

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION  
**RAJYA SABHA**

**STARRED QUESTION NO. \*156**

ANSWERED ON 18.12.2023

**GANGA UTSAV**

\*156 SMT. DARSHANA SINGH

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has recently celebrated the Ganga Utsav organized by National Mission for Clean Ganga in New Delhi;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the various programmes organized under the said Utsav;
- (c) whether Government also flagged the 2nd edition of Ganga Pustak Parikrama in the said Utsav;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and its aims and objectives;
- (e) whether Government proposes to devise a plan for cleaning Ganga River with the help of locals residing near Ganga River; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the challenges being faced in this regard and steps taken to counter these challenges?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI**

(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU)

(a) to (f) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. \*156 TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.12.2023 IN RAJYA SABHA REGARDING “GANGA UTSAV”**

**(a) & (b)** The Ganga Utsav is being celebrated every year from 2017 onwards on 4<sup>th</sup> November, the day on which river Ganga was declared the National River of India in 2008. It has been developed as a model River Festival with the aim to connect people to the rivers, make them aware about the importance of rivers and inculcate a sense of pride in them. It brings together various stakeholders such as NGOs, Volunteers, partner organisations, youth, students, academia and children and celebrate our rivers and spread awareness on the significance of river rejuvenation across river basins in India.

Ganga Utsav 2023 celebrated at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi on 4<sup>th</sup> November with participation of key stakeholders like NGOs, Volunteers and partner organisations. It featured cultural performances, flute recital, live music and folk dance shows by classical artists, instrumental saga etc.

It was also celebrated in more than 45 Ganga districts by District Ganga Committees to mark the occasion and ensure greater participation.

**(c) & (d)** 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of Ganga Pustak Parikarma in association with National Book Trust was flagged off on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The 3-month long journey of the Pustak Parikarma was commenced on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 from Gangotri. The Parikarma would traverse through various major cities and towns on the banks of river Ganga including- Uttarkashi, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Bijnore, Meerut, Aligarh, Farrukhabad, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Chhapra, Patna, Begusarai, Sultanganj, Bhagalpur, Sahibganj, Baharampur, Kolkata and Haldia- before concluding on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Ganga Sagar. This is a unique literary initiative which is aimed to connect with children and youth to preserve, celebrate, encourage the flow of knowledge and to make people aware of the cultural and environmental influence of Ganga on our lives through creative writing, readings, paintings, workshops, discussions and other such books-and-reading-related activities, etc.

**(e) & (f)** The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has undertaken comprehensive public awareness campaigns to foster a sense of responsibility and engagement among the public in efforts to clean and conserve the Ganga River through educational materials, community outreach, school programs, mass media campaigns, and online engagement. Swachhta Pakhwada Ganga Utsav, Ganga Run, Ganga Rafting expeditions, treks, Ghat pe Haat with a social message and several activities have also been taken up. 139 District Ganga Committees (DGCs) have been formed and their mandated monthly meetings done to encourage decentralization and ensure people’s participation. Namami Gange was recognized as one of the top ten World Restoration Flagship initiatives during UN Conference on Biological Diversity by UN Decade, primarily for halting and reversing riverine environmental degradation, with peoples’ active participation.

To enhance public awareness, promote people river connect and large scale participation and involvement of community and common masses, NMCG has conducted a series of awareness and Aarti Training workshops, promoted Yoga on Ghats, started initiatives like Ganga Bhog – Gangotri se Ganga Sagar Tak centered on 5Ms concept: Maa (mother), Mandir (temple), Mitti (Land), Mahila (Women) and Mota Anaj (Millets) etc. Ganga Aarti is being conducted regularly at several ghats (Uttarkashi, Champawat, Dehradun, Bulandshahar, Chandauli, Buxar, Bhagalpur, Vaishali, Munger, Hooghly etc.) under the auspices of District Ganga Committees, Ganga Doots and other trained volunteers of NMCG.

NMCG has taken various steps to address river and water-related challenges along with various IEC campaigns to create awareness, sensitize people, and ensure Nirmal Ganga and Aviral Ganga. The ‘Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan’ was a pioneering and historic exploratory open-water rafting and kayaking expedition on the Ganga River. This was the first ever effort by National Mission for Clean Ganga to raft across the entire stretch of the river, and also the longest ever social campaign being undertaken through an adventure sporting activity to spread the message of river rejuvenation and water conservation on a massive scale. NMCG supported the ‘Atulya Ganga Cyclothon’ from Gaumuk to Gangasagar. This was an initiative by Army Veterans for raising awareness about Ganga Rejuvenation.

Cadre of ‘Ganga Doots’ (45,000 Nos), ‘Ganga Praharis’ (2,900 Nos) and ‘Ganga Mitra’ (700 nos) involved in public participatory activities. NMCG has taken up a project on “Capacity Building Program for Leveraging Community and Local Resources Based Technology” and has conducted various training programs at village levels. NMCG has developed a JALAJ livelihood model. An awareness and marketing of JALAJ center has been set up in Dilli Haat. The local Ganga basin products are being promoted and through these livelihood programs and an attempt has been made for creating Economic Bridge between people of Ganga Basin and the River.

NMCG has improved communication and public outreach by using social media platforms to reach out to general public. MoUs have been signed with more than 50 universities to foster awareness amongst the youth on water conservation in general and river rejuvenation in particular. ‘Igniting Young Minds,’ a monthly webinar series, has very much impacted university students in terms of creating awareness. This webinar series is an initiative to establish a connection with leading educators and young minds to engage the young generation and sensitize them about the importance of rejuvenating rivers and water conservation. NMCG has signed MoUs with other Ministries/Institutions to promote religious cultural and heritage tourism, natural farming, millet farming etc.

NMCG has launched a River City Alliance (RCA) to foster the sustainable development of river cities. RCA emerged as a catalyst for key frameworks for sustainable urban river management and ensures participation of local authorities and public in formulation of Urban River Management Plan (URMP) which is at core of RCA. The RCA has been expanded to Global River City Alliance (GRCA) which has been launched on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and includes more than 275 cities across the world. GRCA would play a crucial role in sustainable river-centric development with participation from various stakeholders.

To promote the cleanliness of the Ganga River at the district level, 139 District Ganga Committees (DGC) have been constituted under the chairmanship of District Magistrates. The performance is monitored by the Digital Dashboard for District Ganga Committees Performance Monitoring System (GDPMS). District Ganga Committees conduct 4M (Monthly, Mandated, Minuted, and Monitored) meetings, which were launched on April 6, 2022. As of October 2023, more than 2,070 meetings have been conducted.

NMCG together with other agencies in coordination with the selected DGCs have prepared District Ganga Plans for 4 districts in Ramganga Basin i.e. Udham Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand, Shahjahanpur, Moradabad and Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh using a common methodology and River Basin Management framework developed by NMCG with technical support under the India-EU Water Partnership (IEWP). These help in fostering decentralized planning and better participation of people in river basin management.

A new concept of Arth Ganga was launched in 2019 which is a sustainable and viable economic development model to strengthen the river people connect through an economic bridge. Six pillars of Arth-Ganga identified are: Promotion of Natural Framing on 5 kms band either side of River Ganga; Monetisation and reuse of Treated water and sludge from the STPs; Improvement of Livelihood opportunities, particularly for women; Promotion of Tourism and Cultural heritage; People's Participation and Building of capacities and institutions. Implementation of these initiatives is aimed to develop sustainable development model with focus on economic activities related to river Ganga. Several activities under Arth Ganga have been taken up by National Mission for Clean Ganga in coordination with various ministries/departments and other stakeholders, to achieve the goal.

The challenge for monitoring the functioning of District Ganga Committees considering the wide geographical spread has been overcome with the support of IT based Digital Dash Board. Through this Dash Board monthly mandated meetings are monitored by NMCG to arrive upon the areas of discussion, initiative taken for protection of river and water bodies, public engagement etc.

An online system named PRAYAG (Platform for Real-Time Analysis of Yamuna and Ganga & their Tributaries) has been developed as Platform for Real-time Analysis of Yamuna, Ganga, and their Tributaries. This online dashboard started from April 2023 is used for continuous monitoring of river water quality, the performance of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETPs) etc. on the Ganga and Yamuna River.

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