

# Project on Navi Mumbai wins an international award

**DNA Correspondent**

A resident of Versova, Mishkat Irfan Ahmed, has won second prize from Holcim Foundation for her project on Navi Mumbai, under the category of landscape, urban design and infrastructure, titled 'The Village, The City and The Ecosystem.'

Mishkat, 26, is a research scholar from the University of California, Berkeley, United States, and has completed her bachelor's in architecture from Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture. Her project on revitalization and development of Navi Mumbai was selected from Asia Pacific region for Holcim award for project on sustainable construction.

Under the project, Mishkat came up with a concept to retain the pace of development in the city without disturbing its ecological balance. Talking about the project at ACC Cement House in Churchgate, Mishkat said the project focussed on the development of a rural area along with the improvement in urban settlements of the area by integrating it with the ecosystem.

"My project covered one square mile of Ulwe region. The area is a mix of urban and rural life along with a rich ecosystem. And the challenge was to integrate all the three systems," Mishkat said.

The project emphasized on the development of Ulwe, a region around the planned city of Navi Mumbai. While studying the area, she realised that the rapid transformation of the area was done with little consideration to the existing landscape. The present plan involves integration of villagers and their main source of income, agriculture, with other urban developments. Mishkat's project has ensured the coexistence of agriculture along with the growth of the city. It has planned retail outlets and malls



**Under the project, Mishkat came up with a concept to retain the pace of development in the city without disturbing its ecological balance**

closer to the station while residential premises closer to the green belts, estuaries and green patches of the city.

"The importance of agriculture is very high around the cities as growing distance only increases the food price and the food gets stale quickly. Navi Mumbai is still developing and we can learn from our mistakes. The city is losing out on open spaces, water bodies, wet lands and hills due to development, she said.

The only way to attain harmony between development and nature is to blend infrastructure with ecosystem. "The idea is to have roads along the hillocks so that the area is more accessible. A film industry is planned in the area so that it can cater to the demand of people and I have already suggested revitalization of water bodies," Mishkat said.

Responding to why she had chosen to study Navi Mumbai despite of being a resident of suburbs of Mumbai, Mishkat said, "I have always been interested in satellite cities and town planning. So I wanted to study how satellite cities can help rapid growth in population by meeting people's demand and I decided to work on the project."