Spanish, Indian experts discuss urban growth

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Correlating experiences of two cities — Bilbao (Spain) and Delhi — Shiv Nadar University (SNU) brought together experts from the two countries to exchange their ideas and experiences on urban development.

A two-day workshop, ‘Urban Experiences: Bilbao & Delhi’, enabled participants from the two countries to exchange ideas and urban experiences of Bilbao and Delhi. The issues ranged from zoning, urban planning, environment and pollution to urban governance, public spaces and public aesthetics.

The workshop was attended by representatives of the Basque Government from Spain — Cabinet Member Miguel Burzako, Deputy Mayor Ibone Bengoetxe and Assistant Mayor Gemma Rojo.

The Indian delegation included Prof Dipankar Gupta, Director, Centre for Public Affairs and Critical Theory (Shiv Nadar University); Lt-Gen SS Mehta, former General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command; and Professor Shubhashis Gangopadhyay, Director, School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Experts stressed priority should be accorded to mobility and public transport in cities. Discussions concluded with an emphasis on the need for local-level initiatives, creation of public spaces and environment and pollution control.

According to Professor Gangopadhyay the two sites (Bilbao and Delhi) may be different but there was a lot that could be learnt from experiences and perspectives on both sides so that issues related to urban planning — zoning, livelihood pollution, transportation and urbanised livelihood — can be adequately understood and tackled.

The Spanish town of Bilbao was ravaged by floods in 1983 and has since been rebuilt.