Co-organised by

National Institute of Urban Affairs

UN-HABITAT

PRAJA.ORG
MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

PRAJATANTRA
2025

National Youth Festival

Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Cities

Supported by

ROHINI NILEKANI philanthropies

Madhu Mehta Foundation

Overview

India is the largest democracy in the world, with over half under the age of 30. Young citizens bring unique perspectives, ideas, and potential for transformation. They can shape our cities with innovation and diversity. By empowering youth and giving them a platform to share their ideas, we can harness their potential to build a better future.

In shaping cities for tomorrow, the vision and energy of youth are key to building communities that reflect our aspirations. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing a vital role in transforming our cities into smarter, efficient and sustainable environments. It is being used rapidly for managing urban services and improving quality of life, benefitting both citizens and administration. Bringing together the potential of youth and the power of AI opens up exciting possibilities for citizen participation.

Prajatantra 2025, co-organised by the Praja Foundation, National Institute of Urban Affairs and UN-Habitat India with support from Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies and Madhu Mehta Foundation, introduces a celebration of participatory city governments. This festival is designed for youth to advocate for their vision, and ideas and actively participate in debates and discussions on city governance.

Through Prajatantra, our goal is to empower Indian youth, increase citizen participation in local decision-making and create sustainable cities for everyone.

Background

Prajatantra: National Youth Festival was conceptualised by Praja Foundation in 2019 with the core objective of engaging youth in city governance. Prajatantra facilitates a dynamic exchange of ideas, visions, and practices. Young participants immerse themselves in the decision-maker's role to present their vision of model city governance. Through active dialogue with experts & changemakers from the government, public policy, and academia sectors at Prajatantra, participants also expand their horizons on how they can shape urban futures. Inclusivity is at the heart of Prajatantra. Prajatantra 2024 witnessed enthusiastic representation from 2500 participants, representing 102 cities from 28 states and 7 union territories. Praja team actively reached out to 3000 Academic Institutes and Community Organisations to ensure the representation of youth across the socio-cultural realities of India.

SCAN TO REGISTER

COMPETITIONS AND ACTIVITIES

MAYOR'S SPEECH

POLICY ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE

POLICY ON LEVERAGING AI TO ENHANCE MUNICIPAL SERVICES

POLICY DEBATE

QUIZ COMPETITION

OP-ED WRITING

DIGITAL POSTER MAKING

REEL MAKING

FIELD ENGAGEMENT

Teams participating in Prajatantra should participate in all events, otherwise it will impact overall team performance.

VIRTUAL
Qualifying round
Semi-finale round

IN PERSON
Grand finale
in Mumbai

REGISTRATION STARTS FROM:

16th June 2025

LAST DATE TO REGISTER:

15th August 2025

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN PRAJATANTRA

A team of four (4) to eight (8) members can participate. Prajatantra celebrates diversity among participants with respect to class, caste, gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. Everyone is welcome to share their vision on this platform.

Participating teams are encouraged to name their team and design a symbol for themselves like a real political party. While participants should use their creativity and originality, we strictly prohibit the use of a name or a symbol associated with any existing political party. Plagiarism is also not allowed.

Teams will be eligible for the **'Best Team Award'** based on their performance in all competitions. Participating teams are recommended to take part in all events, as it will give them an edge. Each competition will have an Individual Winner and 2 Runners Up. All participants will get a Certificate of Participation.

A participant can engage in multiple events but must adhere to the following participation guidelines:
- The same participant cannot participate in the Mayor's Speech and Policy on Municipal Finance or Policy on Leveraging AI to enhance Municipal Services.
- There must be two (2) different participants for both Policy Presentation events from a team. Remember Municipal Committees in a city government are chaired by different persons.

TEAM DETAILS

COMPETITION	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
MAYOR'S SPEECH	1
POLICY ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE	1
POLICY ON LEVERAGING AI TO ENHANCE MUNICIPAL SERVICES	1
POLICY DEBATE	1
QUIZ COMPETITION	2
OP-ED WRITING	1
DIGITAL POSTER MAKING	1
REEL MAKING	1

TIMELINE FOR PRAJATANTRA 2025

Qualifying Round (Virtual) : 5th, 6th, 7th September 2025

Semi Final (Virtual) : 20th and 21st September 2025

Grand Finale (In person) : 1st and 2nd November 2025

SCHEDULE FOR PRAJATANTRA 2025

Last day to Register: 15th August 2025

Boot Camp: 15th & 16th August 2025

KNOWLEDGE SESSIONS

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 1
Date: 19th August 2025 (Tuesday)　　　Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 2
Date: 21st August 2025 (Thursday)　　　Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 3
Date: 23rd August 2025 (Saturday)　　　Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 4
Date: 26th August 2025 (Tuesday)　　　Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 5
Date: 11th September 2025 (Thursday)　　　Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

KNOWLEDGE SESSION 6
Date: 13th September 2025 (Saturday)　　　Time: 05:00 PM - 06:00 PM

*More Knowledge Sessions will be conducted, date and time will be communicated closer to the event.

PRAJATANTRA ACTIVITIES

BOOTCAMP

A Boot Camp will be organised for all teams registering for Prajatantra 2025. In this session, members of the organising team will provide a comprehensive orientation on the format and rules of Prajatantra events. The activity plan will also be explained.

Boot Camp is a crucial preparatory phase, ensuring that all teams are well-equipped with the necessary knowledge to engage effectively in the event. Hence, it is mandatory for participating teams to attend the Bootcamp. Bootcamp is also for the participants to directly engage with the organising team and clarify their doubts.

KNOWLEDGE SESSIONS

The Knowledge Sessions of Prajatantra 2025 are designed to provide participants with a foundational understanding of policy-making for the competition. During these sessions, experts in the field will impart valuable information and insights related to the subject matter, equipping participants with the knowledge they need to formulate well-informed and effective policies.

These sessions serve to enhance the capacity of participants by broadening their understanding of the topic and enabling them to delve into the intricacies of policy development. With the knowledge gained from these sessions, participants will be empowered to present their policies in a comprehensive and detailed manner, highlighting their expertise and contributing to meaningful discussions on urban governance and related issues.

01 MAYOR'S SPEECH

The Mayor is the first citizen of the city and presides over the Municipal Corporation. The Mayor is elected directly by the citizens or by the councillors, depending on the state legislation.

In the Mayor's Speech competition, participants are required to present a speech as the Mayor in the first General Body Meeting of the Corporation following a fresh election. The Mayor presents the policy framework of the city government for their current term, highlighting significant decisions and key changes in the administrative structure. The competition aims to enhance participants' leadership skills and provide them with insight into the preparation of a comprehensive development vision for the city.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- Encourage Innovative Solutions by challenging participants to think creatively about local issues, the mayor's speech competition encourages fresh solutions, with some even using AI to help solve problems.
- To Build Leadership Qualities by stepping into the mayoral role. Participants must analyse current problems, envision practical and impactful strategies, and articulate these ideas.
- Participants develop the critical skills needed to communicate effectively and persuasively by preparing and delivering speeches on topics of municipal importance. This experience allows them to practice organising their thoughts and engaging with an audience.
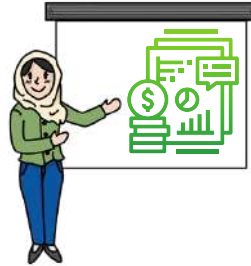
*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

02 POLICY ON MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Municipal Finance plays a crucial role in shaping the execution of public works and services within a city. Municipal Budget encompasses fiscal policies and corresponding financial plans of the Municipality. It includes a "Revenue Budget" for maintaining existing services and operations, as well as "Capital Budget" for creating new assets and infrastructure to improve service quantity and quality. Recognizing its importance, many cities across India have adopted a participatory approach, inviting citizens to actively engage in the budget-making process for their local wards and the city at large. Participants will create an action plan designed to boost community engagement in local economic planning. The goal is to integrate citizens' voices into the financial decision-making processes of their cities, ensuring that budget allocations reflect the collective priorities and needs of the local community.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- To encourage the participants to familiarise themselves with the Budgetary procedures. They will understand the science behind creating a budget for a city including detailed aspects of financial planning, management, and implementation.
- Participants will have the opportunity to simulate the work of a municipal budgeting committee, presenting policy briefs and recommendations based on their research. This competition will highlight the significant role that citizens can play in shaping effective and responsive municipal budgets.
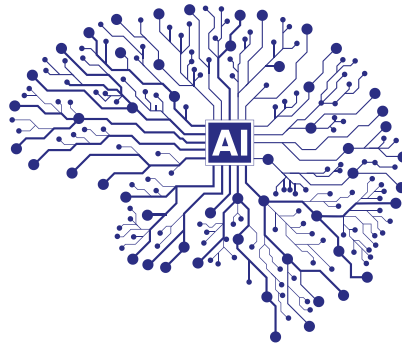
*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

The Subject Committee will be responsible for drafting and presenting policies that explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used to improve the delivery and efficiency of municipal services. This initiative will focus on creating inclusive, ethical and technologically sound frameworks to integrate AI into everyday governance and public service systems. The aim of the Subject Committee is to foster smarter cities by leveraging data-driven solutions, enhancing transparency, and streamlining citizen-centric services. Participants will explore how AI can optimize urban infrastructure, improve responsiveness to public needs and wants, and ensure better resource management across city governments.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

- Motivating participants to craft innovative policies on Artificial Intelligence in Municipal Services, ensuring the development of programs and platforms that not only streamline service delivery but also promote real-time problem-solving, data-driven decision-making, and improved accessibility to essential civic services for all citizens.

- Designing AI-driven solutions that are responsive to evolving community needs and wants, and continue to promote inclusive, tech-enabled governance among citizens.
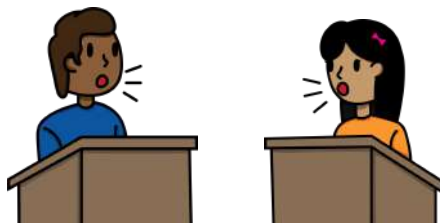
*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

04 POLICY DEBATE

The Policy Debate focuses on urban governance and policies through formal and systematic discussions. The debate provides a platform for participants to critically analyze and discuss current events, and socially, culturally, politically, and economically relevant topics. The competition is structured in the form of debate in which teams advocate for and against a resolution that calls for a change in governmental policy.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- Promote critical analysis of proposed policies and their potential impact on urban governance.
- Encourage participants to develop persuasive arguments in favour or against proposed policies.
- Enable participants to assume the role of municipal councillors in the city government's legislative body, fostering a realistic and immersive experience.

The topics for Policy Debate will be provided during the Prajatantra 2025 Boot Camp.

The competition follows a specific format replicating a General Body Meeting of a city government and the participants will be given a set of instructions. The Motion of the debate will be decided on the day of competition and participants will be assigned a side (government or opposition) to debate on the spot. Participants can raise questions to the opposing participant during the Q&A session.

Overall, the competition provides an opportunity for participants to engage in constructive debates, simulate the roles of policymakers, and develop critical thinking skills on urban governance and policies.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

05 QUIZ COMPETITION

The Quiz Competition tests knowledge and understanding of Urban Governance among participants. It aims to promote healthy competition, a deeper understanding of governance, and amplify the learning experience. The competition serves as a platform to assess the participant's knowledge and skills related to the theme and stimulate their political and constitutional awareness. This will improve fast decision-making and spontaneous and rational thinking among the participants.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:
- Assessing participants' knowledge and understanding of City Governance.
- Stimulating participants' political and constitutional knowledge.

5.2 CATEGORIES IN THE QUIZ COMPETITION

- Constitution of India
- Urban Governance
- Democracy (history, concepts, theory)

The Qualifying Round and Semi Final of the Quiz Competition will consist of multiple rounds conducted on an online quiz platform. The Grand Finale, on the other hand, will be held in person and will feature multiple rounds such as a rapid-fire round, audio-visual round, etc.

*Questions in the quiz competition will be prepared on the above themes.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

06 OP– ED WRITING

Opinion-Editorial is a platform where individuals can express their views towards a certain issue. It is generally accommodated on the left side of a newspaper called the 'editor's column', Op-Eds focuses on 'Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Cities' & aims to celebrate the skill of writing and the talent required to create well-researched articles on this important topic. Participants will have the opportunity to delve into various aspects of urban governance and convey their thoughts and opinions through informative Op-Eds.

By engaging in this competition, participants will enhance their knowledge, deepen their understanding of urban governance issues, and improve their communication skills, thereby empowering them to effectively advocate for and contribute to the development of better citizen-centric governance practices in the future.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- Op-Ed contributes to public discourse by sparking discussions and debates on important topics. Participants are encouraged to engage critically with different perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of complex issues and promoting a diversity of perception.
- Op-Ed competition allows participants to articulate their viewpoints on various topics ranging from politics and social issues to culture and economics. It provides a space for individuals to share their perspectives and insights based on their expertise, experiences, or research.

6.2 TOPIC FOR OP–ED WRITING

Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Cities

*Note: Kindly refer to the By–Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

07 DIGITAL POSTER MAKING COMPETITION

Prajatantra 2025 understands the importance of technology and the crucial role it plays among youth today. Keeping this in mind, the Digital poster-making competition aims to promote the healthy inclusion of budding technology & creative abilities and amplify the learning experience. The competition serves as a platform to assess a participant's knowledge, skills and new perspectives on Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Cities.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- By leveraging digital platforms, the competition transcends geographical boundaries, allowing participants from different states and cultures to showcase their artistic talents and perspectives on the theme given.
- Motivate participants to engage in digital mediums to improve the transparency of governments, engagement of citizens, efficiency of government structures, and accessibility of the facilities.
- Make participants realise the potential of digital mediums in improving urban governance through AI & provide an opportunity for participants to hone their digital design skills, including graphic design, illustration, and digital editing.

7.2 THEME

Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Cities

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

08 REEL MAKING

Social Media platforms have become powerful tools for civic expression and youth engagement. The Reel Making Competition invites participants to create short and impactful videos (reels) on themes related to governance and civic issues, by incorporating artificial intelligence. Participants are encouraged to use creativity, storytelling and hone their digital skills to craft content that can inspire, educate and mobilize citizens– especially the youth, towards active civic participation. The competition aligns with the spirit of Prajatantra, thus enabling young voices in the democratic process.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- Participants will learn to express their complex ideas in a concise, visual and creatively engaging manner, improving their storytelling, design and public awareness skills.
- The event provides a platform for young individuals to highlight pressing social and political issues, empowering them to become changemakers within their community.
- Through content creation, participants will explore the impactful use of social media to influence public opinion constructively and positively.

8.2 THEMES

Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Cities

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

09 FIELD ENGAGEMENT

After the declaration of the results of the Semi-Final round, only the finalists of Prajatantra 2025 will be involved in field engagement activities. It will span over a period of two weeks and will focus on the theme of 'Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Cities'.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the competition are as follows:

- To enhance participants' awareness about urban governance and enable them to actively participate in the same by engaging themselves in the field.
- To enable participants to gain hands-on experience about city governance and be more aware of the components and functions of the existing plans and missions.

9.2 ACTIVITIES

Finalists will be required to participate in:

- They will conduct a literature review on policies in their respective cities and then meet with the administration to validate their findings. This will involve assessing the status of the policies in the city.

- Finalists will conduct qualitative research in the field by surveying local communities; street vendors, self-help groups, elected representatives and citizens to analyse the implementation of urban governance policies and the service delivery of the respective municipal corporation. The finalists will be evaluating the impact of policies on the citizens and presenting the findings and experiences to a team of experts during the Grand Finale.

*Note: Kindly refer to the By-Laws document for Event Guidelines and Rules & Regulation.

DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed by students, teachers, and other faculty during or after the event are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of Praja Foundation or supporting organisations.

PARTICIPATION DISCLAIMER

By participating in Prajatantra 2025, you agree to the following terms:

- The use of inappropriate language or references to real-life political parties or ideologies will result in immediate disqualification.

- Any form of cheating or dishonest behaviour during the competitions will result in immediate disqualification and a ban from future events.

- Colleges/Institutions will be responsible for their students, and it is mandatory to have cameras switched on during certain events such as the Quiz competition.

- By participating, you consent and authorise Praja Foundation to use and post any photographs, videos, recordings, or other records of the event, including full names of participants for promotional purposes, media reporting, and publication on the organisation's website or blog. You will not be entitled to any compensation for the use of your name, image, or video by the Praja Foundation.

- Praja Foundation reserves the right to exclude any individual from the competition at any time, providing appropriate reasoning to college/institution authorities.

SCAN TO REGISTER

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