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1. UP achieves 100% ODF+ coverage in Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (Sept. 29, 2023)

Uttar Pradesh achieved 100% ODF Plus status for all 95,767 villages as part of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Phase II.

An Overview of the News

- An ODF Plus village is one that has achieved open defecation-free status through the establishment of effective systems for solid or liquid waste management.
- As of January 1, 2023, only 15,088 villages were ODF Plus in the state.
- In just nine months, more than 80,000 villages achieved ODF Plus status, accelerating the success of the programme.
- Of the 95,767 ODF Plus villages, 81,744 are ODF Plus Aspirational Villages, 10,217 are ODF Plus Emerging Villages, and 3,806 are ODF Plus Model Villages.
- Solid waste management exists in 15,649 villages, while liquid waste management exists in 95,048 villages.

ODF Plus Model Village:

- ODF Plus model villages maintain ODF status, have both solid and liquid waste management, minimal waste, no plastic waste in public areas, and display ODF Plus related IEC messages.
- At present, there are 96,192 such villages across India.

Swachhta Hi Seva (SHS) Campaign 2023:

- The feat was achieved during the ongoing SHS campaign, which takes place from 15 September to 2 October every year.
- About 88 lakh people participated in SHS and contributed significantly in achieving ODF Plus status.

Progress across India:

- About 75% of India's 4.43 lakh villages have declared themselves ODF Plus.
- This progress is in line with the targets of Swachh Bharat Mission Phase II for 2024-25.

Best Performing States/UTs:

- Many states and union territories, including Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Tripura have achieved 100% ODF Plus villages.

Details of ODF Plus Villages:

- There are currently 4,43,964 ODF Plus villages in India.
- This includes villages making progress towards solid waste management or liquid waste management (2,92,497), villages having both (55,549) and ODF plus model villages (96,018).
- There are 2,31,080 villages with solid waste management and 3,76,353 villages with liquid waste management.

Components of Phase-II of SBM(G):

- Phase II includes sustaining ODF-S, solid waste management, plastic waste management, liquid waste management, faecal sludge management, cow dung, IEC/BCC and capacity building.

Participation in Swachhta Hi Seva (SHS) - 2023 Campaign:

- More than 5 crore people participated in this campaign in India, in which more than 2.05 crore people donated labor.
- Additionally, 34 States/UTs and 42 partner Ministries/Departments actively participated in SHS 2023.

Waste Management:

- Plastic waste management includes setting up of units with utilization of waste plastic in road construction and waste collection and segregation sheds in 23 States/UTs.
- Biodegradable waste management includes composting at the community level and the construction of biogas and CBG plants in various districts.

Gray Water Management:

- In rural areas, grey-water management is important, and initiatives like the 'Sujlam' campaign have achieved success in this regard.
- About 63% of the villages have implemented grey-water management, contributing to the ODF Plus status.

2. Uttarakhand launches India's first polythene waste bank for sustainable waste management (Sept. 27, 2023)

On September 25, 2023, Dehradun Cantt Board in Uttarakhand launched the first three polythene waste banks in the country.

An Overview of the News

- These polythene waste banks are strategically placed, two of which are in Garhi and one in Premnagar.

- The inauguration of Garhi Kuda Bank was presided over by State Urban Development Minister Premchand Aggarwal.
- The primary objective of these garbage banks is twofold: waste management and income generation.
- Various polythene waste items including bags, chips wrappers, packing bags, plastic cutters and bread wrappers will be collected.
- Contributors will be compensated at the rate of Rs 3 per kg for the polythene waste brought by them.
- The collected polythene waste will be processed to make decorative items like tiles, boards and utensils.

Expansion Plans and Environmental Impact:

- Additional polythene waste banks are planned to be operational soon, including at places like Bindal Chowki, Dairy Farm in Garhi, and Special Wing in Premnagar.
- This initiative has set a target to purchase a minimum of 70 tonnes and a maximum of 100 tonnes of polythene waste every month.
- This initiative addresses the issue of low-value plastics such as polythene bags and chip wrappers, for which there is often a lack of buyers and markets.
- Polyethylene waste banks aim to provide a solution for responsible disposal of such waste, which can potentially have a positive impact on waste management and the environment.

3. Inauguration of Marwar International Center in Jodhpur (Sept. 27, 2023)

Marwar International Center was inaugurated by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in Jodhpur.

An Overview of the News

- It aims to deliver on the government's commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of every region of the state and promoting intellectual exchange.
- As part of this effort, town halls are being constructed in many districts across Rajasthan.
- Notable establishments in Jaipur include the Rajasthan International Center and the Constitution Club.
- Inspired by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Social Sciences has also been established.
- Additionally, MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions) centers are under construction at a cost of Rs 100 crore in four districts including Jodhpur.

MICE Center in Rajasthan

- MICE centers are being developed to promote the tourism sector in Rajasthan.

- These centers will facilitate international-level conferences and exhibitions in popular tourist destinations like Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Ajmer.
- Plans for these centers were announced in the budget for 2023-24.

Marwar International Center

- Marwar International Center aims to serve as a center of cultural and ideological exchange.
- It will play an important role in the preservation and promotion of art, culture and traditions.
- Situated on 65,000 square meters of land, the center has an auditorium with a seating capacity of 1350 people.
- It includes two hostels for artists, two green rooms, two banquet lawns and an exhibition center spread over 5820 square meters.

Prestigious Institute in Jodhpur

- The foundation stone of many prestigious institutions in Jodhpur includes MBM University, Rajiv Gandhi Fintech University and Mahatma Gandhi Divyang University and Marwar Medical University.
- These institutions contribute to the educational and healthcare infrastructure of Jodhpur and the entire state.

4. 'India Smart Cities Conclave 2023' organized in Madhya Pradesh (Sept. 26, 2023)

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India organized the 'India Smart Cities Conclave 2023' in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on September 26, 2023.

An Overview of the News

- The event brought together all 100 smart cities that are leading urban innovation and changing the city development process.
- The conclave aims to showcase the excellent work done under the Smart Cities Mission and shape the future of urban transformation in India.
- President Draupadi Murmu on September 27, 2023, honored the winners of the India Smart Cities Awards Competition (ISAC) 2022, which has been organized by the ministry since 2018.

Main activities during the Event:

- The event was scheduled for two days on September 26 and 27, 2023.
- On the first day of the conclave, an exhibition of the award-winning projects of ISAC 2022 was inaugurated.

- Attendees had the opportunity to interact with Smart City Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and participate in site visits of notable projects implemented under the Smart City Mission in Indore and Ujjain.
- ISAC 2022 awards were distributed on the second day of the conclave. The awards will recognize 5 States/Union Territories (UTs), 31 distinguished cities and 7 partner organizations for their outstanding contributions.
- In total, there have been 66 recipients of ISAC awards.
- Additionally, several reports will be released during the conclave, including:
 - ISAC 2022 Awards Collection
 - UN Habitat report: "Smart Cities Mission – Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals"
 - A collection of Smart City Mission newsletters
 - ISAC 2023 Awards Booklet.

Smart City Mission:

- The Smart Cities Mission was launched on 25 June 2015 as a centrally sponsored scheme with the goal of transforming 100 cities using "smart solutions".
- The mission aims to provide essential infrastructure, a clean and sustainable environment and a high quality of life to the citizens through smart solutions.

Mission Achievements:

- More than 6000 projects costing more than Rs 1.1 lakh crore have been completed as part of the Mission, with the remaining projects targeted to be completed by June 30, 2024.
- One of the notable achievements was the establishment of Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCC) in all 100 smart cities, functioning as the city's operational center for urban management.
- ICCC has significantly improved various urban services including crime tracking, civil defense, transport management, solid waste management, water supply and disaster management.
- Smart cities have launched projects in areas such as mobility, energy, water, sanitation, solid waste management, public space, social infrastructure and smart governance.

5. Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve becomes the 7th tiger reserve of Madhya Pradesh and 55th in India. (Sept. 26, 2023)

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change declared Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve as the 7th Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh.

An Overview of the News

- The primary objective is to ensure better conservation efforts for the wildlife of the area.
- There are now a total of 55 designated tiger reserves in India.
- Earlier the 54th Tiger Reserve was Dholpur-Karauli Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan.
- Madhya Pradesh was already home to six tiger reserves: Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Satpura, Pench, Panna and Sanjay-Dubri.

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve:

- Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve was established as per the conditions laid down by the Central Government while approving the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project.
- Madhya Pradesh was entrusted with the task of merging Nauradehi and Durgavati wildlife sanctuaries to create this sanctuary.
- In June 2023, the combined area spanning Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur districts was officially notified as the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve.
- The reserve covers approximately 2,339 square kilometers, comprising 1,414 square kilometers of core area and 925.12 square kilometers of the buffer zone.

Tiger Population in India

- India is home to a significant portion, approximately 75%, of the global wild tiger population.
- Russia is second only to India in terms of the second-largest population of wild tigers.

Tiger population in states

- Madhya Pradesh leads with the largest population of tigers in India with 785 tigers.
- Karnataka and Uttarakhand stand second with 563 and 560 tigers respectively.
- Maharashtra also plays an important role with 444 tigers.

Tiger population in the reserve

- Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve has the highest tiger population with 260 tigers.
- Other notable reserves include Bandipur (150), Nagarhole (141), Bandhavgarh (135), Dudhwa (135), Mudumalai (114), Kanha (105), Kaziranga (104), Sunderbans (100), Tadoba (97), Sathyamangalam. (85), and screw (77).

Largest and smallest tiger reserves in India

- Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh is the largest tiger reserve in terms of area.
- Bor Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra holds the title of the smallest tiger reserve in terms of area.

About Madhya Pradesh

- It is the second largest state of India in terms of area after Rajasthan.
- Forests occupy 25.14 percent of its area.
- Governor - Mangubhai Patel
- Chief Minister - Shivraj Singh Chauhan
- Capital - Bhopal
- Union Cabinet Minister for Labor and Employment, Environment, Forest and Climate Change in the Government of India: Bhupendra Yadav

6. Jammu and Kashmir's first Tata Memorial Cancer Care Center inaugurated in Kathua (Sept. 26, 2023)

On September 24, 2023, Jammu and Kashmir inaugurated its first Tata Memorial Cancer Care Center affiliated with Tata Memorial Cancer Care Center (TMC) Mumbai in the newly constructed block of Government Medical College (GMC) in Kathua.

An Overview of the News

- The establishment of the Tata Satellite Cancer Care facility in Kathua addresses the increasing incidence of cancer in the region, which is attributed to factors such as aging, lifestyle changes and environmental impacts.
- This healthcare facility in Kathua aims to serve not only Jammu and Kashmir but also the neighboring areas of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, which lack facilities like the Tata Memorial Center (TMC).
- The introduction of the day-care chemotherapy unit at GMC Kathua makes cancer treatment more accessible and affordable for the local population, eliminating the inconvenience and high cost associated with travel to TMC Mumbai.

India's Healthcare Vision

- Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is expanding its healthcare infrastructure, including the establishment of medical colleges, AIIMS institutes and biotech parks. 'Kathua-Udhampur-Doda' parliamentary constituency is moving towards becoming the future 'health circuit' of India.

India's Vision for Bio-economy

- India aims to achieve a \$150 billion bioeconomy by 2025, with a significant focus on biotechnology and its contribution to vaccine development and cancer treatment.

Leading Cancer Hospital in India

- Tata Memorial Hospital is located in Mumbai.

- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is located in New Delhi.
- Cancer Institute, located in Chennai.
- Apollo Specialty Hospital is located in Chennai.
- Gujarat Cancer and Research Institute is located in Ahmedabad.
- Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre is located in Delhi.
- Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology is located in Bengaluru.
- Regional Cancer Centre, located in Thiruvananthapuram.
- HCG (Healthcare Global Enterprises), based in Bengaluru.
- Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research is located in Chandigarh.

7. Gandhi Vatika inaugurated: Tribute to the life and legacy of Mahatma Gandhi in Jaipur's Central Park (Sept. 25, 2023)

On September 23, "Gandhi Vatika", a museum dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, was officially opened in Jaipur's Central Park.

An Overview of the News

- Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot attended the inauguration ceremony.
- Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) invested Rs 87 crore in the construction of this museum.

Initiative and Guidance:

- The Rajasthan government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, played a key role in initiating and overseeing the construction of the innovative museum named Gandhi Vatika.
- The construction of Gandhi Vatika was made possible with the funds allocated in the state government budget for the financial year 2021-22.

Museum Layout:

- The museum is built over three floors and includes a basement, with each floor dedicated to highlighting different aspects of Mahatma Gandhi's life and teachings.
- The basement section of the museum focuses on major historical events such as the colonial era, the early stages of the freedom struggle, the Rebellion of 1857 and Gandhi's experiences in South Africa.
- The ground floor of the museum houses exhibitions related to Gandhi's return to India, his vision for the nation, the various movements he led and the events leading up to his last days.

- The first floor of Gandhi Vatika is dedicated to showcasing Gandhi's visits to Rajasthan and his deep impact on the global stage.

About Rajasthan

- It is bordered by five other Indian states: Punjab to the north; Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in the northeast; Madhya Pradesh in the southeast; and Gujarat in the southwest.
- Rajasthan is also home to three national tiger reserves, Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhopur, Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar, and Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve in Kota.
- Formation - 30 March 1949
- Capital - Jaipur
- Districts - 33 (7 divisions)
- Governor - Kalraj Mishra
- Chief Minister - Ashok Gehlot (INC)
- Assembly - Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (200 seats)
- Rajya Sabha - 10 seats
- Lok Sabha - 25 seats

8. Elephant Festival begins in Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh (Sept. 25, 2023)

Elephant Mahotsav began in Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve and will continue for seven days.

An Overview of the News

- Elephants play an important role in protecting the tigers in the reserve and keeping out wild elephants.
- The Elephant Festival gives villagers and nearby families a chance to interact with elephants.
- The primary goal of the festival in 2023 is to educate villagers about elephants and remove misconceptions about the wild animals.
- The festivities will end on September 26, after which the elephants will return to their patrolling camps.

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve:

- Located in the Eastern Satpura hill range of Umaria and Katni districts in Madhya Pradesh.
- Boasts a healthy population of tigers and a diverse range of herbivorous animals.

- It has diverse topography, including hills, valleys, rivers, swamps and grasslands
- supporting diverse vegetation.

Other tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh:**1. Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve:**

- Located in the Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh.
- Established in 1975
- Known for saving the world-famous white tiger "Mohan".
- Forms a wildlife corridor connecting Bandhavgarh and Palamu Tiger Reserve.
- Sometimes wild elephants keep coming from the neighboring Chhattisgarh region.

2. Panna Tiger Reserve:

- Located in the Vindhya hill region of northern Madhya Pradesh.
- Characterized by dry deciduous forests, plateaus, and valleys.
- The Ken River flows through the reserve.
- It is surrounded by teak forests in the north and teak-Kardhai mixed forests in the east.
- The Vindhya hill ranges connect wildlife populations in the east and west.

3. Pench Tiger Reserve:

- Inspiration for Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book".
- Known for natural beauty and historical importance.
- Awarded the "Best Maintained Tourist Friendly National Park" award in 2006-07.

4. Kanha Tiger Reserve:

- Home to the hard ground Barasingha, the state animal of Madhya Pradesh.
- Conservation efforts have led to an increase in the population of this emblematic deer.
- The forests are mainly composed of Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and mixed forest trees.

5. Satpura Tiger Reserve:

- Home to arboreal mammals such as flying squirrels, Indian giant squirrels, and leaf-nosed bats.
- The Eurasian otter and smooth-coated otter are also found here.
- Allows pollution-free activities like cycling, canoeing, and trekking.

9. Pramila Malik becomes the first woman Speaker of Odisha Assembly (Sept. 23, 2023)

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) party member Pramila Malik became the first woman Speaker of the Odisha Assembly.

An Overview of the News

- The election of Pramila Malik as the Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly took place on September 22, 2023, and she was elected unopposed.
- The post became vacant due to the resignation of Bikram Keshari Arukha in May 2023.

The political background of Pramila Malik:

- Pramila Malik has been a six-time MLA from the Binjharpur assembly seat in Jajpur district of Odisha. This seat is reserved for the Scheduled Caste community.
- She initially became an MLA in 1990 as a member of the Janata Dal and later joined the BJD party led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.
- Before his role as Speaker, he held the post of Minister of Revenue and Disaster Management in the BJD government.

Notable firsts in Indian politics:

- **Amrit Kaur** was the **first woman cabinet minister of India**, responsible for health in the Nehru government from August 16, 1947 to 1957.
- **Sarojini Naidu** was the **first woman Governor of India**, serving the United Province (now Uttar Pradesh) from August 15, 1947 to March 2, 1949.
- The **first female Chief Minister of India** was **Sucheta Kripalani, who led Uttar Pradesh** from 1963 to 1967.
- **Shanno Devi** was the **first woman Speaker of a state legislative assembly in India**, serving in Haryana from December 6, 1966 to March 17, 1967.
- In 1966, **Indira Gandhi became the first female Prime Minister of India.**
- **Pratibha Patil Singh** was the **first woman President of India**, who served from 2007 to 2012.
- **Meira Kumar** was the **first woman Speaker of the Lok Sabha**, who held the post from 4 June 2009 to 5 June 2014.

About Odisha

- Formation - **1 April 1936**
- Capital - **Bhubaneswar**

- Governor - **Ganeshi Lal**
- Chief Minister - **Naveen Patnaik**
- Rajya Sabha - **10 seats**
- Lok Sabha - **21 seats**
- There are a total of 147 seats in Odisha Assembly.

10. The Prime Minister will inaugurate 16 Atal Awasiya Vidyalayas in Uttar Pradesh (Sept. 21, 2023)

16 Atal Awasiya Vidyalayas in Uttar Pradesh will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Varanasi.

An Overview of the News

- Built at a cost of over Rs 1,100 crore, these schools aim to provide quality education to laborers, children of construction workers, and orphans affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Each school is spread over 10 to 15 acres and has classrooms, sports facilities, recreational areas, a mini auditorium, hostels, mess halls, and staff accommodation.
- The ultimate goal of each of these Awasiya Vidyalayas is to accommodate 1,000 students.

The foundation stone of the International Cricket Stadium:

- The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of the international cricket stadium in Varanasi.
- Located in Ganjri, Rajatalab, Varanasi, this cricket stadium will cover a vast area of 30 acres and is estimated to cost around Rs 450 crore.
- It is designed to seat 30,000 spectators.

Closing Ceremony of Kashi Sansad Cultural Mahotsav 2023:

- The Prime Minister will also attend the closing ceremony of the Kashi Sansad Cultural Festival 2023.
- This cultural festival saw the participation of over 37,000 persons representing 17 different disciplines including singing, musical instrument playing, street theater (nukkad natak), and various dance forms.