

# Swachh Bharat will be a top priority: UP CM

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The Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, today declared that the goals and targets of the Swachh Bharat Mission are of top priority to the new government in the State. He made this declaration when a Central government team led by the Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Parameswaran Iyer, met him in Lucknow today.

Earlier this week, the Chief Minister had declared that 30 districts in the State will become Open Defecation Free (ODF) by December 2017. The Secretary, Shri Iyer, briefed the Chief Minister about the support that will be provided by the Centre to the State government to meet the ODF targets set by the State. This support will include posting of one young professional as a Zila Swachh Bharat Prerak (ZSBP) in each of the 75 districts of UP, priority fund allocation to the State, and continuous technical assistance, training and capacity building to the districts by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

The Central team, led by Shri Iyer, and the State Government, led by Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Rahul Bhatnagar, reviewed Swachh Bharat Mission progress in the State through a video conference with the district magistrates (DMs) of the State. For the success of Swachh Bharat in the State without compromising on quality, the DMs were advised to focus on toilet technology, building a cadre of 1 lakh trained Swachhagrahis to trigger behaviour change on the ground and geo-tagging of toilets built.

Districts that have gram panchayats situated along the banks of the Ganges were specifically asked to focus in a concerted manner on making those Gram Panchayats ODF at the earliest. Districts were also asked to take up solid and liquid waste management work increasingly in the coming days. The DMs spoke about the efforts they are making to scale up sanitation in their respective districts, and the challenges faced by them in the process. The Chief Secretary directed officials of the State to take all necessary steps to move Swachh Bharat activities at a faster pace in their respective districts.

In particular, 4 districts of the State - Varanasi, Etah, Sonbhadra and Agra - volunteered to become ODF by the end of the year, in addition to the 30 districts announced by the Chief Minister, taking the total tally of UP districts targeting ODF status in 2017 to 34. The Secretary appreciated the initiative shown by them, and urged them to deploy creative ideas to involve communities in the movement and make it a *janaandolan* in a true sense, as envisioned by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, at the time of inception of the Mission.



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