



National Mission for Clean Ganga

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Why in News

Recently, the **World Bank** has approved a five year loan (for the second phase) to the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** or **Namami Gange Project** worth Rs.3,000 crore to **help stem pollution in the Ganga river basin.**

So far, 313 projects worth Rs. 25,000 crore have been sanctioned under the mission.

Key Points

- **The First Phase:** The Namami Gange has already received **Rs. 4,535 crore** from the World Bank as part of the first phase (valid until December 2021) of the National Ganga River Basin.
- **The Second Phase:**
 - **Hybrid Annuity Projects:** The loan would fund three new 'Hybrid Annuity Projects' in Agra, Meerut and Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh for the tributaries of the Ganga.
 - **Cleaning Projects:** Some of the projects include spillover projects from the first phase of the mission as well cleaning projects in tributaries such as the Yamuna and Kali rivers.
 - **DBOT Projects:** Rs.1,209 crore is provided for the ongoing DBOT (**Design, Build, Operate and Transfer**) projects in Buxar, Munger, Begusarai in Bihar.
 - **Other Initiatives:** It would include institutional development, improving investment resilience to **Covid-19** like emergency situations, performance based incentive for **Urban Local Bodies** and communication and management programmes.

- **Associated Challenges:**
 - **Pollution:**
 - Most of the Ganga is polluted and it is due to presence of five states on the river's main stem i.e. Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.
 - Industrial **pollution** from tanneries in Kanpur, distilleries, paper and sugar mills in the Kosi, Ramganga and Kali river catchments are major contributors.
 - **Violation of e-Flow Norms:** According to the **Central Water Commission (CWC)**, 4 of the 11 hydro power projects on the upper reaches of the river Ganga's tributaries are violating Ganga **ecological flow (e-flow) norms** which is further interrupting the natural flow of the river.
 - **Illegal Construction:** The problem of illegal and rampant construction near river beds has become a major hurdle in cleaning the river.
 - **Poor Governance:** There is less utilisation of funds allotted under the programmes due to lack of monitoring and supervision.

Namami Gange Programme

- **Namami Gange Programme** is an **Integrated Conservation Mission**, approved as a 'Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in **June 2014** to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.
- It is being operated under the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- The program is being implemented by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**, and its state counterpart organizations i.e., State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).
 - NMCG is the implementation wing of **National Ganga Council** (set in 2016; which replaced the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NRGBA).
- It has a **Rs. 20,000-crore, centrally-funded**, non-lapsable corpus and consists of nearly 288 projects.
- **The main pillars of the programme are:**
 - Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure & Industrial Effluent Monitoring,
 - River-Front Development & River-Surface Cleaning,
 - Bio-Diversity & Afforestation,
 - Public Awareness

Other Initiatives Taken

- **Ganga Action Plan:** It was the first River Action Plan that was taken up by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 1985, to improve the water quality by the interception, diversion, and treatment of domestic sewage.
The National River Conservation Plan is an extension to the Ganga Action Plan. It aims at cleaning the Ganga river under Ganga Action Plan phase-2.
- **National River Ganga Basin Authority (NRGBA):** It was formed by the Government of India in the year 2009 under Section-3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
It declared the Ganga as the 'National River' of India.
- **Clean Ganga Fund:** In 2014, it was formed for cleaning up of the Ganga, setting up of waste treatment plants, and conservation of biotic diversity of the river.
- **Bhuvan-Ganga Web App:** It ensures involvement of the public in monitoring of pollution entering into the river Ganga.
- **Ban on Waste Disposal:** In 2017, the **National Green Tribunal** banned the disposal of any waste in the Ganga.

Way Forward

- The government's **Namami Gange Programme** has **revitalised India's efforts** in rejuvenating the Ganga.
- In this line, the first World Bank loan has helped build critical sewage infrastructure in 20 pollution hotspots along the river and the current funding would help in cleaning of the **tributaries of Ganga**.
- It will further aid the government to **strengthen the institutions** needed to manage a river basin as large as the Ganga Basin.
- In order to successfully implement the plan there is a **need for a strategic blueprint** that includes the **strict monitoring, mass awareness campaigns, use of digital media and conservation of biodiversity in Ganga**.

Source: TH