

Ministry of Jal Shakti



NMCG Approves Action Plan 2025 to Strengthen Urban River Rejuvenation under River Cities Alliance

The plan focuses on integrating river-sensitive urban planning within India's growing cities

In alignment with the Prime Minister's vision, the NMCG is steering the development of a URMP for the national capital

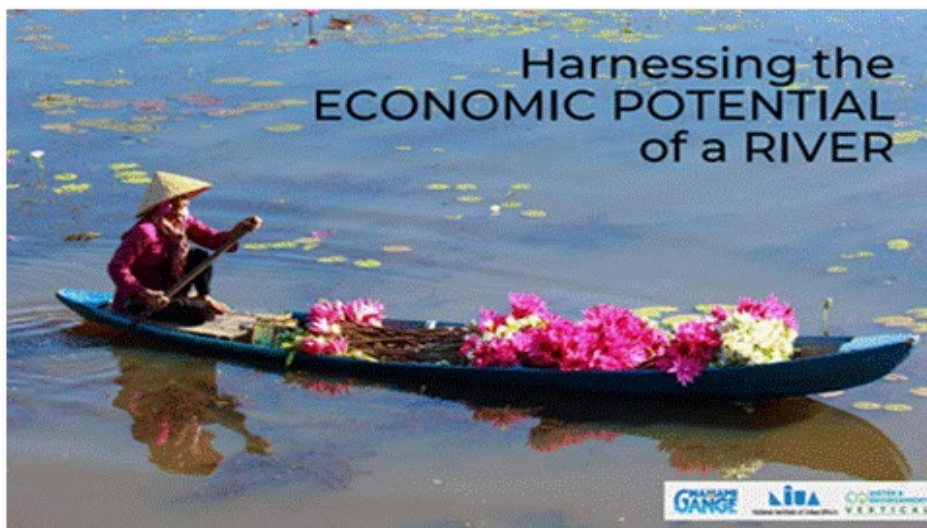
River Cities Alliance is a pioneering initiative led by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

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Posted On: 25 APR 2025 4:25PM by PIB Delhi

In a significant step towards sustainable urban river rejuvenation, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has approved an annual master plan for the River Cities Alliance (RCA), charting out a vibrant and action-oriented roadmap of initiatives to be undertaken across the year. The plan encompasses a series of capacity-building programs, knowledge exchange platforms, development of technical tools, expert guidance, and thematic case studies, all focused on integrating river-sensitive urban planning within India's growing cities.

Launched in 2021, the RCA is a pioneering initiative led by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. With a current membership of 145 cities, the Alliance promotes a comprehensive approach to urban river management—one that strengthens institutional capacity, fosters inter-city collaboration within river basins, and supports the creation of Urban River Management Plans (URMPs). This year's approved plan is tailored to further operationalize these goals by rolling out a range of strategic interventions.



A major focus this year will be the promotion of river considerations within city master plans through the organisation of River-Sensitive Master Planning (RSMP) training programs across states. Simultaneously, to support the formulation of Urban River Management Plans (URMPs), the NMCG will conduct training sessions including onboarding programs specifically for RCA cities in Tamil Nadu, with further sessions planned for additional states.



The URMP framework, launched in 2020 by National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and NMCG, represents a first-of-its-kind approach to ensure that environmental, economic, and social dimensions are considered in the urban management of rivers. Five cities—Kanpur, Ayodhya, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Moradabad, and Bareilly—have already developed their URMPs, setting the benchmark for other urban centres. Notably, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar's Kham River Restoration Mission was globally recognised by the World Resources Institute's Ross Center Prize for Cities, underlining the transformative potential of this initiative.

The year ahead will also see the development of 25 more URMPs as part of the first phase of a larger mission to create 60 such plans across India over the next two to three years. Supported by the World Bank, this initiative marks a bold step in deepening river-sensitive urban governance. Steering Committees have already been constituted in states like Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal to facilitate plan formulation and guide implementation.

In alignment with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision, the NMCG is also steering the development of a URMP for the national capital. This initiative seeks to redefine Delhi's rivers as vital ecosystems and not just water channels, paving the way for sustainable and inclusive urban river management in alignment with national environmental priorities. The URMP in Delhi will serve as a model for other metropolitan cities, anchoring the vision of resilient and river-sensitive urban development.

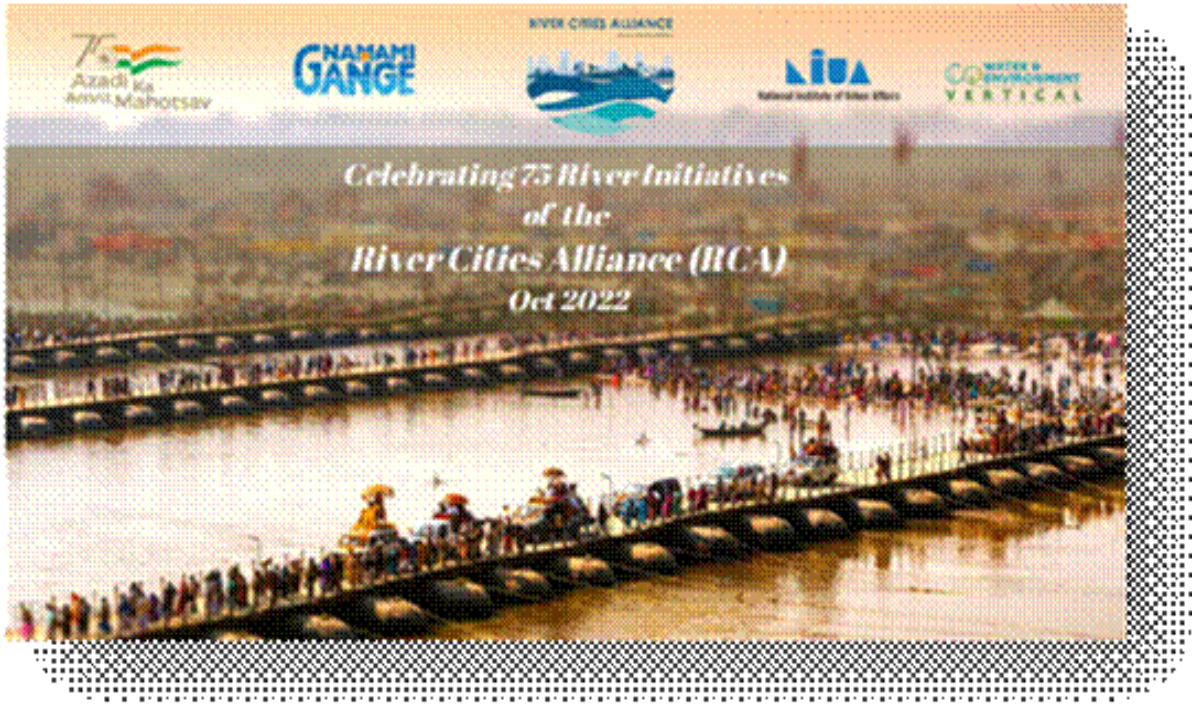


In an effort to foster basin-linked urban thinking, NMCG will issue an advisory on “Effective vertical coordination among basin, district and city-level river management plans.” Complementing this, a variety of tailored knowledge products will be developed, alongside a feedback mechanism to identify knowledge gaps faced by member cities. Technical support will be strengthened through the formation of Thematic Expert Groups, which will also guide eco-friendly riverfront development initiatives.

To facilitate knowledge exchange and promote best practices, key events such as DHARA, a basin-level RCA meet, and exposure visits to Udaipur and Hyderabad are scheduled. Enhancing governance capacity in river-sensitive urban planning is another priority, with formal training programs to be rolled out in Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of member cities.

Additionally, RCA will focus on documenting successful on-ground practices through weekly case studies every Monday, showcasing urban river rejuvenation efforts. Public awareness campaigns and sensitisation programs will be launched to promote river-conscious behaviour among citizens. Financial advisory services will be provided to support cities in mobilising resources for river-related projects. Furthermore, NMCG will benchmark member cities on urban river management using the URMP framework to track performance and guide improvements.

Among the initiatives already completed, the development of a new, comprehensive RCA website stands out and the participation in the prestigious World Economic Forum held in Davos in February 2025—demonstrating the growing national and international engagement



The NMCG's approval of the 2025 plan under RCA marks a pivotal advancement in institutionalising river-sensitive urban planning across India. With a robust calendar of capacity-building programs, technical interventions, collaborative platforms, and city-level support systems, the year ahead promises to be transformative. These efforts not only reflect NMCG's enduring commitment to revitalizing India's urban rivers but also strengthen the foundation for resilient, inclusive, and water-secure urban ecosystems nationwide.

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