

Safai Mitra Suraksha Challenge

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In news

Recently, the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs launched Safai Mitra Suraksha Challenge across 243 cities

About Safai Mitra Suraksha Challenge

- The Challenge, aptly launched on the occasion of World Toilet Day, is aimed at preventing 'hazardous cleaning' of sewers and septic tanks and promote their mechanized cleaning
- During the launch, the Chief Secretaries, State Mission Directors and other senior State/ Union Territory and city officials came together to take a pledge on behalf of 243 cities to **mechanize all sewer and septic tank cleaning operations by 30th April 2021**
- The **Challenge will focus extensively on creating citizen awareness on this critical issue along with infrastructure creation for mechanized cleaning** and capacity building of the workforce.
- Along with this, **a dedicated helpline number has been set up to register complaints and provide real-time solutions** on desludging or sewer overflow.
- The actual on-ground assessment of participating cities will be conducted in May 2021 by an independent agency and results of the same will be declared on 15 August 2021
- Awards: **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 crores to be given to winning cities across all categories.

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their

Rehabilitation Act (2013)

It mandates survey of manual scavengers if any municipality or panchayat has reason to believe that some persons are engaged in manual scavenging within its jurisdiction

This law makes it an offence to:

- Employ people as manual scavengers to clean insanitary latrines.
- Employ people to clean sewers and septic tanks without protective gear.
- Construct insanitary latrines.
- Not demolish or convert insanitary latrines within a certain period of this Act coming into force.