World Cities Day (31 Oct) 2026 theme: 'Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All'

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News

World Cities Day was observed on 31 Oct 2026, closing UN-Habitat's 'Urban October' campaign. The 2026 theme: 'Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All'. The global observance is being held in Fuzhou, capital of China's Fujian province, at the Fuzhou Strait International Conference and Exhibition Center from 31 Oct to 2 Nov; the fourth cycle of the Global Award for Sustainable Development in Cities (Shanghai Award) is presented there. According to UN-Habitat, up to 3.4 billion people face some form of inadequate housing, and over 1.1 billion live in informal settlements and slums.

Key facts

Date	31 October (annual)
2026 theme	'Regenerating the City: Adequate Housing for All'
Global host	Fuzhou, Fujian province, China – 31 Oct – 2 Nov 2026
General theme	'Better City, Better Life'
Origin	UNGA resolution A/RES/68/239 (27 Dec 2013); first observed 2014, Shanghai
Urban October	From World Habitat Day (first Monday of Oct – 5 Oct in 2026) to World Cities Day (31 Oct)

Previous year	2025 – 'People-centred smart cities', Bogotá (Colombia)

Background

- UN system: UN-Habitat (UN Human Settlements Programme) was set up in 1978, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11) – 'inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities'. The 'New Urban Agenda' was adopted at Habitat III in Quito in 2016. The general theme 'Better City, Better Life' comes from the Shanghai World Expo 2010.
- Indian schemes: the Smart Cities Mission, AMRUT (water supply, sewerage) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U) were launched on 25 June 2015; nodal ministry – Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). 100 smart cities were selected through a competition; the mission was extended to 31 March 2025.
- Constitution: the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 gave constitutional status to urban local bodies – Part IX-A (Articles 243P–243ZG), 12th Schedule (18 subjects). The 'right to adequate housing' is in Article 25 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- Geography: Fuzhou is the capital of Fujian province on China's south-east coast facing the Taiwan Strait, on the Min River. Shanghai (2014, 2022) and Guangzhou (2017) are other Chinese cities that have hosted the global observance.

Tamil Nadu link: as per Census 2011, Tamil Nadu's urbanisation is 48.45% – the most urbanised among the large States. Eleven Tamil Nadu cities were selected under the Smart Cities Mission: Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Salem, Vellore, Thanjavur, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tiruppur and Erode.

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