



Review of Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen Progress | Madhya Pradesh | 12 Dec 2024

Why in News?

- Recently, the **Union Minister of Jal Shakti led a high-level review meeting** with State Ministers responsible for rural sanitation from **Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar** to strengthen the [Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen \(SBM-G\)](#).
- The session aimed to **assess progress, tackle challenges, and streamline strategies** to ensure **sustainable sanitation outcomes in rural India**.

Key Points

- The Union Minister emphasized sanitation as a behavioral mission critical to the health and dignity of rural communities.
- He underlined the **importance of shaping a cleaner, healthier India through collective efforts**, noting that each State/UT has unique challenges but shares the common goal of achieving a Swachh Bharat.
- **State-Wise Progress:**
 - **Madhya Pradesh:**
 - **99%** of villages are [Open Defecation Free Status \(ODF\) Plus](#), with 95% achieving ODF Plus Model status.
 - The state implemented innovative plastic waste management initiatives, including MoUs with RRDA Bhopal.
 - **Uttar Pradesh:**
 - **98%** of villages are ODF Plus. Over **1 lakh personnel have been trained** for SBM-G objectives.
 - Focused on waste-to-energy models and scrap dealer linkages for plastic waste management.
 - **Bihar:**
 - **92%** of villages are ODF Plus. Grey water management coverage is at 91%, and solid waste management at 80%.
 - Efforts are concentrated on improving outcomes in underperforming districts.
 - **Punjab:**
 - **98%** of villages are ODF Plus, with 87% achieving grey water management saturation.
 - Enhanced systems are under development.
- **Minister's Guidance for Collective Action:**
 - **ODF Plus Sustainability:** Establish robust monitoring mechanisms to verify and sustain ODF Plus Model villages.
 - **Waste Management Gaps:** Address gaps in [solid and grey water management](#) by prioritizing household-level solutions.
 - **Community Sanitation:** Strengthen functionality and asset management of community sanitation complexes.
 - **Plastic Waste Management:** Forge partnerships with recyclers and utilize [Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\)](#) frameworks.
 - EPR makes **producers responsible for the environmental impacts of their products** throughout their life cycle. It aims to **promote better waste management and reduce the burden on municipalities**.

- **Behavioral Change:** Promote sustained toilet use and waste segregation through targeted [IEC \(Information Education and Communication\)](#) campaigns.
- **Community-Led Approaches:** States to engage **women's self-help groups**, local leaders, and private sector enterprises to foster community-led sanitation efforts.
- **Broader Vision and Global Alignment:**
 - Swachh Bharat Mission is a cornerstone of rural transformation, integrating [sanitation](#), [waste management](#), [water conservation](#), and community well-being.
 - The mission aligns with global goals, including [SDG 6 \(Clean Water and Sanitation\)](#) and [SDG 3 \(Good Health and Well-being\)](#).
 - The focus extends beyond targets to **building ecosystems of health, dignity, and self-reliance**.

Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G)

- **About:**
 - It was launched in 2014 by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation.
 - The mission was implemented as a **nation-wide campaign/Janandolan which aimed at eliminating open defecation in rural areas**.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (G) Phase-I:**
 - The rural sanitation coverage in the country at the time of launch of [SBM \(G\)](#) on **2nd October, 2014** was reported as 38.7%.
 - More than 10 crore individual toilets **have been constructed since the launch of the mission**, as a result, rural areas in all the States have declared themselves ODF as on 2nd October, 2019.
- **SBM(G) Phase-II:**
 - It emphasizes the sustainability of achievements under phase I and to provide adequate facilities for **Solid/Liquid & plastic Waste Management (SLWM) in rural India**.
 - It will be implemented from 2020-21 to 2024-25 in a mission **mode with a total outlay of Rs. 1,40,881 crores**.
 - The SLWM component of **ODF Plus will be monitored on the basis of output-outcome indicators for 4 key areas:**
 - Plastic waste management,
 - Biodegradable solid waste management (including animal waste management)
 - Greywater (Household Wastewater) management
 - Fecal sludge management.

UP- First State to Fully Adopt GeM Platform | Uttar Pradesh | 12 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in India to fully integrate the [Government e-Marketplace \(GeM\) platform](#), enhancing **transparency and efficiency in public procurement**.

- This move is **projected to save Rs 2,000 crore annually** while fostering fair practices and empowering small businesses.

Key Points

- Prior tendering systems in Uttar Pradesh lacked uniformity and were vulnerable to misuse.
- GeM resolves these issues by enforcing standardized rules, thereby reducing the chances of violations or loopholes.
- The state government aims to scale up GeM usage across all state departments, ensuring compliance and enhancing accountability.
- **Demonstrated Success:**
 - The Uttar Pradesh Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board used GeM to procure materials for 18 [Atal Residential Schools](#).
 - These schools, serving students from Class 6 to intermediate level, now offer exemplary learning environments, including support for children orphaned during the [Covid-19 pandemic](#).
- **Policy Reforms and Compliance:**
 - **Strict guidelines:** Policies prohibit practices such as offline contracts, price discovery bids, quantity-based bids, and unnecessary requests for samples during bid evaluations.
 - All state departments must procure at least 25% of their annual goods and services through GeM, with penalties for non-compliance.
 - **Support for Small Enterprises:** Relaxed tender eligibility criteria (e.g., turnover and past performance) create opportunities for **micro and small enterprises (MSEs)**.
 - **Worker Welfare Provisions:** Policies mandate minimum wages, [Employee Provident Fund \(EPF\)](#), and [Employee State Insurance \(ESI\)](#) benefits for outsourced employees.
 - Service providers cannot arbitrarily replace outsourced employees after hiring, ensuring job stability and fairness.
 - **Anti-Collusion Measures:** Collusion or bid manipulation incurs severe penalties, with provisions for reporting cases to the GeM team.
 - **Complaint Redressal Mechanism:** High-level committees, chaired by the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary, review compliance-related grievances submitted via dedicated emails.
- **Alignment with National Initiatives:**
 - GeM adoption promotes the vision of ["Digital India"](#) by enhancing transparency and accountability in governance.
 - The platform supports local suppliers and fosters fair competition, aligning with the ["Make in India" initiative](#).

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Platform

- GeM facilitates **online procurement of common use Goods & Services** required by various Government Departments / Organisations / PSUs.
 - The initiative was launched in August 2016, by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
 - The current version of GeM, i.e., **GeM 3.0 was launched on January 26, 2018**.
- It provides the **tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation** to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value for their money and aims to **enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement**.

Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah Dispute | Uttar Pradesh | 12 Dec 2024

Why in News?

A [Supreme Court](#) bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna is set to hear the case on [Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura](#).

- It is among the oldest temple-mosque conflicts in India, with **Hindus seeking to reclaim places of worship** they allege were converted into mosques during invasions by Muslim rulers.

Key Points

▪ Background of the Dispute:

- Mathura, considered the birthplace of Lord Krishna, had a **temple built in 1618**.
- The Hindu side alleges that the **temple was demolished in 1670 by Mughal ruler Aurangzeb to construct the Shahi Idgah Mosque**.
- The Hindu side claims the mosque **contains Hindu religious symbols and features**, including a lotus-shaped pillar and an image of the deity Sheshnag.
 - Also contends that the mosque was built on a part of the 13.37-acre land **belonging to the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust** and has **filed a suit seeking the mosque's relocation**.
- **The Shahi Idgah Mosque Committee and the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board** argue that the mosque does not stand on disputed land.

▪ Key Developments:

◦ Court-Monitored Survey:

- On 14th December 2023, the **Allahabad High Court** ordered a **court-monitored survey** of the Shahi Idgah Mosque.
- The court appointed a commissioner to oversee the survey, based on claims that signs of the site's past as a Hindu temple exist on the mosque premises.

◦ Supreme Court Intervention:

- The Committee of Management, Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah, filed a petition **challenging the High Court's order for the survey**.
- On 16th January 2024, the Supreme Court stayed the High Court's order for the survey, citing vagueness in the Hindu side's application.

▪ Arguments:

◦ Hindu Side's Position:

- They demanded that the High Court conduct an original trial, similar to the [Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi case](#).
- The Hindu side has urged the Supreme Court to allow the High Court to determine the modalities for the commission survey.

◦ Mosque Committee's Position:

- The committee argues that the High Court's order for a survey is invalid as the suit is barred under [the Places of Worship Act, 1991](#) which prevents changes to the character of religious places as of 15th August 1947.
- The committee has also challenged the High Court's 26th May 2023, order transferring all dispute-related cases from the Mathura court to itself.



Dark Age Coins Unearthed in Rajasthan | Rajasthan | 12 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, archaeological sites in Rajasthan have unearthed a wealth of **punch-mark coins from 600 BC-1000 BC.**

- It offers insights into a "dark age" in Indian history that **spanned the decline of the [Indus Valley Civilization](#) to the era of [Lord Buddha](#).** Historians refer to this period **from 1900 BC to 600 BC, as the Dark Age.**

Key Points

- **About:**
 - Rajasthan's archaeological discoveries shed light on its role as a **hub of ancient trade and cultural exchange.**
 - The findings underscore the importance of preserving and studying these artifacts to illuminate India's lost historical periods.
- **Presentation at National Numismatics Conference:**
 - A retired numismatist from the **Rajasthan Department of Archaeology and Museology**, presented his research on punch-mark coins at the **[National Numismatics Conference](#) in Meerut on 5th December 2024.**
 - Museology is the **study of museums and the activities they undertake.**
 - It includes the **study of museums' history, their role in society, and the activities they engage in**, such as curating, preservation, education, and public programming.

- A numismatist is a **person who studies, collects, and analyzes currency and other objects used as money.**
- He highlighted discoveries from sites like **Ahar (Udaipur), Kalibanga (Hanumangarh), Viratnagar (Jaipur), and Jankipura (Tonk)**, showcasing evidence of a thriving ancient trade network.
- **Discoveries and Significance:**
 - **Extensive Coin Studies:**
 - The symbols such as the **Sun, Shadchakra, and Mountains/Meru** were **identified** on the coins.
 - These coins, **crafted from silver and copper** with a standard weight of 3.3 grams, display similarities to coins found across India, from Peshawar to Kanyakumari.
 - **Major Findings:**
 - Notable discoveries include **3,300 coins unearthed in Tonk in 1935** and **2,400 coins in Sikar in 1998.**
 - **Metallurgical tools** from these regions resemble those **found in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Peshawar, linking Rajasthan to a wider cultural and trade network.**
- **Historical Context and Archaeological Evidence:**
 - **Documentation by Chinese Travelers:**
 - Chinese travelers **Fa-Hien (399-414 CE), Sunyan (518 CE), and Hiuen-Tsang (629 CE)** documented ruins in these areas, pointing to their historical importance.
 - Their accounts, combined with archaeological evidence, enrich the understanding of Rajasthan's ancient trade and cultural heritage.
 - **Broader Trade Connections:**
 - Rajasthan's trade history parallels the **Silk Route** in significance, supported by discoveries of coins from the **Gupta dynasty, Malavas, and Janapadas.**
 - These findings emphasize Rajasthan's pivotal economic and cultural role in ancient India.
- **Treasure Collection:**
 - The Rajasthan Department of Archaeology has amassed over 2.21 lakh ancient coins, including 7,180 punch-marked examples, curated under the **Rajasthan Treasure Trove Rules, 1961.**
 - These coins provide invaluable insights into the state's historical and economic prominence.

Indus Valley Civilization

- **About:**
 - The **history of India begins with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**, also known as Harappan Civilization.
 - It flourished around **2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia**, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India.
 - The Indus Valley was home to the **largest of the four ancient urban civilizations** of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India and China.
 - In the 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. **Mohenjodaro and Harappa** were unearthed.
 - In 1924, **John Marshall, Director-General of the ASI, announced the discovery** of a new civilisation in the Indus valley to the world.
- **Decline:**
 - The **Indus Valley Civilization declined around 1800 BCE**, primarily due to **climate change and migration.**
 - Its two major cities, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, disappeared, marking the end of the civilization.
 - Harappa is often associated with the civilization's name as it was the first city discovered by modern archaeologists

Excavation of Mauryan Empire in Patna | Bihar | 12 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the [Archaeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) initiated the excavation of the '**80-pillared assembly hall**' at Kumhrar, a site regarded as the only surviving evidence of the [architectural achievements of the Mauryan emperors](#) in the Indian subcontinent.

Key Points

- **Uncovering the Mauryan Palace at Kumhrar:**
 - According to ASI, the excavation began on 1st December 2024 at the **Kumhrar protected site in Patna**, focusing on the **Asokan Sabha Ghar (assembly hall)**.
 - The primary aim is to assess the current condition of the buried **Mauryan stone pillars**.
 - A detailed scientific analysis will be conducted, including collaboration with the [Central Ground Water Board](#) to measure the water table.
 - Based on the findings, the possibility of uncovering all 80 pillars will be considered.
- **Historical Context and Past Excavations:**
 - The Mauryan period hall, believed to have been used by [Emperor Ashoka](#) for the [Third Buddhist Council in the 3rd century BCE](#), was first revealed through excavations between 1912-1915 and 1951-1955.
- **Challenges:**
 - In the late 1990s, the ruins **suffered from waterlogging due to groundwater seepage**, causing damage to the structure.
 - To prevent further deterioration, the **site was covered with soil and sand in 2004**.
 - Initially, a **few pillars will be uncovered for condition assessment**. If the condition permits, more pillars may be revealed to the public.
- **Importance of Kumhrar:**
 - Kumhrar, located in Patna, houses remnants of the **ancient city of Pataliputra**, the Mauryan Empire's capital.
 - Archaeological **discoveries at Kumhrar, dating to 600 BCE**, provide insights into the history of rulers like **Ajatasattu, Chandragupta Maurya, and Ashoka**.
 - The site includes artifacts spanning four historical periods, from 600 BCE to 600 CE, highlighting its historical significance.

Mauryan Dynasty

- **Chandragupta Maurya (321-297 BCE):** The **founder of the Mauryan Empire**, overthrew the **Nanda dynasty** and expanded the empire by annexing regions such as the [Hindu Kush](#).
 - In 305-303 BCE, he formed a treaty with **Seleucus Nicator**, gaining additional territories. Later in life, **Chandragupta became a disciple of Jainism**.
 - [Chanakya](#), the prime minister under the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (322 BCE - 297 BCE) and his successor Bindusara. Chanakya played a significant role in the empire's success.
- **Bindusara (298-272 BCE):** Expanded the empire to the Deccan, known as "**Amitraghata (slayer of enemies)**". Adopted the **Ajivika sect**. **Deimachus** was a Greek ambassador at his court.
- **Ashoka (272-232 BCE):** After the [Kalinga War](#), which led to massive casualties, he embraced Buddhism and promoted peace through his **Dhamma (moral laws)**. Organized the 3rd Buddhist Council and spread Buddhism globally.

- **Dasharatha (232-224 BCE):** Last Mauryan ruler to issue imperial inscriptions. Faced territorial losses.
- **Samprati (224-215 BCE):** Re-established Mauryan control over disintegrated territories and promoted Jainism.
- **Shalishuka (215-202 BCE):** Known as a quarrelsome ruler with a negative reputation.
- **Devavarman (202-195 BCE):** Brief reign, mentioned in the Puranas.
- **Shatadhanvan (195-187 BCE):** Lost territories due to external invasions.
- **Brihadratha (187-185 BCE):** The last Mauryan emperor, assassinated by **Pushyamitra Shunga**, marking the end of the Mauryan dynasty.

