

SWACHH SURVEKSHAN 2024-25 AWARDS



- Marking its **9th edition**, Swachh Survekshan 2024-25 is the world's largest urban cleanliness survey and a key **pillar of the Swachh Bharat**

Mission-Urban.

- **Highlights:**

- In total, **78 awards were presented**, recognising cities, cantonments, and institutions for their exemplary performance across a range of sanitation parameters.
- **Indore, Surat, and Navi Mumbai** have once again secured the **top spots** in urban sanitation, emerging as the **cleanest cities** in the Swachh Survekshan 2024-25 rankings.
- The three cities were ranked **first, second, and third, respectively, in the newly introduced “Super Swachh League,”** which recognises sustained excellence in cleanliness. Vijayawada followed closely, securing the fourth position.
- This year’s Swachh Survekshan introduced a **simplified and inclusive assessment framework, enabling smaller cities to compete on equal footing with larger counterparts** under the principle of **“One City, One Award.”**
- As a result, **34 cities from various States and Union Territories were declared Promising Swachh Shehars** for their notable progress in sanitation and urban cleanliness.
- **Ahmedabad, Bhopal, and Lucknow** were declared the **new generation of top clean cities**, emerging as **India’s leading Swachh Shehars.**
- **Prayagraj** was honoured as the **Best Ganga Town**, while Secunderabad Cantonment Board was awarded for its strong sanitation efforts.

- Visakhapatnam, Jabalpur, and Gorakhpur received recognition as the **Best SafaiMitra Surakshit Shehars** for prioritising the safety, dignity, and welfare of sanitation workers.
- A **special award** was conferred upon the **Government of Uttar Pradesh**, the **Prayagraj Mela Adhikari**, and the **Municipal Corporation of Prayagraj** for **successfully managing urban waste during the Mahakumbh**, which saw a record footfall of approximately 66 crore people.

POSHAN TRACKER APP



- It is a mobile-based application rolled out by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, Government of India on 1st March 2021.
- It was developed by the **National eGovernance Division**.
- It serves as a specialized digital **platform for Anganwadi Centers (AWCs), Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), and enrolled beneficiaries**, aiming to **enhance nutrition service delivery** and support the government's fight against malnutrition.
- The app provides mechanisms for **direct data capture, status tracking, and reporting**, making it a pivotal tool in the implementation of the **Poshan Abhiyaan initiative**.
- Access to Poshan Tracker is **limited to designated users**, including **government-authorized staff and registered beneficiaries**.
- It facilitates **real-time updates on nutrition indicators** covering children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.
- Anganwadi workers can **record individual attendance, distribute supplements, and update health parameters** directly from the field.

What is the Poshan Abhiyaan Initiative?

- It is a **multi-ministerial initiative** launched by the Government of India in March **2018**.
- The focus of Abhiyaan is to lay **emphasis on the nutritional status of adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children from 0-6 years of age**.
- The programme, through the use of **technology, convergence, and community involvement** with a targeted approach, strives to **reduce the level of stunting, undernutrition, anaemia, and low birth weight in children**, as also focus on **adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers**, thus **holistically addressing malnutrition**.
- **Objectives:**
 - **Prevent and reduce stunting in children (0- 6 years)**.
 - **Prevent and reduce undernutrition** (underweight prevalence) in children (0-6 years).
 - **Reduce the prevalence of anaemia among young children (6-59 months)**.
 - **Reduce the prevalence of anaemia among women and adolescent girls** in the age group of **15-49 years**.
 - **Reduce Low Birth Weight (LBW)**.

WHAT IS CHRONIC VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY (CVI)?



- The CVI occurs when your **leg veins struggle to allow the flow of blood back to the heart**.
 - Under **normal conditions**, the **valves in our veins facilitate the flow of blood** towards the heart.
 - However, when **they don't work on the optimum level**, the **blood may flow backwards and accumulate (pool) in your legs**.
- The condition may not be a serious health threat, but it can **cause pain, swelling, cramps, skin changes, varicose veins, leg ulcers**,

- People are **more likely** to have the condition **if/when they are overweight or pregnant** or have a **family history** of the problem.
- People may **also experience** it if they **have ever sustained an injury** to their leg, had **surgery**, or had **previous blood clots**.
- It affects about 1 in 20 adults. **Common among older adults**, its risk heightens with age.
- **Treatments:**
 - From **lifestyle changes to surgery**, there are multiple ways to address the issue.
 - **Regular exercise, leg elevation, and weight management** are considered the first steps to treat the condition.
 - **Medicines that boost blood flow** through the vessels and **compression therapy**, which involves tight stockings or bandages, help a long way.

WHAT IS A PROTOSTAR?



- A protostar is an **early stage in the star formation**
- It is a **large mass of gas and dust** formed as a result of the **contraction of a giant molecular cloud** in the interstellar medium.
- **As the cloud collapses, gravitational energy is converted into heat**, warming the still-forming protostar.
- It may last from **100,000 to 10 million years**, depending on the mass of the star.
- It **begins with an increase in density in the molecular cloud core** and **ends with the formation of a pre-main-sequence star**.
- Pre-main-sequence stars of similar mass to the Sun are known as T-Tauri stars.
- **Once hydrogen fusion ignites in the core of a star, it begins producing energy and becomes a main sequence star**.
- Protostars are usually **surrounded by dust, which blocks the light that they emit**, so they are **difficult to observe** in the visible spectrum.



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TRADE CONNECT EPLATFORM



- It is a **new digital initiative** aimed at transforming the landscape of **international trade** for Indian **exporters, especially MSMEs** (Medium, Small and Medium Enterprises).
- It is an initiative of the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** under the Ministry of Commerce and
- **Features of Trade Connect ePlatform**
 - It serves as a comprehensive hub of **information and services on international trade** for all stakeholders.
 - It will **connect Indian Exporters, MSMEs and Entrepreneurs** with various stakeholders including **Indian Missions Abroad, Export Promotion Councils, and other Partner Government Agencies.**
 - The platform will provide information on trade events taking place in different parts of the world, benefits available due to India's Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and other international trade-related information and data.
 - It provides **latest and updated information on tariffs, certifications, trade events, eCommerce, and buyers** in a simplified manner to MSMEs.
 - Interactive courses to introduce MSMEs to **exports & related procedures** across multiple languages are also provided.
 - It also serves a **single point of issuance and validation** for preferential and non-preferential certificates of origin through a secure, electronic, paperless issuance process with all authorised issuing agencies being present on the platform.
 - The platform, developed in collaboration with key partners including **the Ministry of MSME, EXIM Bank, Department of Financial Services (DFS), and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).**



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INDIA CALLS OUT GLOBAL BIAS ON RUSSIAN OIL TRADE

Strong stand
The 'Sanctioning Russia Act of 2025', expected to be introduced in U.S. Congress in August, mandates 500% duties on goods and services from countries buying Russian oil



What the NATO chief said

- India, China, and Brazil should tell Vladimir Putin to be serious about peace talks with Ukraine
- Continuing to do business with Russia will 'slam back' on these countries
- The secondary sanctions by U.S. will hit these countries 'very hard'

Centre's response

- Securing energy needs is an 'overriding priority' for the government
- India is guided by what markets offer and global circumstances
- Maintain caution against double standards on the matter

- The United States is signaling tougher measures against countries trading with Russia, directly impacting India.

- US President Donald Trump, now taking a firmer stance on

Russia, has warned of imposing “secondary sanctions” if Moscow does not end its war in Ukraine within 50 days.

- This would mean penalties targeting Russia’s key trading partners like India, China, and Brazil.
- NATO chief Mark Rutte also cautioned India, urging Delhi to pressure Russia into peace talks to avoid facing severe economic fallout.
- In addition, the US Congress is considering a bill that would impose up to 500% tariffs on buyers of Russian energy.
- These moves reflect growing Western frustration as existing sanctions have not crippled Russia’s economy, largely because of its ongoing trade with countries including India.

Should India Be Concerned About New US Sanctions

- India’s trade with Russia has grown sharply, reaching a **record \$68.7 billion in FY 2024–25**—almost six times the pre-pandemic figure.
- India’s key imports from Russia include crude oil, petroleum products, fertilizers, and coal, with oil purchases rising significantly after Western sanctions on Moscow in 2022.
 - In May 2025 alone, India imported \$4.42 billion worth of crude from Russia.
- While this raises concern over potential US sanctions, India maintains it has diversified its oil sources and can shift suppliers if necessary.
- Moreover, there’s skepticism over whether former President Trump would follow through on such harsh measures, especially since India and the US are negotiating a trade deal that sanctions would disrupt.

- **Another factor is China**—Russia’s largest trade partner—making it uncertain if the US would risk escalating tensions with Beijing again.
- Finally, targeting Russian oil buyers could unsettle global energy markets, causing blowback for the US and its allies as well.

Mixed Reactions in the West to Trump’s New Russia Sanctions Plan

- Trump’s proposed 50-day deadline for Russia to end the Ukraine war and threats of secondary sanctions have drawn a mixed response in the West.
- Some welcome his tougher stance, seeing it as a shift from his earlier reluctance to support Ukraine.
- However, many worry the deadline could backfire—giving Russia time to seize more Ukrainian territory and strengthen its bargaining power.
- Critics also point out that Trump’s proposals lack clear details and timelines.
- Meanwhile, his core MAGA (Make America Great Again) supporters feel betrayed, viewing this move as a departure from Trump’s pledge to avoid foreign entanglements.

GOVERNMENT VS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON SAFE HARBOUR DOCTRINE

- The Centre defended before the Karnataka High Court its expanded use of **Section 79 of the Information Technology (IT) Act** (which provides for safe harbour doctrine) and the **Sahyog Portal** to regulate and remove online content by intermediaries such as social media platforms.
- The case stems from a legal challenge filed by social media platform X (formerly Twitter) against **alleged government overreach** in content takedown mechanisms.

Legal Framework and the Challenge:

- **Section 79 vs Section 69A of the IT Act:**
 - **Section 79:** Provides “safe harbour” to intermediaries protecting them from liability for third-party content, but this is withdrawn if intermediaries do not comply with takedown notices.

- **Section 69A:** Grants power to block content only on specific grounds (e.g. national security, public order), under the IT (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.
- **X's argument:** The government is **misusing Section 79** to issue blocking orders which are only permitted under Section 69A; **Sahyog Portal** is termed a “ **censorship portal.**”

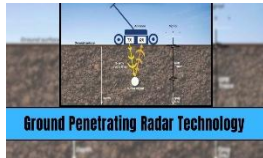
The Sahyog Portal and Government's Justification:

- **Purpose and scope of Sahyog Portal:**
 - Developed under **I4C** (Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre) of the Union Home Ministry.
 - As of March 2025, **38 intermediaries** including Google, Amazon, Apple, Telegram, YouTube onboarded; Meta enabled API access.
 - X has refused onboarding, citing legal overreach.
- **Government's stand:**
 - **Algorithmic content curation** is distinct from traditional editorial control, hence needs new regulation.
 - **Algorithms amplify harmful content** rapidly without oversight, unlike editors in newspapers or TV.
 - **Anonymity and pseudonymity** on platforms increase incitement risks and shield accountability.
 - Thus, **a wider net under Section 79 is essential** to tackle a broad class of ‘unlawful content’ beyond what is specified in Section 69A.

Conclusion:

- The Centre is asserting its regulatory authority over digital intermediaries through an expanded interpretation of Section 79, citing the unique risks of algorithmic amplification and anonymity.
- The case is **a significant legal milestone** in defining the contours of safe harbour doctrine, online free speech, platform responsibility, and the role of the State in digital governance.

GROUND PENETRATING RADAR TECHNOLOGY



- It is a **geophysical method** that uses **high-frequency electromagnetic pulses** to image the subsurface of the Earth or other solid materials.
- It is a **non-destructive detection** and imaging method which identifies subsurface elements either underground or within a surface such as concrete.

Working of Ground Penetrating Radar Technology

- GPR uses a **transmitter antenna** to send high-frequency, pulsed, **electromagnetic waves** (typically from 10 MHz to 1,000 MHz) into the subsurface to acquire information.
- The wave spreads out and travels downward until it **hits a buried object** or boundary with different **electromagnetic properties**
- Part of the wave **energy is reflected or scattered back to the surface**, while part of the energy continues to travel downward.
- The wave is reflected back to the surface to a receiver antenna that records the amplitude of the reflected energy and the arrival time of the wave on a digital storage device

Applications of Ground Penetrating Radar Technology

- GPR can detect both **metallic and non-metallic objects**, giving it a wide range of applications.
- It reveals all types of utilities, including electrical conduit, steam pipes, telecommunications lines, gas & oil lines, water lines, and sewer & storm pipes.