

Swachh Shehar Jodi

MoHUA rolls out massive urban waste management mentorship initiative

Nearly 300 cities sign MoUs simultaneously to foster knowledge transfer, experience sharing, peer learning and replicate best practices

Posted On: 27 SEP 2025 1:45PM by PIB Delhi

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched the Swachh Shehar Jodi (SSJ) initiative, a structured mentorship and collaborative action program involving 72 mentor cities and around 200 mentee cities. Based on their recent performance in the Swachh Survekshan rankings, top-performing cities have been identified as mentor cities and paired with low-performing mentee cities. Implemented under the Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U), Union Minister, Shri Manohar Lal rolled out the SSJ initiative in the presence of MoS, MoHUA, Shri Tokhan Sahu, Haryana CM, Nayab Singh Saini, UD ministers from various States, Mayors, Commissioners, Secretary MoHUA, Shri S. Katikithala. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the mentor and mentee cities in a national event at Sonipat.



The SSJ initiative represents one of the largest time-bound and structured mentorship frameworks in the urban waste management sector, aiming to foster knowledge and experience sharing, peer learning and transforming best practices in sanitation and waste management across urban India.



Across successive editions of Swachh Survekshan—the world’s largest urban sanitation survey—several cities have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance, high citizen engagement, and resilient governance despite leadership and operational challenges. This has prompted ongoing discussions on scaling and replicating these best practices in other cities. In line with this, the Super Swachh League was introduced in this year’s Swachh Survekshan (SS). Cities that ranked 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in SS 2022, 2023, and 2024 were included as top performers across five population categories were inducted in the league. The idea was to encourage top-performing cities to strive for higher aspirational standards, while also motivating other cities to improve and aim for top ranks

The mentor cities are the top performing cities that are part of the Super Swachh League, top three cities that are featured across population categories in SS 2024 and Promising clean cities that emerged across States/UTs as part of SS 2024. Mentee cities were chosen from the lowest ranks in their State’s latest SS cumulative rankings, considering their geographical proximity to their paired mentor cities.

Speaking at the launch event of Swachh Shehar Jodi initiative in Sonipat, Union Minister, Shri Manohar Lal, emphasized on the spirit of Antyodaya—where no city is left behind, and every city benefits from the collective knowledge pool of the Mission. He said, “the spirit of Swachh Bharat Mission, has always focused on building capacity and capabilities for all stakeholders - this is an inclusive Mission, where we all walk together. SSJ is not just a ceremonial partnership - it is time-bound and outcome-driven initiative. It is among the largest structured and time-bound mentorship arrangements in the urban waste management sector.”



Joining the session virtually, Secretary MoHUA, Shri S, Katikithala said, “SSJ is a dynamic platform for knowledge-sharing, mentoring, and handholding. The aim is clear that every mentee city should improve their swachhata outcome by learning from the best cities.”

On August 26, 2025, MoHUA released guidelines for the SSJ initiative, officially pairing mentor and mentee cities. The mentee cities will get direct exposure to well performing cities to replicate their

best practices. The Ministry has launched a 100-day program, to showcase the impact of city-to-city mentorship in driving urban transformation. During this period, each mentor–mentee pair will collaboratively develop action plans with clearly defined milestones - focusing on experience sharing and knowledge transfer.

MoHUA will provide strategic direction and policy-level support to ensure effective implementation of the Swachh Shehar Jodi across States. This is being supported under the capacity building initiative of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

Nearly 300 MoUs were signed simultaneously across the nation in the presence of all participating cities and their political executive heads, thus marking the beginning of a 100-day phase of creating a dynamic platform for knowledge-sharing, mentoring, and handholding, which will be evaluated in Swachh Survekshan 2026.

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(Release ID: 2172112)