World Toilet Day, 19 November – Swachh Bharat and SDG 6.2

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Why in news: 19 November 2026 is World Toilet Day, a United Nations observance that draws attention to the billions of people who still lack safe sanitation. For India it is a moment to take stock of the Swachh Bharat Mission, launched on 2 October 2014.

Key points

- Origin: the day was started in 2001 by the World Toilet Organization, a Singapore-based non-profit. The UN General Assembly made 19 November an official UN day through resolution 67/291, 'Sanitation for All', adopted on 24 July 2013; UN-Water coordinates the observance.
- Global picture: the WHO–UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme report 'Progress on Household Drinking Water and Sanitation 2000–2024' (26 August 2025) found that 3.4 billion people still lack safely managed sanitation, including 354 million who practise open defecation.
- The goal: SDG target 6.2 – by 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
- India: the Swachh Bharat Mission began on 2 October 2014, and rural India was declared open-defecation free on 2 October 2019. Under SBM (Grameen), 11,90,82,266 individual household latrines and 2,59,982 community sanitary complexes had been built (Lok Sabha reply, 24 July 2025). Phase II aims at 'ODF Plus' villages – sustaining ODF status with solid and liquid waste management.
- Tamil Nadu: the same reply lists 60,24,612 household latrines and 9,091 community sanitary complexes under SBM (Grameen), and 5,45,101 household latrines and 92,744 community and public toilet seats under SBM (Urban).

In the exam: TNPSC – important days (World Toilet Day 19 November), Swachh Bharat Mission and Tamil Nadu's progress, SDGs. UPSC Prelims – UN observances, SDG 6, JMP data; Mains GS-II (health, sanitation and welfare schemes) and GS-III (solid and liquid waste management).

Questions

1. World Toilet Day (19 November) became an official United Nations observance through a UN General Assembly resolution adopted in:

A. 2001

B. 2010

C. 2013

D. 2015

2. According to a Lok Sabha reply of 24 July 2025, roughly how many individual household latrines had been built under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) since 2014?

A. About 5.5 crore

B. About 8 crore

C. About 11.9 crore

D. About 20 crore

Answers with explanations

1. **C) 2013** – Resolution 67/291, 'Sanitation for All', adopted on 24 July 2013, made 19 November an official UN day. The day itself was started in 2001 by the World Toilet Organization; UN-Water coordinates it.

2. **C) About 11.9 crore** – 11,90,82,266 household latrines and 2,59,982 community sanitary complexes. Tamil Nadu's share: 60,24,612 household latrines and 9,091 community sanitary complexes. Rural India was declared open-defecation free on 2 October 2019.

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