



Campaign on SafaiMitra Suraksha Challenge

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has launched a **week-long awareness campaign on SafaiMitra Suraksha Challenge (SSC)** as part of the '**World Toilet Day**' (19th November) celebrations, to run up to the 'Swachh Amrit Diwas'.

- The **Swachh Amrit Diwas** is an award ceremony to recognize the role and efforts of the states, cities, ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) and Cantonment Board in **Swachh Survekshan 2021**, and Garbage Free Star Rating certification on 20th November 2021.

World Toilet Day

- In 2013, the **United Nations General Assembly** officially designated **19th November as World Toilet Day**. It is coordinated by **UN-Water** in collaboration with governments and partners.
- It aims **to break the stigma around sanitation** as the silence around the issue of toilets and sanitation has deadly consequences.
- The **theme for the year 2021** is about **valuing toilets**.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - **A total of 246 cities are participating in SSC** which is being conducted across the country. The **state capitals, urban local bodies and smart cities will be eligible** to participate.
 - **Cities will be awarded in three sub-categories** - with a population of more than 10 lakhs, 3-10 lakhs and upto 3 lakhs, with a total prize money of Rs. 52 crore.
 - It is one of the government efforts **to combat manual scavenging**.
- **SafaiMitra Suraksha Challenge (SSC):**
 - SSC was **launched on 19th November 2020** on the occasion of World Toilet Day.
 - SSC is aimed **to encourage cities to mechanise their sewer and septic tank cleaning operations** in order to prevent deaths and fatalities of sanitation workers from 'hazardous entry'.
 - The Government launched this "challenge" for all states **to make sewer-cleaning mechanised by April 2021** — if any human needs to enter a sewer line in case of unavoidable emergency, proper gear and oxygen tanks, etc., are to be provided.
- **Initiatives Taken:**
 - Under SSC, **National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC)**, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, supported by MoHUA are **organizing Loan**

Melas across the country.

- The aim is to help Safaimitras avail loans under the **Swachhata Udyami Yojana (SUY)** for procurement of sewer/ septic tank cleaning machine/ equipment for mechanized cleaning.
- **Skill development training of Safaimitras** have also been conducted through the support of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment via NSKFDC in 115 cities.
- **Call Centre and Helpline number** have been operationalized in 345 cities for safe cleaning of septic tanks/sewers and registering complaints on hazardous cleaning.
- 31 states/UTs have established a **Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA)** and 210 cities are having the **Sanitation Response Units (SRU)**.
- All 246 participating cities have already notified a **ban on [single-use plastic \(SUP\)](#)**.

Manual Scavenging

▪ About:

- Manual scavenging is **defined as** “the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers”.
- The practise of manual scavenging **is linked to India’s caste system** where so-called lower castes were expected to perform this job.
- Officially, **the number of manual scavengers dropped** to 42,303 in 2018 from 7,70,338 in 2008. The survey of manual scavengers in 2018 was conducted by the NSKFDC.

▪ Related Initiatives:

- **[The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation \(Amendment\) Bill, 2020:](#)**
 - It prohibits construction or maintenance of insanitary latrines, and employment of any person for manual scavenging or hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- **[The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013:](#)**
 - The act seeks to reinforce the prohibition of manual scavenging in all forms and ensures the rehabilitation of manual scavengers.
- **[Prevention of Atrocities Act:](#)**
 - It delineates **specific crimes against [Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes](#)**.
- **[National Commission of Safai Karamcharis:](#)**
 - The Commission is acting as a **non-statutory body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** whose tenure is extended from time to time through Government Resolutions.
- **[Swachh Bharat Mission:](#)**
 - Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a national campaign launched by the Government on 2nd October, 2014 to clean the streets, roads and build social infrastructure of the country.

[Source: PIB](#)

