation from a large cross-section of real estate players spanning the categories of developers, architects, and interior designers from across India.

 A total of 15 awards were presented at the Gala Awards night in Singapore.

- PTI