

Press Release of 12th Meeting of Empowered Task Force

The 12th meeting of the Empowered Task Force (ETF) on Ganga Rejuvenation was chaired by Hon'ble Minister of Jal Shakti Sh. C. R. Paatil, with the presence of MoS, Dr. Raj Bhushan Choudhary. Senior officials, including Sh. Ashok K. Meena OSD, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Sh. Rakesh Kumar Verma (AS), Sh. Rajeev Kumar Mital (DG), Executive Directors, and representatives from Ministry of Power, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change. The meeting was also attended by Sh. Anurag Srivastava, Principal Secretary State Government of Uttar Pradesh; Sh. Sunil Kumar Yadav Additional Secretary State Government of Bihar, Sh. Shailesh Bagauli Secretary, State Government of Uttarakhand Sh. Sunil Kumar, Principal Secretary State Government of Jharkhand and Ms. Nandini Ghosh Project Director SPMG West Bengal.

Director General NMCG, Sh. Rajeev Kumar Mital gave a detailed presentation on various issues and briefed Hon'ble Minister about the progress made since the last meeting.



During the session, a comprehensive action plan for the rejuvenation of River Ganga was discussed. Key topics included progress under the Namami Gange program, with a special focus on the reuse of treated water, biodiversity

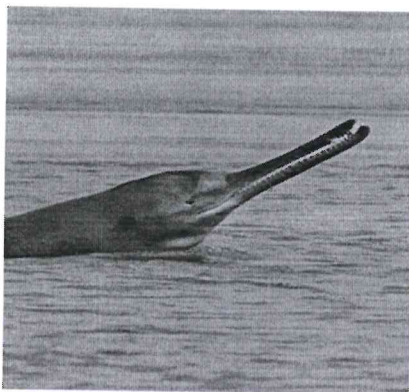
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conservation, remediation of polluted river stretches, and the implementation of the River Action Plan and natural farming. The Hon'ble Minister called for a unified approach among stakeholders to closely monitor and evaluate the progress of Ganga-related projects, stressing the need to preserve the sanctity of the sacred river through dedicated conservation efforts. Rural and urban sanitation efforts have a big role in river cleaning and directed to complete the targets for creation of infrastructure in a time bound manner.

Hon'ble Minister Jal Shakti directed state Governments to assist NMCG in completing the pollution abatement efforts as under to take river cleaning effort to next level:

1. All the State Government should complete the ongoing projects timely and expedite the submission of Detailed Project Reports for the polluted stretches.
2. State Governments should focus on rural sanitation and ensure that all the villages are declared ODF plus status and get the required verification done.
3. State Governments should map all the Nullahs/drains flowing through the villages into the river and send a report to NMCG.
4. The O&M of the STPs should be monitored carefully.
5. Complete coverage for online monitoring should be ensured by installation of Online Continuous Emission Monitoring Systems (OCEMS) in all the STPs and connecting it to Platform for Real-time Monitoring of Yamuna and Ganga (PRAYAG) in NMCG.

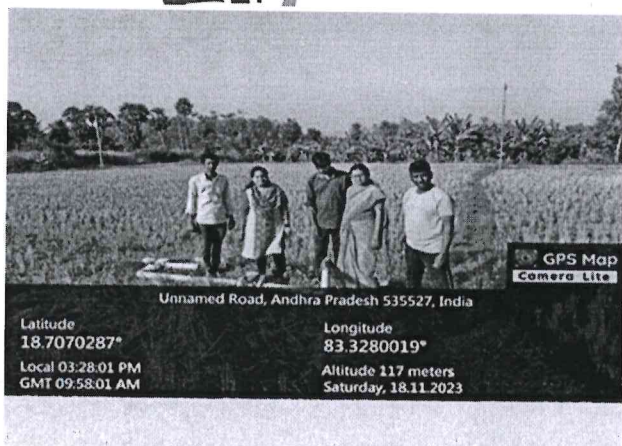
Hon'ble Minister emphasized the spiritual connect of the river Ganga in the country and directed that **tourism** potential along the banks of this sacred river should be harnessed. This will develop the economy of the region and also give the boost to the infrastructure.



Hon'ble Minister also emphasized that **Urban River Management Plans** provide a comprehensive approach to river rejuvenation efforts at the city level and these should be mainstreamed to improve the health of urban rivers. He emphasized that the River City Alliance (RCA) should focus on ensuring co-learning amongst the river cities and should act as a platform for resolution of river related issues. He appreciated the concept of Smart Lab for Clean Rivers which is being developed with Danish collaboration and IIT (BHU) and would help in small river rejuvenation efforts in the country.

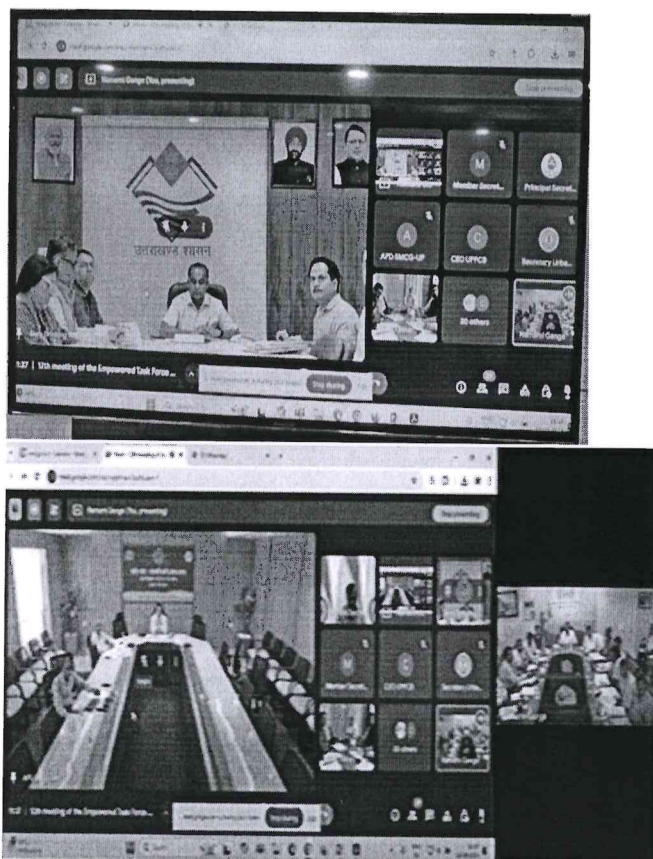
Reuse of Treated Waste Water

1. Hon'ble Minister Jal Shakti emphasized on reuse of treated water and mentioned that there is a need for reuse of treated water and the same should be considered as an important resource. The reuse should be promoted and all possible options should be looked into.
2. He mentioned that a National Framework for Reuse of Treated Water has been released by NMCG and directed that all the states should develop/update their framework aligned to national framework.
3. He directed that Ministry of Power should ensure and promote reuse of treated water in the sector. The economics of reuse would need to be relooked into considering the cost of using fresh water in the sector.
4. It emerged in the meeting that reuse in construction and other sectors would also be looked into.



Hon'ble Minister stressed upon need for adopting **natural farming** practices along the Ganga basin as it would help in river rejuvenation. Ministry of Agriculture mentioned that they would support this initiative of NMCG and will actively collaborate to take this initiative forward. An action plan would be prepared to upscale the activities under Natural Farming with a focused approach.

As an institutional development initiative, it was decided to have a clean Ganga workshop jointly by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation and NMCG to sensitize the DGCs about the initiatives.



Hon'ble Minister emphasized the collaborative efforts by all the stakeholders in furthering the cause of river rejuvenation and mentioned that ETF provides a platform for focused deliberation on the river related issues. He mentioned that all the stakeholders would work together to achieve the targets and goals set by Hon'ble Prime Minister for taking the Ganga river rejuvenation efforts to next level and make it a model to look up to.