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## 1. 10 years of Swachh Bharat Mission: Its aims and status on key targets

### Introduction

Swachh Bharat Mission, one of the first programmes announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he took office in 2014, completes 10 years on October 2. While announcing the "Clean India campaign", the PM had said: "A clean India would be the best tribute India could pay to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary in 2019."

The mission was divided into SBM-Gramin for villages, and SBM-Urban for cities, executed by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs respectively.

SBM's focus areas were building individual toilets, community toilets, solid waste management, and leading awareness campaigns aimed at behavioural changes.



### Targets of SBM

The PM announced that the SBM's main goal was to make India "Open defecation-free" (ODF) by October 2, 2019, for which crores of household and community toilets had to be constructed. The definition of ODF under the mission is as follows: "A city/ ward can be notified/ declared as an ODF city/ ODF ward if, at any point of the day, not a single person

is found defecating in the open."

The aim was to equip all households with individual toilets, ensure communities have cluster toilets, and that school and anganwadi toilets have waste management systems. Solid waste includes organic and inorganic materials (kitchen waste, plastics, metals, etc.), while liquid waste management deals with wastewater that is no longer fit for human consumption.

To achieve this, the government's assistance was increased from Rs 10,000 per toilet (under the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan of the previous UPA government) to Rs 12,000 under SBM. When the mission completed five years in 2021, the government launched SBM 2.0, with a focus on garbage-free cities, faecal sludge, plastic waste, and greywater management.

### Achievements so far

- With over 10 crore toilets constructed, PM Modi declared 6 lakh villages open defecation-free on October 2, 2019. Urban India, except for cities in West Bengal, was announced as ODF in December 2019 by the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry.
- 66 lakh individual toilets were constructed against the target of 59 lakh, the Ministry said. The Centre also said it released Rs 57,469.22 crore to states and UTs for SBM-G between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019. The Budget for SBM-U was Rs 62,009 crore.
- 5.54 lakh villages and 3,913 cities have been declared as ODF+ under the second iterations of SBM-G and SBM-U from 2020-21. ODF+ means that besides being ODF, these villages have arrangements for liquid waste management as well.
- For SBM-G 2.0, the Cabinet had cleared spending of Rs 1.40 lakh crore from 2020-21 to 2024-2025, of which Rs 52,497 crore was from the Drinking Water and Sanitation Department. SBM-U 2.0 was approved in 2021, with allocation of Rs 1.41 lakh crore.
- All 2,400 legacy landfills in cities were to be cleared by 2025-2026. So far, only 30% of the target has been achieved in terms of the area to be cleared, while 41% of the waste remediation goal has been met. The SBM-U dashboard shows 97% of municipal wards have door-to-door collection of waste and 90% of them have 100% segregation at source.

### **Impact of the mission**

In 2018, the World Health Organisation estimated that 3 lakh deaths due to diarrhoea and protein-energy malnutrition would be averted due to the SBM-G from 2014 to October 2019. "Unsafe sanitation caused an estimated 199 million cases of diarrhoea annually before the start of the SBM in 2014. These have been gradually reducing, and will almost be eliminated when universal use of safe sanitation facilities is achieved by October 2019," the WHO said.

A recent study has found a link between reduction in infant deaths and SBM. The report, published in Nature on September 2, said the mission may have led to 60,000 to 70,000 fewer infant deaths annually from 2014 to 2020. The study noted that there had been a decline in infant mortality from 2003 to 2020, but the decrease was more after 2015.

According to the 2011 Census, 53.1% of households, both rural and urban, lacked any kind of latrines. How much this number has changed remains to be seen — Census 2021 has been delayed.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

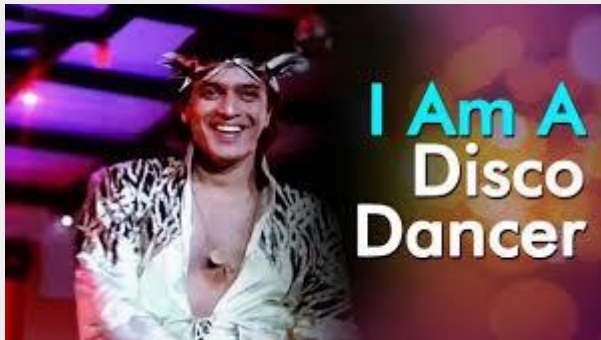
Source: Indian Express

## **2. Dadasaheb Phalke for Mithun Chakraborty: How Jimmy spurred Bollywood's disco fever**

### **Recognition at the 70th National Film Awards**

Actor and former Rajya Sabha MP Mithun Chakraborty will be honored with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2024. The award will be presented at the 70th National Film Awards ceremony on October 8, 2024. Chakraborty is best known for his role as Jimmy in the

iconic film *Disco Dancer* (1982), which catapulted him to stardom and became the first Indian film to gross over ₹100 crore globally.



### **The Rise of *Disco Dancer* and Bollywood's Disco Fever**

By the 1970s, discos had started making their mark in cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata, though they remained part of a niche counterculture. Bollywood embraced this trend with the hit song "Aap Jaisa Koi" from *Qurbani* (1980), featuring 15-year-old Pakistani singer Nazia Hassan and produced

by British-Indian music producer Biddu Appaiah.

Mithun Chakraborty, who had already gained recognition with his debut in Mrinal Sen's *Mrigaya* (1976), stood apart from the typical "angry young man" image popularized by actors like Amitabh Bachchan. His unique style was a fresh contrast to the established Bollywood heroes.

### ***Disco Dancer*: Bollywood's Saturday Night Fever Moment**

The release of *Disco Dancer* in December 1982 marked a turning point for Bollywood, similar to the impact of *Saturday Night Fever* in Hollywood. The film's success was driven by its rags-to-riches storyline, Bappi Lahiri's memorable disco tracks such as "I Am a Disco Dancer" and "Jimmy Aaja," and Mithun Chakraborty's distinctive dance moves.

### **Bollywood's Disco Era**

*Disco Dancer* sparked widespread interest in disco music in Bollywood, leading to a new era characterized by flamboyant fashion—shimmering outfits, bell-bottoms, and headbands—and music dominated by synthesizers, drum machines, and captivating vocals. Bappi Lahiri's experiments with the genre became a defining sound for Bollywood in the 1980s.

### **International Success, Especially in the Soviet Union**

The film was especially popular in the Soviet Union, where it became the highest-grossing foreign film. In her book, *Leave Disco Dancer Alone: Indian Cinema and Soviet Movie-going after Stalin*, Sudha Rajagopalan noted how the film, with its energetic disco music and charismatic hero, won over Soviet audiences. Its release even led to a stampede in Tajikistan, resulting in the tragic death of one person.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Governance

Source: Indian Express

## **3. The Need for Reform in the UPSC Selection Process**

### **Introduction**

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) have recently faced scrutiny, particularly after the Pujya Khedkar episode. This incident exposed significant flaws in the system. When seen alongside controversies like the NEET fiasco, it

becomes evident that India must urgently restore the credibility of its civil services, higher education institutions, and national-level selection bodies.



## Key Issues in the Selection Process

### 1. Opaque Income Certification for OBC and EWS Categories

A significant issue lies in the income certification process for Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) reservations. Income certificates, typically issued by Tehsildars, lack proper verification mechanisms, creating opportunities for fraud. There is also confusion about whether the candidate's income or their family's income should be considered for eligibility, especially when a candidate's financial situation changes over time.

### 2. Gaming the Reservation System

Unlike Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe categories, which can be verified through community checks, the OBC, EWS, and disability categories are prone to manipulation. There are cases where candidates, after failing once, secure admission by presenting questionable EWS certificates. Tehsildars, tasked with issuing income certificates, often lack the capacity to thoroughly assess an applicant's financial standing.

### 3. Outdated Rules and Lack of Scrutiny

Despite the evident flaws, there has been no attempt to revise the rules around income or disability certification. Without a proactive system for verifying credentials, scrutiny only occurs when complaints are filed. This passive oversight has allowed questionable practices to flourish, not only in the civil services but also in higher education institutions.

## The Role of Technology and Transparency

One potential solution is enhancing transparency through technology. Had better systems been in place, it would have been impossible for Ms. Khedkar to sit for the UPSC exam 12 times. However, even sophisticated systems like Aadhaar have been compromised in the past, with fake biometric data being used to fraudulently claim benefits.

## Proposed Solutions for Reform

### 1. Clear Guidelines on Income and Disability

The government needs to establish unambiguous rules on income and disability criteria that are uniformly applied across all states and sectors. If necessary, expert bodies should be formed to help develop these standards.

### 2. Robust Verification Systems

A strong verification system is crucial, particularly in categories prone to manipulation like disability and income-based reservations. Advanced technology should be utilized to reduce the scope for fraud.



### 3. Reevaluate Disability Criteria

The inclusion of mental disability within the civil services disability quota raises concerns, as these roles demand consistent mental acuity. Additionally, introducing an aptitude test for civil services, similar to the Defence Services, may help assess candidates better.

### 4. Accountability and Penalties

Serious penalties should be imposed on officials and medical professionals who issue false certificates. Courts play a critical role in ensuring that deserving candidates are not deprived of opportunities due to fraudulent selections.

### Conclusion: Time for Structural Changes

The civil services are meant for those committed to serving the nation, not individuals seeking personal benefits. It is crucial to address the procedural and structural flaws in the UPSC selection process to safeguard the integrity of India's public institutions.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

### 4. New SEBI rules to curb F&O frenzy, aim to protect small investors

#### Introduction

The regulator has increased the 'tail risk' coverage by levying an additional 'Extreme Loss Margin' (ELM) of 2% for short options contracts. ELM is the margin that exchanges charge over and above the normal margin requirement. Tail risk is the chance of a loss due to a rare event. Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has released a set of six measures to strengthen the equity index derivatives — also known as equity futures & options (F&O) — framework.



The F&O segment has been witnessing an exponential jump in trading volumes, with the majority of investors incurring losses. The increased activity in the derivatives market has become a cause of concern for the government and regulators, as surging F&O volumes have

started to impinge on capital formation and pose a systemic risk to the country's economic growth.

Market experts believe that tighter F&O rules could help limit speculation in the derivatives market, protect the interest of retail investors, increase constructive participation, and improve market stability.

### **1. Contract size for index derivatives recalibrated**

The minimum contract size at the time of its introduction in the market has been recalibrated to Rs 15 lakh from the existing stipulation of Rs 5-10 lakh. The regulator has said that the contract size should be fixed in such a way that the contract value of the derivative on the day of review is Rs 15-20 lakh.

This will apply to all new index derivatives contracts introduced after November 20 this year. This step raises the entry barrier, and seeks to ensure that participants in the derivatives market take on appropriate risks.

**IMPLICATION:** V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said the increase in contract size can curb speculation by small traders who have been hyperactive in the F&O segment.

Kunal Sanghavi, Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, HDFC Securities, said small investors and retail participants end up taking undue risks and make losses in the F&O segment. "Retail players in tier 2 and tier 3 cities will need to re-strategise on account of the increase in the minimum index derivatives contract value from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 15 lakh at the time of introduction," Sanghavi said.

### **2. Upfront collection of options premium**

To deny undue intra-day leverage to the end client, and discourage the practice of allowing positions beyond the collateral at the end client-level, SEBI has mandated the collection of options premium upfront from options buyers by the trading member (TM) or the clearing member (CM). The new rule will be applicable from February 1, 2025.

**IMPLICATION:** This is primarily to ensure prudent risk management at the investor level, Puneet Sharma, CEO and Fund Manager at Whitespace Alpha, a multi-asset class asset management firm, said.

"Options carry inherent leverage, which can amplify gains or losses. By mandating upfront collection, SEBI aims to minimise undue intraday leverage, ensuring that positions are taken only against adequate collateral," he said.

The aim is to instill discipline, reduce aggressive short-term speculation, and mitigate the risk of defaults due to overleveraged positions, Sharma said.

### **3. Rationalisation of weekly index derivatives products**

SEBI has said that expiry-day trading in index options at a time when option premiums are low, is largely speculative. Stock exchanges offer short-tenure options contracts on indices

which expire on every day of the week, leading to hyperactive trading in index options on expiry day.

SEBI has directed that "henceforth, each exchange may provide derivatives contracts for only one of its benchmark index with weekly expiry". This will be effective from November 20.

**IMPLICATION:** Sanghavi said this will limit the avenues for uncovered/ naked options selling. A naked position one that is not hedged.

Sharma said the hyperactive trading in multiple weekly expiring contracts leads to short holding periods and increased market volatility, particularly on expiry days. "By limiting the availability of these products, SEBI is focusing on reducing the volume of purely speculative trades, and thereby curbing the frequent price fluctuations that can destabilise the market," he said.

#### **4. Intra-day monitoring of position limits**

Amid large volumes of trading on expiry day, there is a possibility of undetected intra-day positions beyond permissible limits. "To address the risk of position creation beyond permissible limits...existing position limits for equity index derivatives shall henceforth also be monitored intra-day by exchanges," SEBI said. This will be effective from April 1, 2025.

**IMPLICATION:** Intra-day monitoring of position limits, rather than just end-of-day checks, reflects a commitment to ensuring real-time compliance with regulatory norms. "By implementing random intra-day snapshots, SEBI is trying to proactively prevent speculative excesses and maintain orderly market behaviour throughout the day," Sharma said.

#### **5. Removal of 'calendar spread' treatment on expiry day**

Expiry day can see significant 'basis' risk, where the value of a contract expiring on the day can move very differently from the value of similar contracts expiring in future. Given the large volumes on expiry day, from February 1, 2025, the benefit of offsetting positions across different expiries ('calendar spread') will not be available on the day of expiry for contracts expiring on that day, SEBI said.

**IMPLICATION:** "This will force players to do rollovers early and not wait until expiry day, easing expiry day 'basis' speculation," Sanghavi said. 'Basis' is the difference between the futures price and stock price, which is majorly impacted during rollovers — ultimately impacting the underlying asset price and leading to undesired movement in prices of all derivatives instruments of the underlying asset.

#### **6. Increase in 'tail risk' coverage on day of expiry**

The regulator has increased the 'tail risk' coverage by levying an additional 'Extreme Loss Margin' (ELM) of 2% for short options contracts. ELM is the margin that exchanges charge over and above the normal margin requirement. Tail risk is the chance of a loss due to a rare event. **IMPLICATION:** This will ensure that market participants have more skin in the game, particularly on days when volatility spikes, Sharma said. "It acts as a buffer against abrupt market moves driven by leveraged short options, protecting both investors and the broader market ecosystem from significant downside risk," he said.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: Indian Express

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