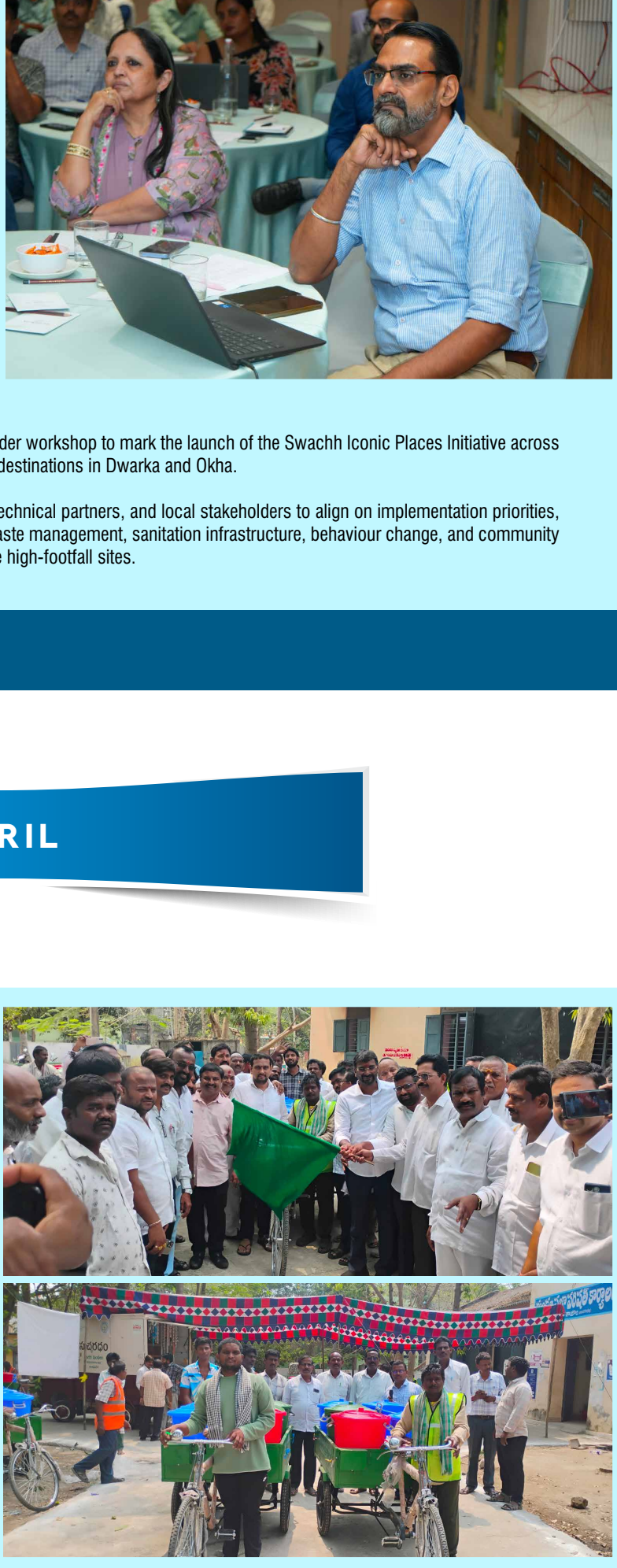




INDIA
SANITATION
COALITION
REALISE A SANITATION TREAT

E- NEWSLETTER 2026 (ISSUE 45)

HIGHLIGHT OF THE QUARTER

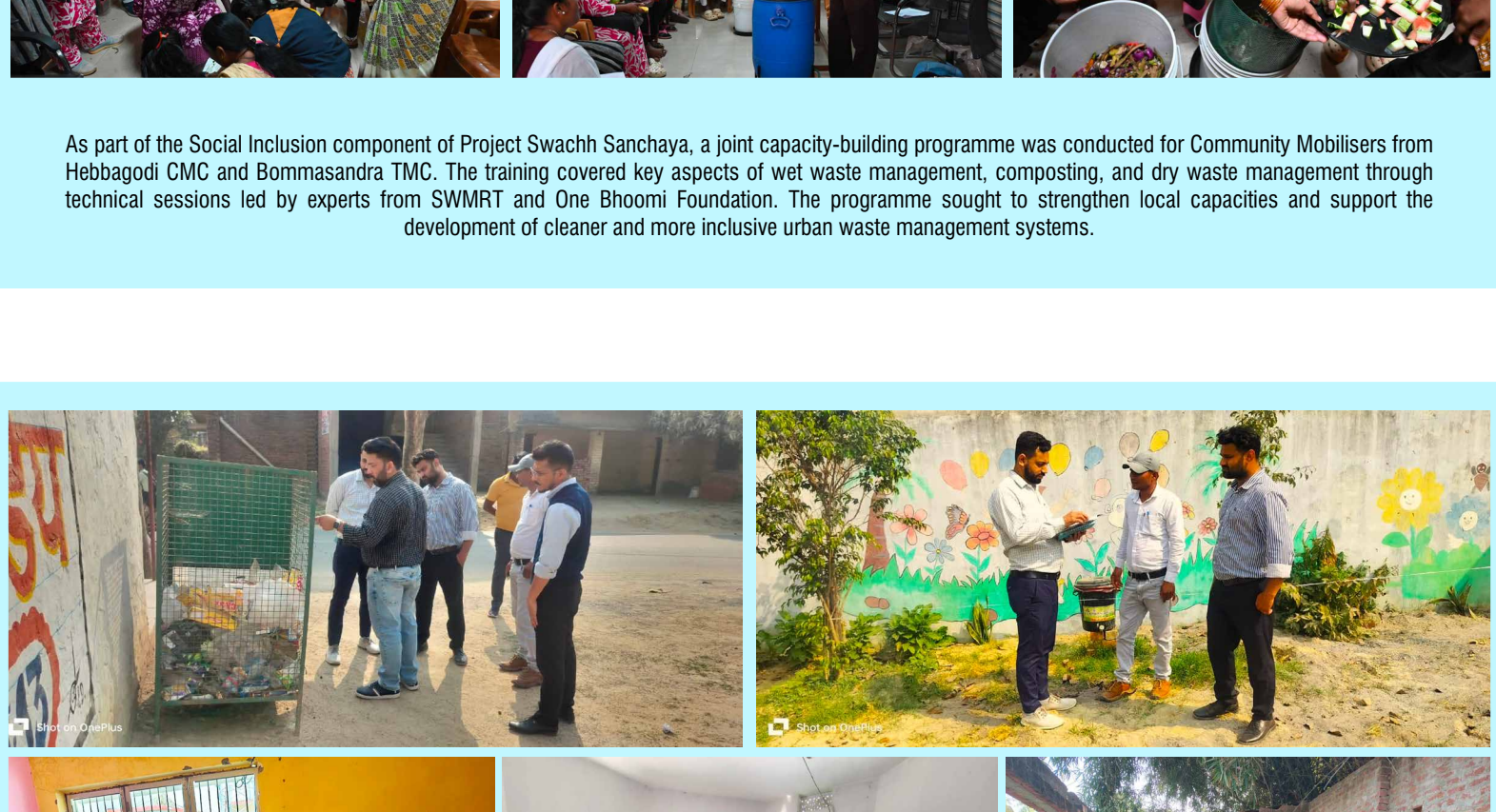


ISC together with Nayara Energy as the CSR partner, convened a multi-stakeholder workshop to mark the launch of the Swachh Iconic Places Initiative across six iconic heritage and pilgrimage destinations in Dwarika and Odisha.

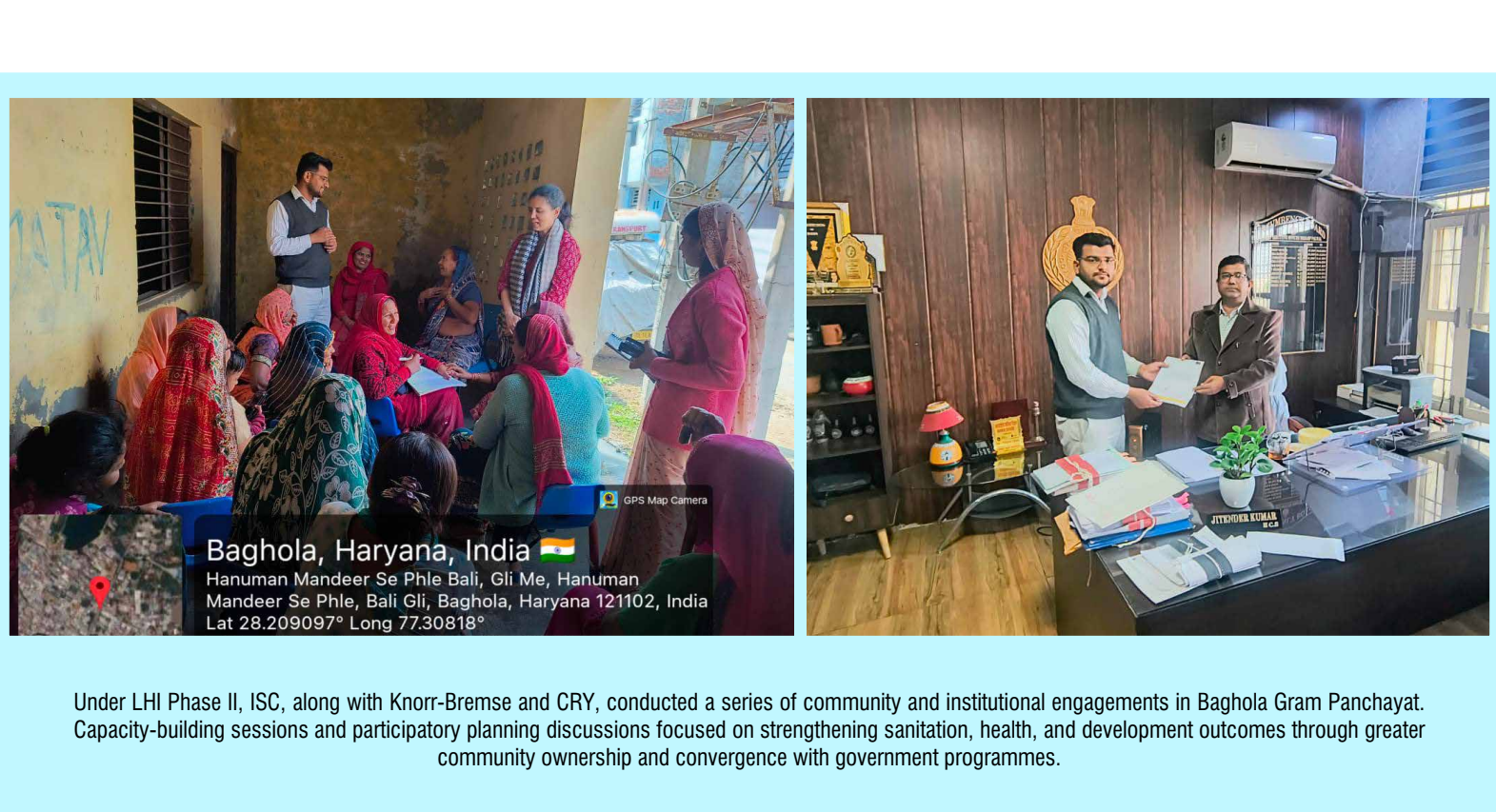
The workshop brought together representatives from government institutions, technical partners, and local stakeholders to align on implementation priorities, institutional convergence, and the roadmap for strengthening solid and liquid waste management, sanitation infrastructure, behaviour change, and community participation at these high-footfall sites.



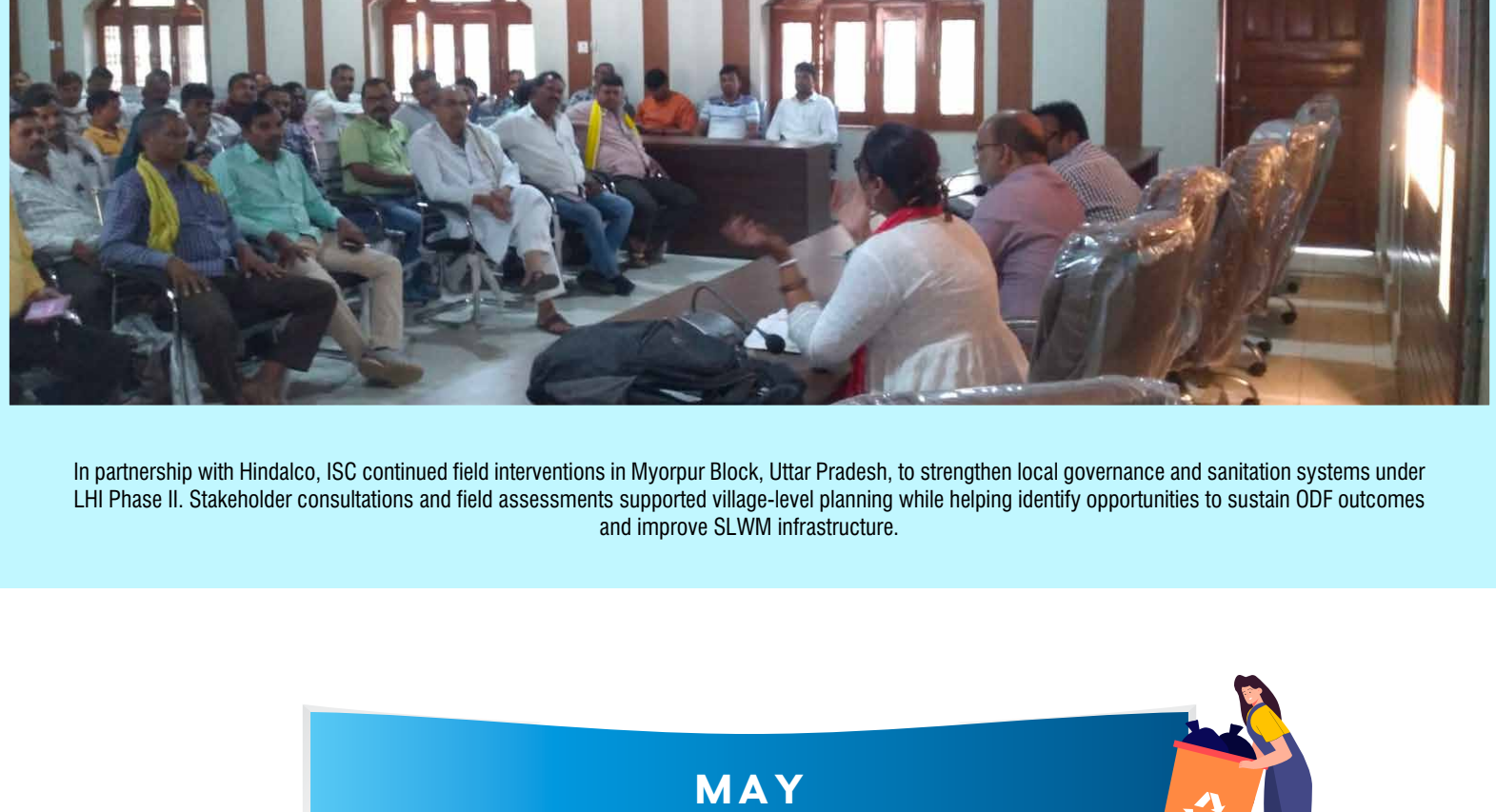
APRIL



Under the LHI Phase II, ISC, in partnership with GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, supported the distribution of sanitation assets across 15 Gram Panchayats in Rajam Mandal, Vizianagaram. The initiative included the provision of 21 tri-cycles, 11 push carts, and 170 dustbins to strengthen waste collection and transportation systems.



As part of the Social Inclusion component of Project Swachh Sanchaya, a joint capacity-building programme was conducted for Community Mobilisers from Hebbagodi CMC and Bommasandra TMC. The training covered key aspects of wet waste management, composting, and dry waste management through technical sessions led by experts from SWMRT and One Bhoomi Foundation. The programme sought to strengthen local capacities and support the development of cleaner and more inclusive urban waste management systems.



Under LHI Phase II, ISC conducted field assessments across Gram Panchayats in Gondia, Gorakhpur, and Ayodhya to review ODF sustainability and SLWM systems. The visits highlighted encouraging progress in waste management practices and community participation, while reinforcing the critical role of Gram Panchayat leadership in sustaining sanitation outcomes. Discussions with stakeholders also identified opportunities to strengthen convergence, improve resource mobilisation, and address key WASH infrastructure gaps.



Under LHI Phase II, ISC, along with Kironi-Bremse and CRY, conducted a series of community and institutional engagements in Baghola Gram Panchayat. Capacity-building sessions and participatory planning discussions focused on strengthening sanitation, health, and development outcomes through greater community ownership and alignment with government programmes.



In partnership with Hindalco, ISC continued field interventions in Myrupur Block, Uttar Pradesh, to strengthen local governance and sanitation systems under LHI Phase II. Stakeholder consultations and field assessments supported village-level planning while helping identify opportunities to sustain ODF outcomes and improve SLWM infrastructure.

MAY



As part of Mother's Day celebrations, ISC highlighted the contributions of women sanitation workers through messages shared by their children.

The initiative acknowledged the vital role played by these women in safeguarding public health and maintaining clean and dignified environments, while also managing responsibilities within their families.



ISC participated in ITC's workshop on "Design of Appropriate Rural Used Water Management Technologies" hosted by IIT Madras.

The workshop provided an opportunity to engage with leading experts and practitioners working in the sector, while facilitating discussions on implementation challenges, technical solutions, and emerging opportunities in rural wastewater management. The engagement also strengthened collaboration with the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, under the Lighthouse Initiative.



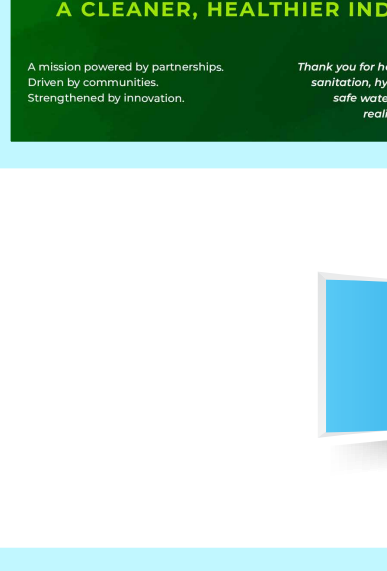
Under LHI Phase II, ISC, in partnership with Hindalco Industries, continues to support sanitation strengthening efforts in Bornali village, Odisha. Through convergence-led planning, institutional ownership, and community participation, stakeholders have worked to address critical sanitation needs and strengthen local systems. The initiative highlights how leadership and community engagement can together drive sustainable sanitation outcomes.



As part of LHI Phase II, ISC conducted a field assessment in Kapurthala district, Punjab, to review GPP-linked sanitation infrastructure, SLWM initiatives, funding convergence, and operational sustainability systems. The visit provided valuable insights into infrastructure gaps, pending interventions, and institutional challenges that will inform future planning and implementation efforts.



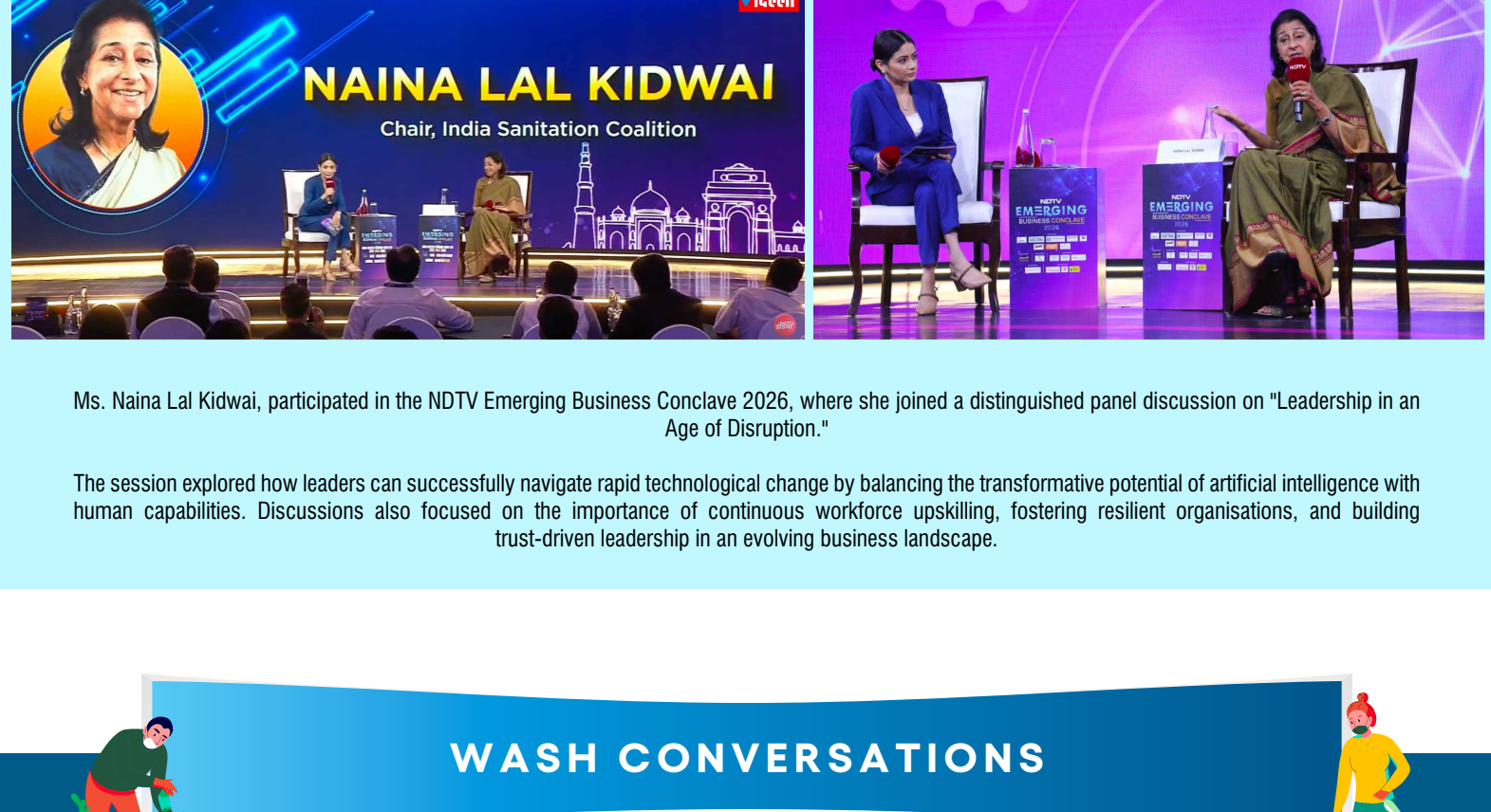
ISC undertook a multi-district field assessment across Sehera and Vidisha districts in Madhya Pradesh to review rural sanitation infrastructure, GPP-linked planning systems, and SLWM sustainability mechanisms. Engagements with Gram Panchayats and district stakeholders highlighted opportunities to strengthen operational sustainability, financing mechanisms, and implementation planning for long-term sanitation outcomes.



JUNE



Under LHI Phase II, ISC conducted a field visit to Palwal, Haryana, to assess sanitation gap being carried out by Swachhta Saathis in collaboration with Gram Panchayats. The exercise is helping identify infrastructure and service delivery gaps while generating valuable inputs to strengthen Gram Panchayat planning, resource allocation, and sustainable ODF plus outcomes.



A block-level consultation under LHI Phase II, supported by Hindalco Industries Ltd., brought together government officials, Swachhta Saathis, and Gram Panchayat representatives in Myrupur Block, Uttar Pradesh. Discussions focused on sanitation gaps, ODF sustainability, and waste management priorities, while supporting the integration of identified needs into the GPPD planning process.

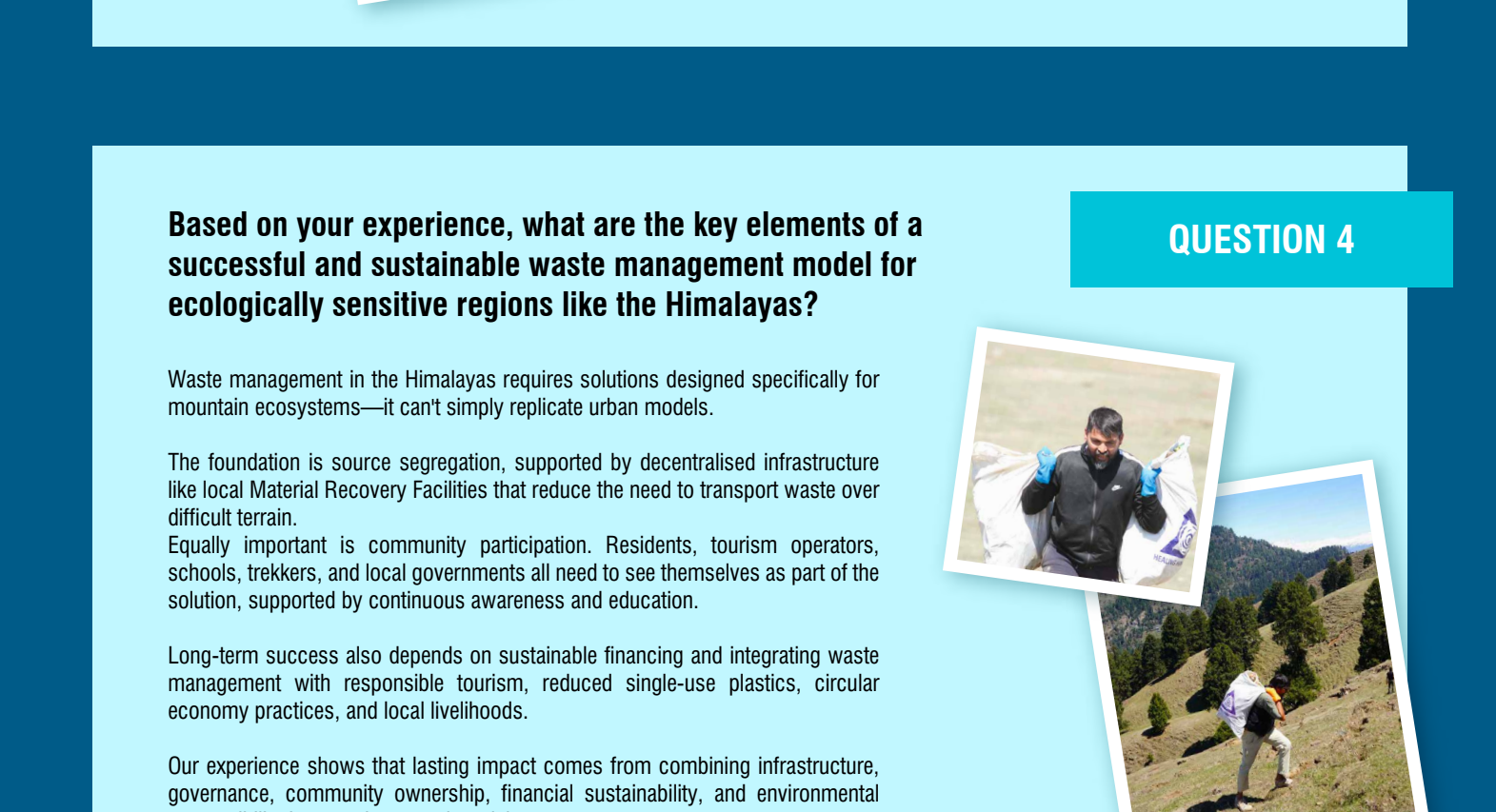


As part of LHI Phase II, ISC conducted a field assessment across Sambalpur district, Odisha in partnership with Hindalco Industries Ltd. The assessment reviewed sanitation infrastructure, SLWM systems, SHG-led operational models, and institutional sustainability mechanisms, reinforcing the importance of strong governance, financing, and community ownership in sustaining sanitation outcomes.



Under the LHI Phase II, ISC, Hindalco Industries Ltd., and implementation partners supported the revival of a non-functional wet waste composting facility in Vavajgar Gram Panchayat. The intervention strengthened waste collection and processing systems, enabled the Miranishi SHG to resume product production and sales, and created new livelihood opportunities while improving local waste management practices.

Subhagpur village in Gondia district is demonstrating how sustainable waste management can create both environmental and economic value. Supported by ITC Limited through awareness-building and capacity development interventions, the village has strengthened waste segregation, resource recovery, recycling practices, and community engagement. The initiative highlights how effective waste management systems can contribute to cleaner communities, livelihood generation, and circular economy outcomes.



WASHathon 2026: Design for Density commenced with finalist teams presenting innovative, localised solutions to address the WASH challenges faced by urban waste picker communities.

The presentations were evaluated by an esteemed jury comprising Ms. Natascha Patel, Chief Executive Officer, India Sanitation Coalition; Ms. Mekala Snehathala, Associate Professor, Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI); Ms. Sneha Satish, Chief Operations Officer, Diway; Mr. Partho Patra, Advisor, Centre for Public Policy, IIM Bangalore; and Mr. Subrata Chakraborty, Director - Water Programme, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

Drawing on their expertise across public health, policy, technology, urban development, and innovation, the jury assessed each solution for its relevance, innovation, and potential for implementation in high-density urban settlements. The pitching sessions marked an important milestone in identifying scalable and community-centred solutions to bridge critical WASH gaps.



ISC celebrated its 11th Foundation Day, marking over a decade of advancing collaborative action in the sanitation sector. Since its inception, ISC has worked alongside governments, corporates, development partners, civil society organisations, practitioners, and communities to strengthen India's sanitation ecosystem through collective efforts and shared purpose.

The occasion served as an opportunity to reflect on the milestones achieved, the partnerships forged, and the impact created over the past eleven years. ISC expressed its gratitude to its partners, supporters, and stakeholders whose continued collaboration has been instrumental in driving meaningful and sustainable change.

As ISC enters its next chapter, it remains committed to fostering partnerships, enabling innovation, and accelerating progress towards safe and sustainable sanitation for all.

ISC IN MEDIA

Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, Chair, ISC, was featured in Business Today, where she shared insights on leadership, resilience, and advancing women in the workplace. The conversation highlighted the importance of fostering work environments and leading with purpose, integrity, and accountability in an evolving professional landscape.

Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, Chair, shared her insights at the e4m PR Women Achievers platform, reflecting on the evolving nature of leadership in an AI-driven world.

During the session, she emphasised that resilience, innovation, effective communication, and customer centricity are becoming increasingly essential for organisations navigating rapid technological change.

Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, participated in the NDTV Emerging Business Conclave 2026, where she joined a distinguished panel discussion on "Leadership in an Age of Disruption".

The session explored how leaders can successfully navigate rapid technological change by balancing the transformative potential of artificial intelligence with human capabilities. Discussions also focused on the importance of continuous workforce upskilling, fostering resilient organisations, and building trust-driven leadership in an evolving business landscape.

WASH CONVERSATIONS

Pradeep Sangwan, Founder, Healing Himalayas, was honoured at the ISC-FICCI Sanitation Awards 2025 under the category "Excellence in Build/Rebuild/Use of WASH and Plastic Waste Infrastructure using Innovation" for his extraordinary work towards environmental conservation in the Himalayan region of India. ISC spoke with Mr. Sangwan to gain insights into his inspiring journey, which has mobilised communities, created lasting impact, and contributed towards a cleaner and more sustainable India.

QUESTION 1

What first inspired you to start working in the Himalayas? Was there one moment that changed everything for you?

For me, the Himalayas have never been just mountains, they are living ecosystems, the source of our rivers, and home to communities that have lived in harmony with nature for generations.

During years of trekking, I began noticing plastic waste even in the most remote regions. A burning pain came when I met shepherds who lived with incredible respect for the mountains, taking only what they needed and leaving almost no trace. It made me reflect on how disconnected we had become from nature.

I started carrying discarded plastic back in my backpack after every trek. What began as a personal habit grew into clean-up drives with friends, then local communities, and eventually into the Healing Himalaya Foundation. Today, we've conducted over 1,000 clean-up drives with the support of 4,000+ volunteers.

Over time, I realised that collecting waste wasn't enough—we needed to fix the systems that allowed it to accumulate. That led us to build Material Recovery Facilities, strengthen local waste management, and work closely with governments and communities.

Our mission remains simple: if the Himalayas have given us so much, it's our responsibility to give something back.

What's been the biggest lesson you've learned about inspiring communities to take ownership of waste management?

The biggest lesson is that sustainable waste management can't be imposed—it has to be owned by the community.

Early on, we realised that awareness campaigns alone weren't enough. Real change came from listening to people, understanding local realities, and involving residents, businesses, schools, and local governments in designing solutions.

Behaviour change takes time, but when communities begin seeing cleaner surroundings, improved tourism, and better livelihoods, participation grows naturally. One example is Koksar, where we've achieved 95% source segregation.

We've also learned that local leadership is essential. Panchayats, women's groups, youth volunteers, and sanitation workers become champions who keep these systems running long after an organisation steps away.

Ultimately, waste management isn't just an environmental issue, it's about public health, dignity, livelihoods, and pride in one's community.

QUESTION 2

How did the ISC-FICCI Sanitation Awards impact the Healing Himalayas Foundation? Did it open up new opportunities or partnerships?

The ISC-FICCI Sanitation Award was a significant milestone because it recognised years of work in some of India's most challenging landscapes. More importantly, it validated that solutions developed in remote Himalayan villages can be replicated elsewhere.

The recognition increased our visibility among policymakers, government bodies, corporate partners, and development organisations. It also shifted conversations from clean-up drives to long-term waste management systems, opening new opportunities to expand our Material Recovery Facilities and partnerships.

At the same time, awards come with responsibility. They remind us that the work is far from finished and motivate us to keep innovating and sharing solutions that can benefit other ecologically sensitive regions.

QUESTION 3

Based on your experience, what are the key elements of a successful and sustainable waste management model for ecologically sensitive regions like the Himalayas?

Waste management in the Himalayas requires solutions designed specifically for mountain ecosystems—it can't simply replicate urban models.

The foundation is source segregation, supported by decentralised infrastructure like local Material Recovery Facilities that reduce the need to transport waste over difficult terrain.

Equally important is community participation. Residents, tourism operators, schools, trekkers, and local governments all need to see themselves as part of the solution, supported by continuous awareness and education.

Long-term success also depends on sustainable financing and integrating waste management with responsible tourism, reduced single-use plastics, circular economy practices, and local livelihoods.

Our experience shows that lasting impact comes from combining infrastructure, governance, community ownership, financial sustainability, and environmental responsibility into one integrated model.

QUESTION 4

QUESTION 5

What's one message you'd like to share with young people who want to make a difference but don't know where to start?

My advice is simple: don't wait for the perfect opportunity—start with what's in front of you.

When Healing Himalayas Foundation began, we didn't have funding or a detailed plan. We simply believed that doing something was better than doing nothing. One clean-up drive grew into a movement.

You don't have to solve climate change overnight. Learn about the issues, volunteer, support local initiatives, reduce waste in your own life, and use your own skills to contribute.

At the same time, remember that meaningful change is always collaborative. It happens when communities, governments, businesses, and individuals work together.

Most importantly, be patient. Every movement starts with ordinary people choosing to act consistently. That's how lasting transformation begins. (edited)

We are calling for inspiring stories and impactful initiatives driving positive change in the sanitation sector. If your story/organisation deserves a feature, reach out to us at rohit.singh@isc.ficci.com