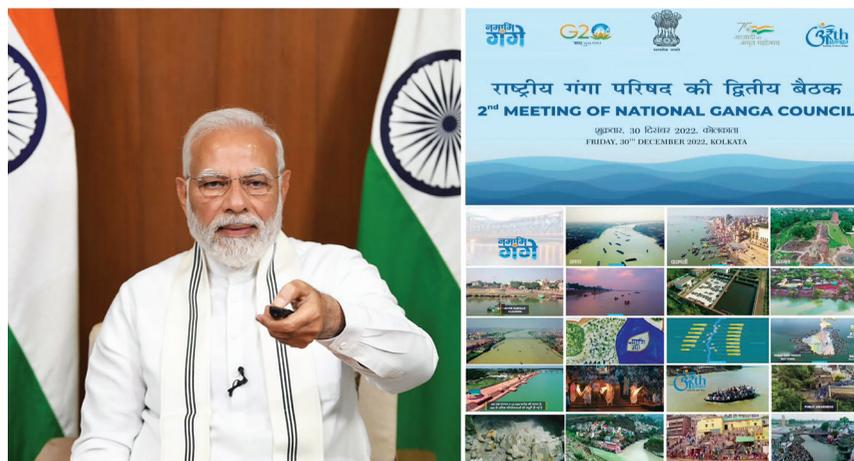


NAMAMI GANGE: A PEOPLE-LED MOVEMENT FOR REJUVENATING THE RIVER

GANGA

Ganga, a river like no other, revered as holy and sacred, symbolizes India's ancient civilization, a carrier of its centuries-old traditions, faith and socio-cultural heritage. The Namami Gange program continues to innovatively push the envelope to realize its goals. It is prudent to remember that river rejuvenation is a continuous effort warranting commitment and support from all.



NGC meeting held on 30th December 2022

By: G Asok Kumar,
Director General, NMCG

- NamamiGange is a flagship program launched by the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi in 2014 to rejuvenate, clean and restore the pristine glory of River Ganga, the longest and holiest of rivers in India, and its tributaries. With a committed financial outlay of over US\$ 5 Billion, it is arguably one of the biggest river restoration programs in the world.
- Not surprisingly, on 13th December 2022, at the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) happening in Montreal, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, announced Namami Gange as one of the top 10 world restoration flagships. It was selected from over 150 such initiatives from across the globe. UN is celebrating 2021-30 as the Decade on Ecosystem restoration.

- Mr. Narendra Modi virtually chaired the 2nd meeting of the National Ganga Council on 30th December 2022 in Kolkata. Mr. Modi said that the purity of Maa Ganga is our common heritage and also our responsibility and it is our destiny to hand over this heritage inherited from our forefathers to future generations in the same condition and with same purity. On being selected as one of the top ten initiatives to restore the ecosystem, Mr. Narendra Modi said that it is a matter of great pride for all of us that this initiative is now receiving plaudits from all over the world. He credited the people of India behind the success of Namami Gange programme and said that it is a direct proof of our willpower and tireless efforts and will show a new path to the world in the direction of environmental protection.
- Not a stranger to accolades, the mission's implementing agency,

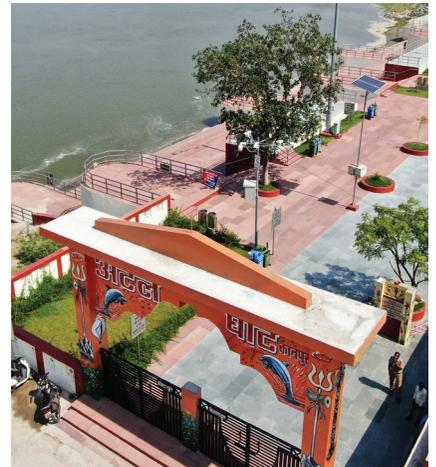
the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has previously won "Public Water Agency of the Year" in the Global Water Awards, 2019 by Global Water Intelligence. The documentary Ganga: River from the Skies, co-produced with National Geographic India, received awards in three categories - Best Documentary, Best Current Affairs and Best Natural History or Wildlife Programme - at the Asian Academy Creative Awards, 2022.

- River Ganges or Ganga is like no other river in India - revered as a holy and sacred river, it symbolizes India's ancient civilization, a carrier of its centuries old traditions, faith and socio-cultural heritage. Spread across 8.61 Million hectares or 26% of India's land area, this nation's largest river basin hosts over 520 million of India's population and 146+ biodiversity species. It contributes to 28% of India's water resources. Cities like Haridwar, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Patna, Kolkata etc are on banks of the main-stem Ganga River and those such as New-Delhi, Mathura, Agra etc on the banks of its main tributary, River Yamuna.
- While PM Modi chairs the National Ganga Council, the apex body of NMCG, the overall programme implementation is monitored by Mr. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Jal Shakti, Government of India.

- NMCG carries out interventions in 5 strategic areas under the Mission. These include – Nirmal-Ganga or unpolluted flow, Aviral-Ganga or unrestricted flow, Jan-Ganga or Strengthening People River Connect and Gyan-Ganga or Research, Policies and Knowledge Management. Arth-Ganga, or the self-sustainable economic model is based on symbiotic relationship between nature and society, by strengthening people-river connect, adopting an ecologically conscious sustainable development framework. It comprises 6 verticals- Zero budget natural farming; Monetization of reuse of sludge and treated wastewater; Promotion of livelihood generation opportunities; Revival of cultural heritage and tourism; Public participation; and Institutional building.
- Till now, 406 projects worth approximately US\$ 4 Billion have been sanctioned as various projects, against which 225 projects have been completed, the remaining are under various stages of execution. 176 projects roughly worth over US\$ 3 Billion have been sanctioned just to create/rehabilitate a cumulative treatment capacity of 5,270 MLD and laying of 5,214 km sewer network in the basin. The other projects pertain to the areas of industrial pollution abatement; solid and liquid waste management; conservation of biodiversity, wetlands; afforestation; groundwater management, rejuvenation of small

ivers and springsheds; floodplain management, etc.

- Strengthening people river connect has been a key component of Namami Gange’ s success. Concerted efforts have been made to reach out to grassroots for raising awareness with a dedicated cadre of volunteers such as Ganga Praharis, Ganga Mitras, Ganga Doots, Ganga Vichar Manch, etc. Year-round activities such as Ganga Utsav (River Festival), Ganga Quest (International Quiz Competition), cleanathons, plantation drives and many more involving the local communities, especially children and youth maintain the Mission’ s momentum and facilitated the transformation into a people led movement. As a bottom up approach, District Ganga Committees have been formed in all the river basin districts. DGC-4M meetings (District Ganga Committee – Monthly Mandated Minuted and Monitored meetings are now taking place every month.
- In the past 8 years, Namami-Gange has achieved significant milestones. The water quality has considerably improved with the Dissolved Oxygen (DO) levels now within acceptable limits throughout the length of the river, and the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) is under set standards, apart from two stretches wherein it just exceeds the limits by few points. In fact, up till Haridwar the water quality has reached Class A, which is the highest standard



Atal Ghat, Kanpur

of water quality. Over 30,000 Ha in the basin has been afforested. Improved biodiversity, as evidenced by sightings of Dolphins, Turtles, Hilsa, Otters, Gharials, etc. are also reflective of the improved health of the river and its riverine ecosystem.

- Introduction of innovations such as Hybrid Annuity based PPP Model and One – City-One-Operator model have been a game changer in Indian wastewater sector. They have enhanced accountability in wastewater infrastructure creation, service delivery and accountability, along with significantly increasing private sector participation in the sector.
- NMCG launched “River Cities Alliance” to provide its 31 member cities a platform to discuss and exchange information related to sustainable management of urban rivers. It is for building river and water-sensitive cities of the future.
- As Namami-Gange continues to innovatively push the envelope to realize its goals, it is prudent to remember that river rejuvenation a continuous effort warranting commitment and support from all stakeholders. With the results achieved in such a short span, the Government of India is currently under process of replicating the success and devising similar strategies for other river basins in the country.



Ganga Arti at Haridwar

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