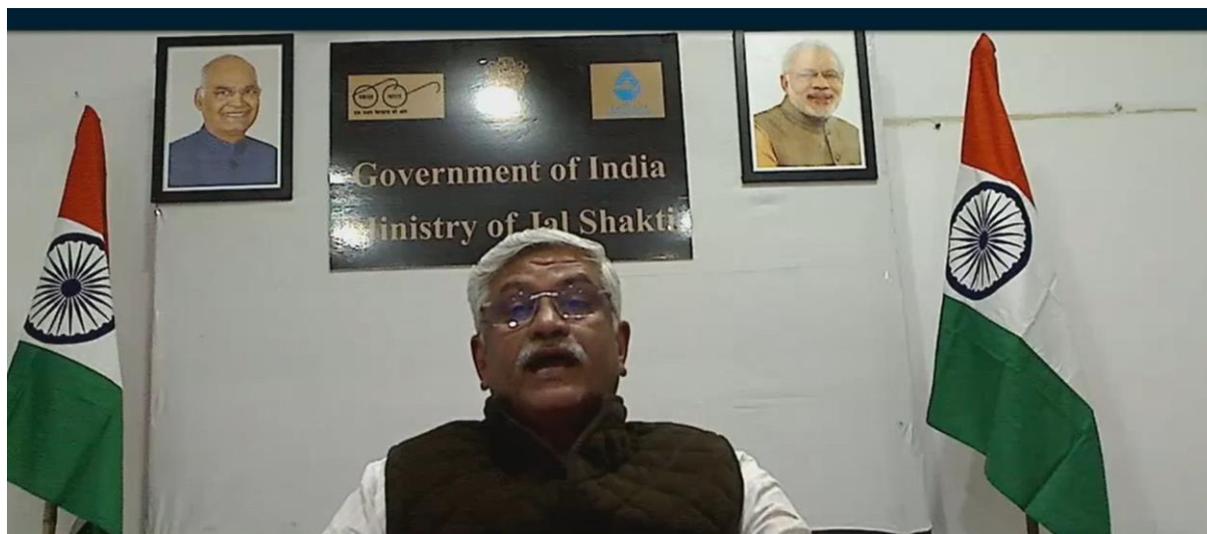


India led the biggest sanitation revolution in history: Union Minister of Jal Shakti



India led the largest behaviour change movement - the biggest sanitation revolution in history, communicating the impacts of sanitation and how the lack of it will affect the productivity of the nation, said Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Government of India, at the 2020 Regional Finance Ministers' Meeting.

Speaking at the first Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Asia and the Pacific Finance Ministers' Meeting (FMM) that was virtually held on 2nd December 2020, the Minister attributed the Swachh Bharat movement to the Prime Minister of India who brought the subject of sanitation before the public and linked it with the health, prosperity, and prestige of people.

"We are confident that the success of India's sanitation and water programmes will certainly support India's ambitious economic and social growth goals," Shri Shekhawat added, elaborating on how every penny spent on sanitation had significant returns.

The Minister of Jal Shakti also discussed the pivotal role played by women across the country in leading the Swachh Bharat Mission from the front.

He referred to the studies made by development partners such as World Health Organisation (WHO) that estimated that in 5 years, the Swachh Bharat Mission had saved more than 300 thousand lives. On the other hand, UNICEF India's 's assessment on the impacts of SBM found that every household in an Open Defecation Free (ODF) village saved up to USD 715 per year on medical costs.

Significantly, "A budget of about 20 billion US dollars backed India's Swachh Bharat Mission. As a result, in only 5 years, India declared itself as ODF, thus achieving SDG Goal of sanitation for all, 11 years before the target year," the Minister stated.

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SWA Asia and the Pacific FMM: The objective of the SWA Asia and the Pacific FMM was to develop and strengthen partnerships with finance ministers in the region for smart investments in water, sanitation, and hygiene. The meetings will underscore the crucial role of water, sanitation and hygiene to the Asian economy, population, and environment during and after COVID-19, and will offer ministers practical avenues for financing the sector.

It was co-convened by global partners UNICEF and the World Bank Water Global Practice, as well as SWA's regional partner, the Asian Development Bank and built on previous global Finance Ministers Meetings organized by SWA in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2017.

The meeting saw the participation of 20 Finance and Sector Ministers, the aim being to develop and strengthen partnerships in the region for smart investments in water, sanitation, and hygiene.



The 3-hour SWA Asia and the Pacific FMM was live-streamed and simultaneously translated in English and French.

The meeting that focused on sparking economic growth through investment in WASH was attended by Mr. Arun Baroka, Additional Secretary, Department of Drinking

Water and Sanitation (DDWS) along with senior officers from the Department.

