Varanasi declared 'Best Ganga Town' for second successive year

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LUCKNOW: Varanasi bagged number one position in the 'best Ganga town' category for the second successive year in the Swachh Bharat Survey of the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs (MoHUA) released on Saturday. Overall, Uttar Pradesh improved its ranking by a notch, from seventh in 2020 to sixth this year.

State urban development minister Ashutosh Tandon, mayors and officials of 18 cities from UP received their awards in various categories from President Ram Nath Kovind at the Swachh Amrit Mahotsav-2021 organised in New Delhi on Saturday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has congratulated the people of UP for an improved performance of the state. "The swachhta campaign being run under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has managed to create a public awareness about the issue. This has largely helped us tackle the Covid-19. The UP government is ensuring an effective implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission."

While Varanasi was awarded in the category of cities with a population of over 1 lakh, Kannauj also got the 'Number One Best Ganga Town' award among cities with a population up to 1 lakh for the second successive year.

Lucknow won the award for 'Best State Capital In Citizens' Feedback'. Overall, it secured 12th rank and retained its previous year's ranking to become top-tanked UP city in population of 10 lakh and above category. Among other seven UP cities in top 30 were Ghaziabad (18th), Kanpur (21st), Agra (24th), Prayagraj (26th), Meerut (27th) and Varanasi (30th).

Three of these — Ghaziabad, Kanpur and Meerut — have improved their rankings while three others -- Varanasi, Prayagraj and

Agra have slipped a bit, but have retained their position in the top 30. Last year, six UP cities were in the top 30. This year, the number has risen to seven.

Urban development minister Tandon and additional chief secretary, urban development, Rajnish Dubey, have congratulated the officials and representatives of award-winning municipal bodies for their good work.

While 'Citizen Feedback' included public response and satisfaction, 'Service Level Progress' encompassed use of technology in providing services to the people, water conservation and sewage treatment and 'certification' assessed open defecation free status and garbage collection.

The direct observation parameter which included third party inspection was merged with the service level progress this year.

Among other award-winning UP cities, Meerut won the 'Fastest Mover Big City' award in the category of cities with a population of 10 lakh to 40 lakh, while Ghaziabad won the 'Best Big City In Innovation and Best Practices' award in the same category.

In the category of cities with 3 lakh to 10 lakh population, Noida won 'India's Cleanest Medium City' award while in the category of more than 1 lakh population, Hapur won the 'Best City in Maximum Citizens' Participation' award.

Patiali won the 'Best City in Maximum Citizens' Participation' award in the category of cities with less than 1 lakh population. Hasanpur won the 'Fastest Mover City' in the category of 50,000 to 1 lakh population while Awagarh and Gajraula won the 'Best City in Citizens' Feedback' award in their respective categories.

Meerut Cantonment bagged 'India's Cleanest Cantonment' award in the category of 1 lakh population while Varanasi Cantonment won the same award in the category of over 1 lakh population.

In the category of 'Garbage Free Cities', five cities from UP —Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Noida, Aligarh and Jhansi — were given a star rating.

Though Lucknow remained on 12th rank, its score improved to 4,586 from 4,102 last year. Kanpur also improved its score from 3,783 to 3847 and jumped to rank 21 from 25 last year. Ghaziabad improved its rank by a notch from 19 last year to 18 this time

even as its overall score witnessed a decline from 4,283 to 4,220.

The rankings released by the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs (MoHUA) on Saturday are based on a cleanliness survey done across the country after segregating cities and towns based on their population.

Overall, 4,320 urban local bodies, including cities, towns, municipalities, and cantonments, in various categories were assessed. Of them, two major categories were 372 cities/towns with population between 1-10 lakh, and 48 big cities with 10 lakh or above population.

The Swachh Bharat Survey 2020 had four parameters — Citizen Feedback (1,500 marks), Certification (1,500 marks), Direct Observation (1,500) and Service Level Progress (1,500).

However, this year, the assessment was done on three scales — Citizen Feedback (1,800 marks), Service Level Progress (2,400 marks) and Certification (1,800 marks). Total marks up for grabs were 6,000.

Meerut was the star performer, recording a big jump of 14 rungs — from 41st rank last year to 27 this time — with an aggregate score of 3,598, a substantial increase in comparison to last year.

On the other hand, the biggest drop in ranking among UP cities was recorded by Agra, which slipped from rank 16 last year to 24 this year. Agra's net score also plunged to 3,715 from 4,391 last year.

Prayagraj also lost six spots from rank 20 last year to 26th this time. Its net score in 2020 was 4,141, which came down to 3,613 this year.

Varanasi, too, slipped three rungs from 27th rank last year to 30th this time, with its score dropping to 3,532 from 3,684 last year.