

2. Modi Chairs First Meeting of Ganga Council

Prelims Level: Environment - Pollution & Waste Management

Mains Level: GS-III Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation.

Why in News?

- Our honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the first meeting of the **National Ganga Council** in Kanpur Recently.

The First Meeting Discussed About:

- The first meeting of the Council was aimed at reinforcing the importance of a 'Ganga-centric' approach in all departments of the concerned states as well as relevant Central Ministries.
- PM also talked about transition from "**Namami Ganga**" to "**ArthGanga**"

What is ArthGange:

- 'Arth Ganga' is about sustainable development model with key focus on economic activities related to Ganga. As part of this process, farmers should be encouraged to engage in sustainable agriculture practices, including zero budget farming, planting of fruit trees and building plant nurseries on the banks of Ganga.
- Such practices, along with creation of infrastructure for water sports and development of camp sites, cycling and walking tracks etc , would help to tap the 'hybrid' tourism potential of the river basin area- for purposes of religious as well as adventure tourism.
- The income generated from encouraging eco-tourism and Ganga wildlife conservation and cruise tourism etc. would help to generate sustainable income streams for cleaning of Ganga.

About National Ganga Council:

- National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga is an authority created under the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016, dissolving the National Ganga River Basin Authority.
- In this backdrop, National Ganga Council has been established as an authority and National Mission for Clean Ganga has been also converted into an authority.
- The National Ganga Council will be overall responsible for the superintendence, direction, development and control of River Ganga and the entire River Basin (including financial and administrative matters) for the protection, prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution in River Ganga.

- Chairman: It is headed by Prime Minister.

Other Government Interventions regarding Cleaning Ganga River:

1. National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG):

- NMCG was registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act 1860.
- It acted as implementation arm of National Ganga River Basin Authority(NGRBA) which was constituted under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act (EPA),1986.
- NGRBA has since been dissolved, consequent to constitution of National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (referred as National Ganga Council)
- The Act envisages five tier structure at national, state and district level to take measures for prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution in river Ganga and to ensure continuous adequate flow of water so as to rejuvenate the river Ganga.
- **Five Tier Structure:**
 1. National Ganga Council under chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
 2. Empowered Task Force (ETF) on river Ganga under chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation).
 3. National Mission for Clean Ganga(NMCG).
 4. State Ganga Committees and
 5. District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

2. Namami Gange:

- Namami Gange Programme – is an umbrella programme which integrates previous and currently ongoing initiatives by enhancing efficiency, extracting synergies and supplementing them with more comprehensive & better coordinated interventions. Government of India is supplementing the efforts of the state governments in addressing the pollution of river Ganga by providing financial assistance to the states.
- **Need:** Each day, more than 500 million litres of wastewater from industrial sources are dumped directly into Ganga. In many places, this wastewater entering the rivers is completely raw, completely untreated.
- Some of the notable achievements of the scheme were as:
 - ✓ Zero waste creation by paper mills

- ✓ Reduction in pollution from tanneries
- ✓ Central Government has made commitment of Rs. 20,000 crores for the period 2015-20 to the five states through which Ganga passes, to ensure adequate as well as uninterrupted water flows in the river.
- ✓ Rs. 7700 crores have already been spent so far, prominently for construction of new sewage treatment plants.

3. Clean Ganga Fund:

- The Government has set up the Clean Ganga Fund (CGF) **to facilitate contributions from individuals, NRIs, corporate entities** for funding Ganga rejuvenation projects.
- For Example PM has personally donated Rs. 16.53 crores to CGF, from the amount realized from auction of the gifts he received since 2014 and the prize money of the Seoul Peace prize.

