

Swachh Survekshan 2023 Under Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0

❖ Context

- Recently, the Secretary, **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has launched the **eighth edition of Swachh Survekshan (SS) – SS 2023** under **Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- **Swachh Survekshan 2023** reiterates the commitment towards a circular economy in waste management while tapping the immense scope of recovering value from waste.
- **Theme:** 'Waste to Wealth' as its driving philosophy, Swachh Survekshan- 2023 is curated towards achieving circularity in waste management.
- **Significance:** Swachh Survekshan 2023 is curated towards achieving circularity in waste management.
- The survey would give priority to the principle of **3Rs : Reduce, Recycle and Reuse**.
- Indicators have been introduced with additional weightage on emphasizing the need for **phased reduction of plastic, plastic waste processing, encourage waste to wonder parks and zero waste events**.
- **Ranking of Wards** within the cities is also being **promoted through Swachh Survekshan 2023**.
- The cities would also be assessed on **dedicated indicators** on the issues of **'open urination' (Yellow Spots) and 'open spitting' (Red Spots), being faced by the cities**.
- SS-2023, the evaluation will be conducted in four phases, instead of three phases in earlier editions.

- Further, this year MoHUA is also promoting cleaning of **back lanes of the residential and commercial areas**.
- Swachh Survekshan was introduced by MoHUA in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation while encouraging large scale citizen participation.

❖ Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0

- SBM-U 2.0 was announced in Budget 2021-22, as the continuation of SBM-U first phase.
- SBM-U first phase was launched on 2nd October 2014 aiming at making urban India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** and achieving 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste. It lasted till October 2019.
- The government is trying to tap safe containment, transportation, disposal of faecal sludge, and sewage from toilets.
- It will be implemented over five years from 2021 to 2026 with an outlay of Rs.1.41 lakh crore.
- The Mission is being implemented under the overarching principles of "waste to wealth", and "Circular Economy".
- Through the launch of SS 2023 with the theme of 'Waste to Wealth', the SBMU 2.0 reiterates its commitment towards moving towards a circular economy in waste management while tapping the immense scope of recovering value from waste.

Abhilasha Barak; Indian Army's First Woman Combat Pilot

❖ Context:

- History was written with golden letters when 26-year-old Captain Abhilasha Barak became the first woman combat aviator in the Indian Army.

❖ Key Highlights:

- On (25th May 2022), the Indian Army officer from Haryana successfully completed her six-month-long Combat Army Aviation Course to join Army Aviation Corps as a helicopter pilot.
- She was accorded with the Coveted Wings along with 36 Army Pilots by Director General & Colonel Commandant Army Aviation during a valedictory ceremony held at Combat Army Aviation Training School, Nashik.
- Captain Barak has been assigned to the second flight of the 2072 Army Aviation Squadron that operates the Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).
- To recruit women officers in Army Aviation, the Indian Army began the course in July 2021. There are 10 women fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force, out of which three women fighter pilots, Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth, Avani Chaturvedi, and Mohana Singh joined the Indian Air Force together in June 2016.

❖ Army Aviation Corps:



- Came into existence on November 01, 1986, Army Aviation Corps is the youngest Corps of the Indian Army. Over the years, it has expanded with the addition of new units and equipment like Cheetah, **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv**, weaponized ALH Rudra, and Light Combat Helicopter.
- The Siachen Glacier has been the final frontier for the **Army Aviation Corps (AAC)**. Routinely, the officers of AAC operate at 20,000 feet and above on the extreme fringes of its flight envelope.

Face to Face Centres



News in Between the Lines

Registered Unrecognised Political Parties



❖ Context

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has decided to initiate graded action against more than 2,100 **Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs)** for non-compliance of statutory requirements under the **Representation of the People (RP) Act 1951**.

❖ Key Highlights

- An **RUPP** is one which is:
 - Either newly registered parties or
 - An old registered party which has never contested elections or
 - An old registered party which has not secured enough percentage of votes in the assembly or general elections to be recognised as a state or national party.
- The ECI, during a verification exercise, found **87 such parties to be non-existent**. They would be deleted from the list and their benefits under the **Symbols Order (1968)** withdrawn.
- The particulars of **2,174 RUPPs** -- which **did not submit contribution reports** -- would be sent to the Department of Revenue for taking all consequential action.
- Till September 2021, as many as **2,796 RUPPs** were listed, which was an **increase of over 300% since 2001**.

❖ Compliance Under RP Act 1951 & ECI Guidelines

- **Section 29 C** - requires an RUPP to **furnish a contribution report** as prescribed. Such contributions received by RUPPs are also **100% exempted from Income Tax** as an incentive to the parties for strengthening the electoral democracy.
- **Section 29A (9)** - mandates every political party to communicate any change in its name, head office, office bearers, address, PAN to the Commission without delay.
- They also have to **submit audited annual statements** and a return of income for each assessment year to be eligible for exemption from income tax.
- **Section 29 A (6)** - The Political Party, [for being registered, as a condition] needs to undertake to include in its constitution that **it must contest an election conducted by the Election Commission within 5 years of its registration**.
- Upon participation in an election, they have to **furnish their election expenditure statement within 75 days** in case of Assembly polls and within **90 days** in case of Lok Sabha election.

PUSA HD 3443



❖ Context

- Scientists at **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI)** have developed the **country's first soft wheat variety** named Pusa Soft Wheat 1 (HD 3443).

❖ Key Highlights

- **Suitable for growing in all producing States**, the Pusa Soft Wheat 1 has a **productivity of 4.5 tonnes per hectare** in Delhi with **11.5 % protein and gluten level of 8.9%**.
- Soft wheat requires less grinding force as its flour has smaller particle size and absorbs less water when kneaded into dough.
- Cake and biscuits, even noodles, thus are made from Soft wheat, for best quality.
- The development will help **Indian bakery makers who import wheat at double the price of domestic rates**. India had imported about 3,108 tonnes of soft wheat at a cost of 4,226/quintal in 2021-22.
- Yield of the **Australian soft wheat (spring) variety is about 1.5 tonnes per hectare** and the **US soft (winter) variety is about 4.5 tonnes per hectare**.

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Travel and Tourism Development Index



- But the US and Australian crop takes 8-9 months to mature whereas **Indian crop takes only 125 days.**
- There is also a **big opportunity** for flour millers to **export wheat flour of India-grown soft wheat to the Middle Eastern countries** who also get it from Australia.

❖ Context

- The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** released the Travel & Tourism Development Index - '**Rebuilding for a Sustainable and Resilient Future**'.

❖ Key Highlights

- The travel and tourism development index assessed a **total of 117 countries** for the study.
- **India grabbed the 54th spot in the overall rankings, down from 46th in 2019.**
- After two years of slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, India's travel and tourism sector has shown "signs of recovery" and is the **top performer in South Asia.**
- **Japan took the number one spot,** followed by the US, Spain, France and Germany among the top five.

NIRDESHAK



❖ Context

- Recently, the survey vessel, **NIRDESHAK,** was launched by the Indian Navy.

❖ Key Highlights

- It is the **second of the four Survey Vessels (Large) (SVL) Project** being built by GRSE in collaboration with L&T shipbuilding for the Indian Navy.
- The first of class ship '**Sandhayak**' was launched on Dec' 21 at GRSE, Kolkata.
- The SVL ships will replace the existing Sandhayak Class survey ships with new generation hydrographic equipment to collect oceanographic data.
- The Survey Vessel (Large) ships have a deep displacement of about 3400 tons and a complement of 235 personnel.
- The ship is designed to operate at cruise speed of 14 knots and maximum speed of 18 knots.

80% Students Found Remote Learning Burdensome



Online learning

The table lists the perception of students on learning at home during the pandemic, according to the National Achievement Survey 2021 report

Perception of learning at home	Share of students (in %)
Joyful, was fun	45
Faced difficulty in learning	38
No difference, same as school	50
Burdensome, lot of assignments	78
No digital device at home	24
Learn better in school with peers help	80
Lot of time to learn new things	70

❖ Context:

- The **Ministry of Education** recently released its **National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2021** report, which assesses the health of the school education system in the country through a **survey of children's learning competencies** at Classes 3, 5, 8 and 10.
- Nearly **80% students** found learning at home during the pandemic "burdensome" and felt that they learnt better in school with help from peers.

❖ Key Highlights:

- The survey is conducted every three years, and the last one was held in 2017.
- Nearly **34 lakh students of 1.18 lakh schools** in 720 districts from government, government-aided and private-unaided schools participated in the exercise.
- The survey was **conducted via an OMR** (optical mark recognition)-based achievement test comprising **multiple-choice questions along with questionnaires in 22 different languages.**
- This nationwide survey was administered by the **Central Board of Secondary Education in one single day at the same time.**
- The report found that out of a score of 500, students across various classes performed better in languages but lagged behind in subjects **like mathematics and science.**
- It also showed that across various subjects and classes, **SC, ST and OBC students performed worse** than general category students.

Face to Face Centres

Israel's Watergen To Shift Production Facilities

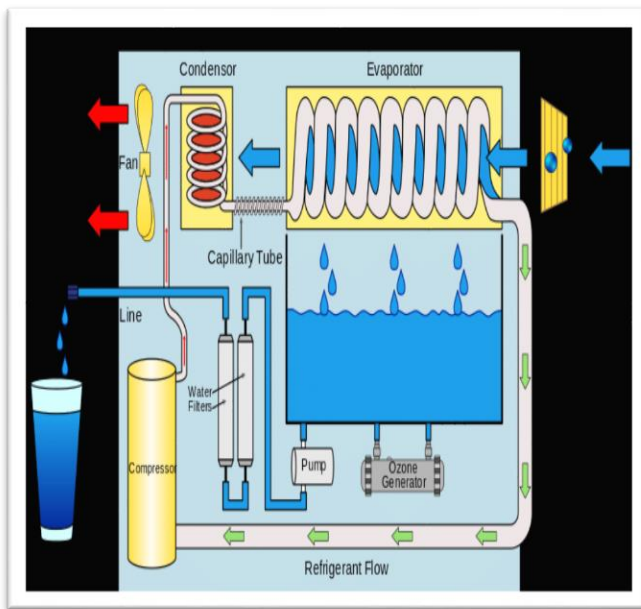


❖ Context:

- Israel-based Watergen, that makes water from air, recently said it is shifting its **four manufacturing facilities** in the US and China (two each), to start a plant in India.

❖ Key Highlights:

- Through this 50:50 JV, **Watergen and SMV Jaipuria** will introduce **Atmospheric Water Generators (AWG)** product categories in India.
- Other than the US and China, the company has its main facility in Israel along with the research and development labs.
- With their capacities ranging from 30-6,000 litres per day, the pricing of these products is estimated to start from ₹2.50 lakh, which may even go up to crores, depending on the requirement (commercial buildings, hospitals, villages, factories)'.



❖ About Atmospheric Water Generators (AWG):

- **Atmospheric water generation (AWG)** uses technology to produce **potable water from surrounding air**.
- This provides the potential to expand **water availability during shortages**, contamination events, and other issues that can interrupt drinking water services.
- The most commonly used AWG systems **employ condenser and cooling coil technology** to pull moisture from the air in the same way a household dehumidifier does.

New 27 Rice Varieties Developed



❖ Context:

- Recently scientists have developed new rice **varieties that suit the different environments** of different growing regions in the country and **give higher yields**.

❖ Key Highlights:

- After a series of **on-farm trials (OFT)** from (**International Rice Research Institute**)IRRI and partner organisations across four rice-growing States including Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh, **the researchers have identified promising rice varieties** that can adapt to the specific requirements of the different environments in the country, improving productivity.
- The researchers are looking to infuse these varieties into the seed chains of respective States for speedy access to quality seeds.
- **Significance:** The identified new varieties, when positioned rightly in the seed system, **can lead to actual delivery of genetic gain in the farmer's field**.

❖ India's Rice Production:

- India is the **world's second-largest producer** and the **largest exporter of rice**, with **43.86 million hectares under cultivation** across different climatic regions, soils and water conditions, with a yield of around **2610 kg (2021) per ha**.
- India's annual rice output has increased from **53.6 million tonnes in 1980 to an estimated record of 129.66 million tonnes**, as projected under the government's third advance estimate for 2021-22.
- The last five-year average was 116.44 million tonnes, with West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh as top growers.

