

RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE

Updates about the alliance activities

“Rivers have always occupied a central place in India’s heritage and ethos, and have traditionally been sources of spiritual inspiration, cleansing and penance... We are striving to introduce a new thinking on river cities. The establishment of ‘River Cities Alliance’ (RCA) connecting 107 river cities across the country is one such step in this direction” - Shri Narendra Modi, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India

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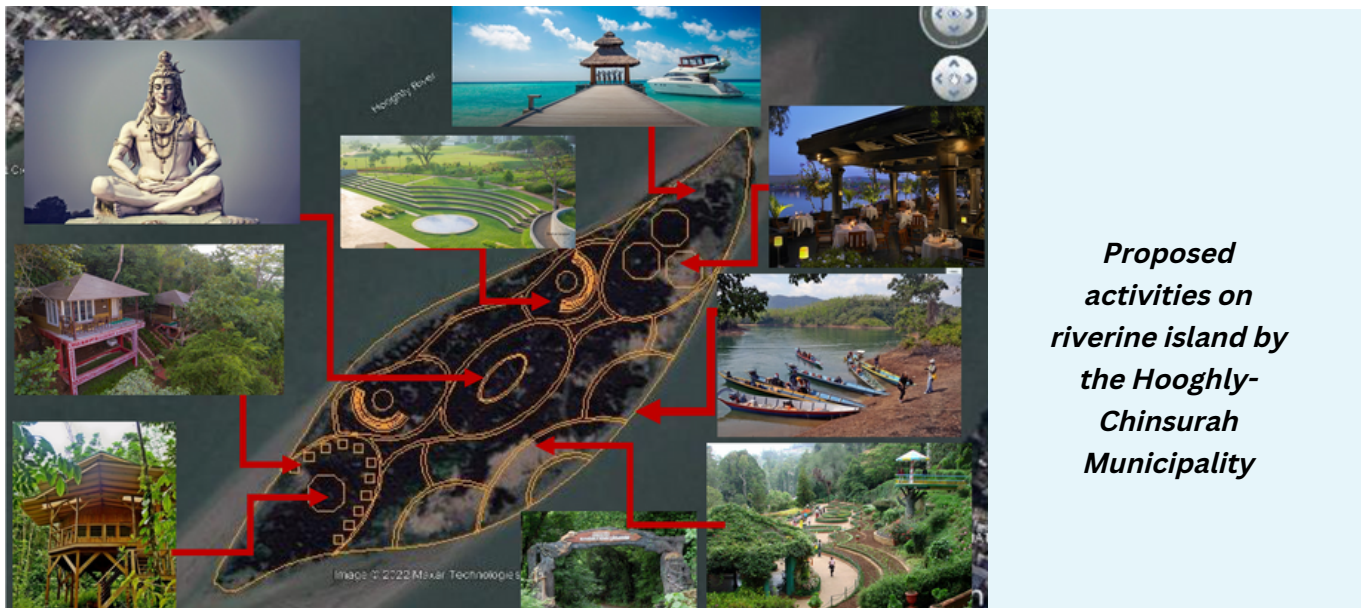
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GUIDANCE NOTE ON ECO-FRIENDLY RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT IN HOOGHLY CHINSURAH, WEST BENGAL

The Hooghly (Ganga) River in West Bengal has several riverine island formations that have remained either natural wild scapes or have been cultivated upon. Chinsurah Municipality, on the right bank (west bank) of Hooghly, is a very densely built-up area with almost no vacant land for any public investment and is thus perennially short of revenue. The Municipality is considering investing in one of the islands as a tourist destination and thereby setting up a revenue stream for the financially beleaguered local body. The Municipality envisioned the island to be an extension of the Sandeshwar Ghat, iconic as well as recreational. This includes making the island into a recreational space, as an extension of the riverfront development and connecting to the existing tourist circuit.

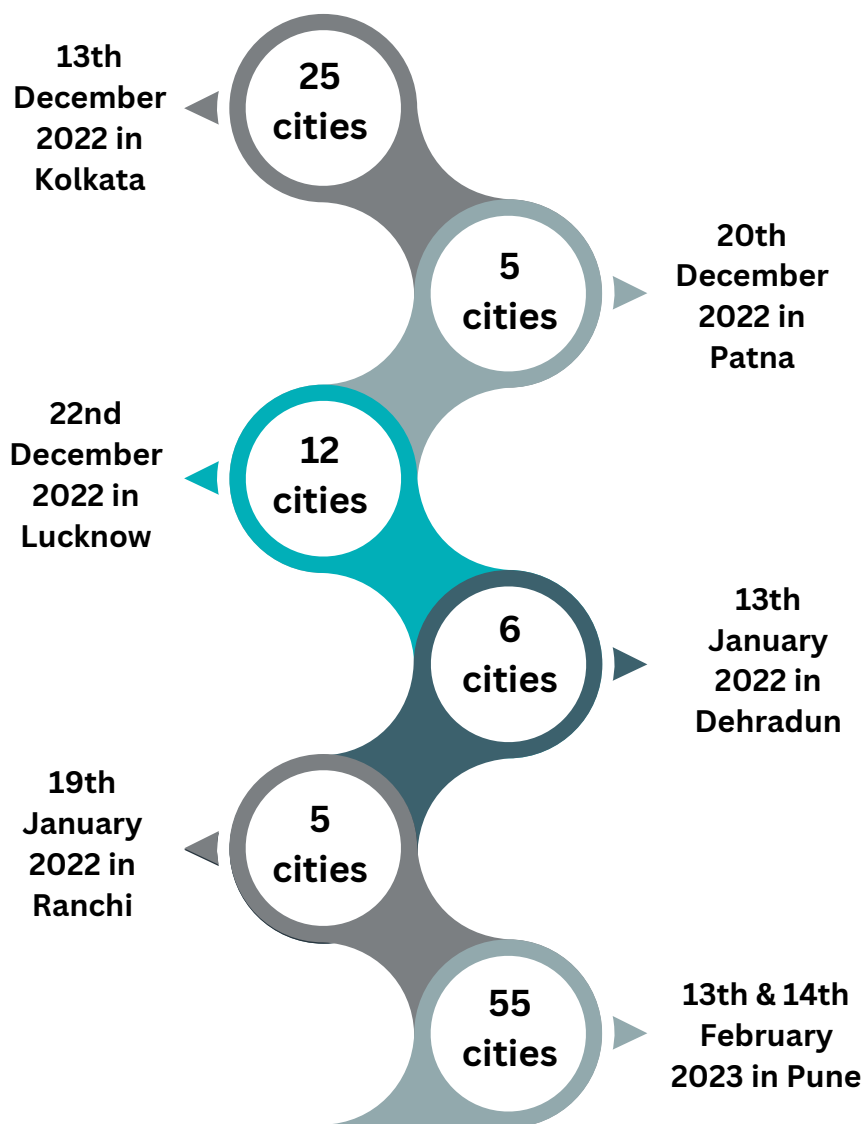


Hooghly-Chinsurah Municipality, being a member of the River Cities Alliance, had approached NIUA for providing technical guidance on developing riverine islands, permissible activities and inputs for conducting the feasibility study and DPR preparation. In this regard, earlier a two-member team from NIUA and INTACH had visited Hooghly Chinsurah. Based on their observations and discussions with the city officials, a technical report has been prepared. Some key observations/recommendations are mentioned below:-

- The island is unstable, mobile/shifting, with little capacity to have enduring structures which, in any case, would have to bear the flood fury every monsoon thus, there is a possibility of light structures on the island
- The possibility of stabilizing the island edges with riparian grasses and/or gabion structures may be scientifically investigated
- Island crest area of at least 1 ha may be retained as completely natural as a refuge area for fauna in the flood period
- Tourism on the island should only be encouraged if the following parameters are taken care of which are ownership, stabilization, biodiversity, sanitary issues, use of natural materials, landscape features, avoiding chemical fertilisers, night lighting sensitivity and other environmental parameters.

ONBOARDING OF NEW INDIAN RIVER CITIES UNDER RCA

To expand the footprint of the River Cities Alliance, a total of 78 new river cities have been onboarded. RCA started with 30 cities in 2021 and currently has 108 cities as members across India. To onboard the river cities under the RCA and brief them on river-sensitive urban planning agenda, onboarding workshops were conducted in the 5 states i.e Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.



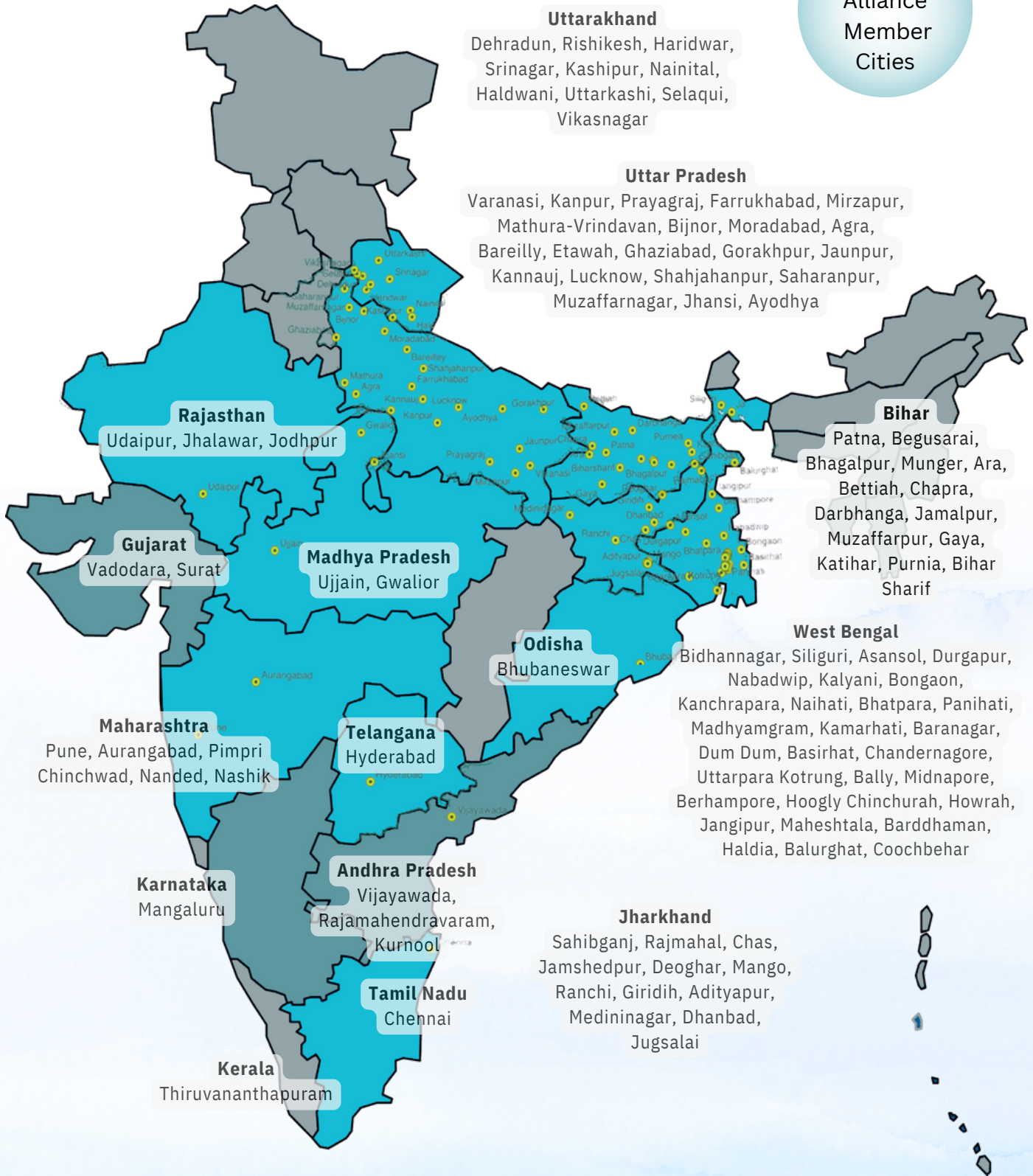


National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)
Ministry of Jal Shakti, GoI



National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)
Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, GoI

100+
Alliance
Member
Cities



To know more about River Cities Alliance, log onto
<https://niua.in/rca/>

TRAINING ON URBAN WATER DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

With the objective of building an understanding and learning practical applications of the ‘Urban Water Body Diagnostic Tool’, a two-day technical workshop on “Management of Urban Water Bodies” was organised on 17-18 November, 2022 in New Delhi. The purpose of the training workshop was to introduce the participants from River Cities Alliance Cities as well as member nations of UNESCO, New Delhi office (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) to the tool as a means for management of water bodies in their cities.

The workshop was attended by senior officials from the River Cities Alliance (RCA) member cities from Begusarai, Behrampore, Bhubaneswar, Bijnor, Chennai, Farrukhabad, Gwalior, Hoogly-Chinsurah, Howrah, Lucknow, Maheshtala, Mathura, Vrindavan, Moradabad, Patna, Pune, Srinagar, and Vijayawada. In addition, participants from Bhutan, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Nepal, and Sri Lanka also took part in the workshop. The diverse cohort of participants included urban planners/ engineers/ architects/ environmentalists, who are engaged as consultants/ practitioners/ professors/ students, with government/ private/ academic institutions.

The first day covered an overview of the urban water body diagnostic tool and its web-based application. This was followed by presentations on the role of decentralized wastewater management and nature-based solutions for maintaining healthy water bodies.

The second day commenced with best practices across countries for the management of urban water bodies. This was followed by a site visit to ASITA EAST waterbody, Delhi for hands-on application of the tool to map and assess the health of a waterbody for a practical experience of the application of the tool. In the end, the participants reflected on the potential for the application of this tool in the context of their regions.



DHARA 2023

(DRIVING HOLISTIC ACTION FOR URBAN RIVERS)

13 - 14 FEBRUARY 2023 | HYATT PUNE, MAHARASHTRA

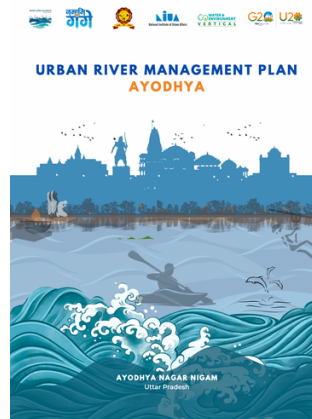
NIUA and the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) organised DHARA 2023 (Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers), the annual meeting of the RCA members on 13-14 February in Pune. Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Minister of Jal Shakti, presided over the opening session of the event, while Shri Kaushal Kishore, Minister of State, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India presided over the culminating session of the event.

Twelve new cities were onboarded as part of the River Cities Alliance (RCA) on the first day of DHARA 2023. The Urban River Management Plans of Ayodhya and Aurangabad were also released by the Hon'ble Minister along with city representatives.

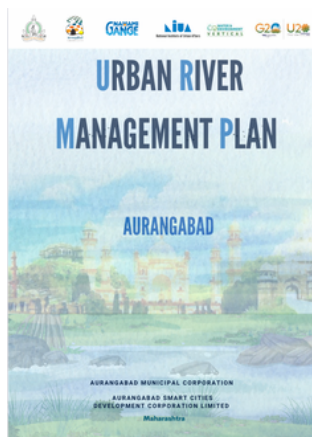
Efforts by the River Cities Alliance (RCA) and partners coming together for DHARA 2023 was lauded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi through a message which was unveiled during the two-day meeting in Pune.

DHARA 2023 drew over 300 people from river cities in India, including commissioners, additional commissioners, chief engineers, senior planners, academicians, water security experts, financial specialists, and others, to co-learn and discuss solutions for managing river stretches in their cities. Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh has been selected to host DHARA 2024.

Launch of Urban River Management Plans (URMP) for Ayodhya and Aurangabad



Ayodhya Urban River Management Plan



Aurangabad Urban River Management Plan



Special Message from Hon'ble Prime Minister

- Hon'ble PM Shri. Narendra Modi lauded DHARA 2023 for steering issue of ensuring water security Efforts by the River Cities Alliance (RCA) and partners coming together for DHARA 2023 through a message which was unveiled during the two-day meeting in Pune.

"It is heartening to learn about the organization of Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers (DHARA 2023) Forum in Pune by the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and National Mission for Clean (NMCG). The fact that the NIUA is serving as the Urban 20 (U20) Technical Secretariat under India's G20 Presidency enhances the pride and honour associated with the occasion."

Shri. Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister, India

Some glimpse of DHARA 2023



STUDENT THESIS COMPETITION, SEASON 3

WRITESHOP

15TH & 16TH FEBRUARY 2023

NIUA in association with the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), hosted a writeshop on 15th and 16th of Feb, for sponsored thesis competition on 'Re-imagining Urban Rivers' to achieve the sensitization & capacity-building of students for river-sensitive planning and development.

Through interactive activities, the students were encouraged to use their creativity and imaginative skills to strengthen their thesis projects on urban river management. The students also took part in a panel discussion in DHARA 2023 where they presented their ideas for the management of urban rivers.

In the third season of the competition, 20 students from across India are being supported through mentorship and financial assistance.



WEBINARS AND ONLINE TALKS

Webinar on “Gwalior’s story of restoring its shallow aquifers”

Mr. Shishir Shrivastava, Deputy Commissioner, Gwalior Municipal Corporation, spoke at the webinar on "Gwalior's story of restoring its shallow aquifers" on December 12, 2022.

Key Highlights

- Gwalior city has over 3,000 open wells
- The city has mapped and geotagged these open wells as a first step towards conservation and rejuvenation
- The mapping has helped the city to identify the potential groundwater recharge zones
- Gwalior Municipal Corporation (GMC) harvests more than 5000 million litres of water per year

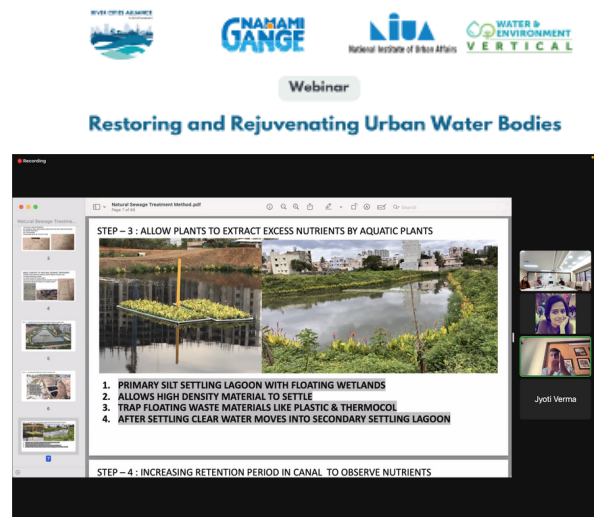


Webinar on “Restoring and Rejuvenating Urban Water Bodies”

On December 20, 2022, lake conservationist Anand Malligavad, spoke at a webinar on "Restoring and Rejuvenating Urban Water Bodies". Anand Malligavad, a former mechanical engineer, has been collaborating with state governments to plan for and revitalise urban water bodies in the urban areas.

Key Highlights

- Healthy water bodies are an integral part of the city's ecosystem and provide benefits such as flood regulation, water supply, socio-cultural connection and recreation.
- Nature-based solutions can help improve the overall ecosystem of urban water bodies
- Rejuvenated more than 20 lakes and is aiming to rejuvenate around 45 lakes by the end of 2025.
- Private sector and communities needs to come together to protect our waterbodies

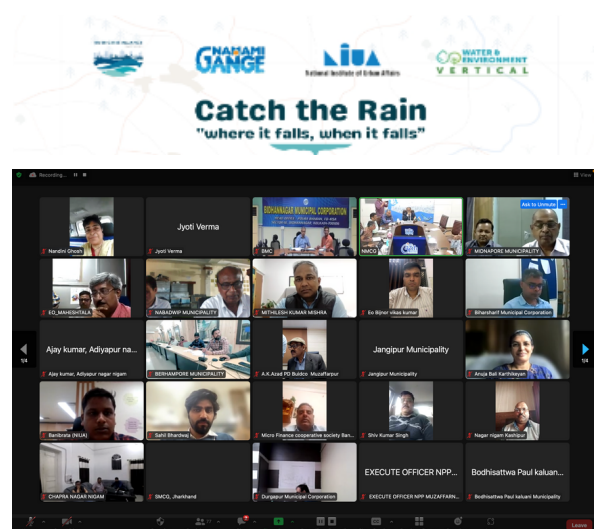


Webinar on “Catch the Rain - where it falls, when it falls”

National Water Mission’s (NWM) campaign “Catch the Rain” with the tagline “Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls” is to nudge the states and stakeholders to create appropriate Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) suitable to the climatic conditions and sub-soil strata before monsoon. On February 23, 2023, Sh. G. Asok Kumar, the Director General of NMCG, discussed the campaign with the members of the River Cities Alliance.

Key Highlights

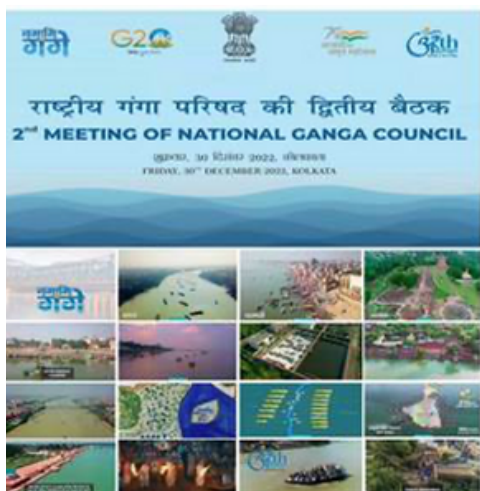
- Largest campaign for rainwater harvesting
- Rain Centres created at the district level to act as a technical guidance centre on constructing and managing the Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) for all the districts
- Cities can leverage the Catch the Rain campaign to ensure water security
- Role of people's participation is very huge in successfully implementing the campaign on-ground



NAMAMI GANGE MISSION: KEY HIGHLIGHTS

UN recognises Namami Gange as one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships

The United Nations (UN) has recognized Namami Gange initiative to rejuvenate India's sacred River Ganga as one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships to revive the natural world. The Award was received by Mr. G. Asok Kumar, Director General, Namami Gange at a function in the 15th Conference of Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada on 14th December 2022, the World Restoration Day. Namami Gange was selected from over 150 such initiatives from 70 countries across the globe.



2nd National Ganga Council Meeting

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi chaired the National Ganga Council meeting held on 30th December 2022 via video conferencing in Kolkata. Prior to the meeting, PM Shri Modi also laid the foundation stone and dedicated Namami Gange and Drinking Water & Sanitation Projects to the nation via video conferencing. The Prime Minister inaugurated 7 sewerage infrastructure projects (20 Sewage Treatment Plants and 612km sewer network) at a cost of more than Rs 990 Crore.

10th Empowered Task Force Meeting of NMCG

The Union Minister for Jal Shakti Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on 8th December 2022 chaired the 10th meeting of the Empowered Task Force (ETF) including several central ministries, departments and state governments. Shri Bishweswar Tudu, the Minister of State (MoS) for Jal Shakti, Shri. Pankaj Kumar, Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Shri G. Asok Kumar, Director General, Mission for Clean Ganga and other senior officials from NMCG, central ministries and States also attended the meeting. The Hon'ble Minister urged the States and the Central ministries to be proactive in carrying out the projects related to Namami Gange and achieve targets in a time-bound manner.



Ganga Utsav

On 4th November 2022, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) vibrantly celebrated Ganga Utsav as an ode to the river’s significance to the people of India. The event witnessed the coming together of art and culture and people from different walks of life to honour the river’s sanctity. The Utsav was graced by celebrated personalities, tribal and folk artists. The festivities began with Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the Union Minister of Jal Shakti, imparting insightful thoughts as he said, “Ganga is not just our national river but is also our cultural heritage. Despite being a country imbibing different languages, religions, cultures and music, there are some elements that bind each one of us together and unite us. Ganga is one of them.”



RIVER CITIES ALLIANCE
A city led movement



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