

4 MAY 2019

NAMAMI GANGE MISSION

In News:

- Only 10 of 100 sewage projects on Ganga have been completed (NMCG)
- “Of 28,000 cr. sanctioned, only 6,700 cr. spent till date”

In Brief:

- 10 of the 100 sewage infrastructure projects commissioned after 2015 under the Namami Gange mission, according to records have been completed.
- The bulk of the projects completed were those commissioned before the Ganga mission began work in earnest under programmes such as the Ganga Action Plan-1 and Ganga Action Plan-2, which began in 1987 and 1996 respectively.
- Uttar Pradesh, responsible for about three-fourths of the inadequately treated industrial waste and municipal sewage, had 18 pre-2015 STP and sewage infrastructure projects commissioned. Only 12 of these have been completed, and only 1 — of the 33 projects commissioned after 2015 at the cost of 8,000 crore — has been wrapped up, records show.
- None of the towns through which the Ganga courses through has water fit for bathing or drinking, according to water monitoring reports by the State and Central Pollution Control Board.

About NMCG:

- National Mission for Clean Ganga(NMCG) was registered as a society on 12th August 2011 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 with effect from the 7th October 2016, 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 as below;

I. National Ganga Council under chairmanship of Hon’ble Prime Minister of India.

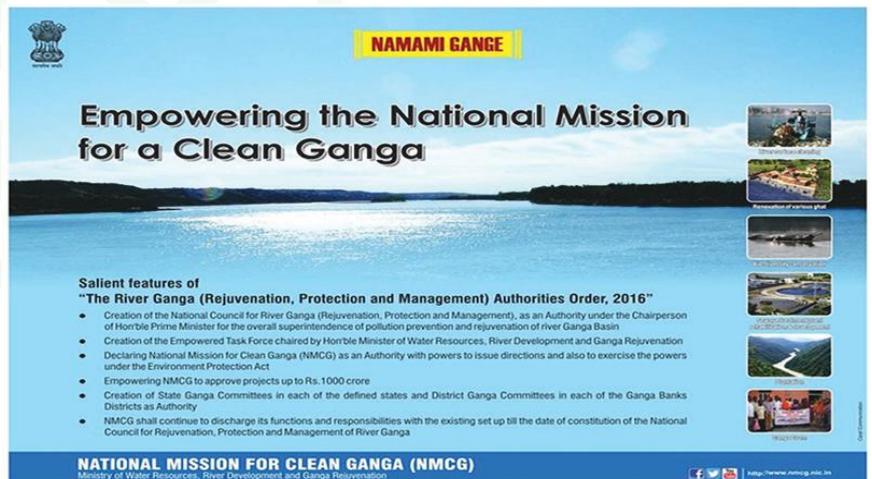
II. Empowered Task Force (ETF) on river Ganga under chairmanship of Hon’ble Union Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

III. National Mission for Clean Ganga(NMCG).

IV. State Ganga Committees and

V. District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

- NMCG has a two tier management structure and comprises of Governing Council and Executive Committee. Both of them are headed by Director



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General, NMCG. Executive Committee has been authorized to accord approval for all projects up to Rs.1000 crore.

- Similar to structure at national level, State Programme Management Groups (SPMGs) acts as implementing arm of State Ganga Committees. Thus the newly created structure attempts to bring all stakeholders on one platform to take a holistic approach towards the task of Ganga cleaning and rejuvenation.
- The Director General (DG) of NMCG is an Additional Secretary in Government of India. For effective implementation of the projects under the overall supervision of NMCG, the State Level Program Management Groups (SPMGs) are, also headed by senior officers of the concerned States.

SGNP LOST ITS LAST WHITE TIGER

In news:

- The Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) in Borivali, Mumbai lost its last surviving 18-year-old male white tiger Bajirao. It has suffered from multiple organ failure. Tigers in protected areas live up to 16 years.

About White Tiger:

- The white tiger or bleached tiger is a pigmentation variant of the Bengal tiger.
- The white fur is caused by a lack of the pigment pheomelanin, which is found in Bengal tigers with orange color fur.
- For a white Bengal tiger to be born, both parents must carry the unusual gene for white colouring, which only happens naturally about once in 10,000 births.
- It is reported in the wild in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh (especially in the former State of Rewa), Assam, Bihar and West Bengal in the Sunderbans region.



About Sanjay Gandhi NP:

- It is situated on the northern part of the suburbs of Mumbai and spread over a total area of 104 sq. km.
- It is a part of the Western Ghats biodiversity zone.
- It is located at a height of 400m.
- After independence it was called Borivali National Park as it is close to the residential area of Borivali. In the year 1981 the park was renamed as Sanjay Gandhi National Park
- The 2,400 years old, Kanheri Caves are located inside the park.
- The two lakes of the park are the Vihar Lake and the Tulsi Lake. These lakes cater to the water requirements of Mumbai.
- The Karvi shrub only blooms once in eight years in a mass flowering covering the forest floor in a lavender blush.



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CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR WASTE TO WEALTH TECHNOLOGIES

Why in news?

To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India and Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding today in New Delhi for setting up a Centre of Excellence for Waste to Wealth Technologies

More on news:

This centre will help in implementation of sustainable, scientific and technological solutions for waste management, through validation and deployment of available technologies for transformation of waste to wealth.

About Centre of Excellence:

The immediate objective is to implement technologies that are available with various national and international academies, industries, research laboratories and other agencies by way of setting up pilot projects on-site effectively and successfully, and demonstrating the proof of concept of the technology under Indian condition.

The long-term goal is to create circular economic models for waste management, by leveraging big data analytics and frontier technologies to streamline waste in India.

Under the initiative, a waste to wealth programme management centre will also be set up at IIT Delhi.



About Prime Minister's Science Technology and Innovation Advisory Council:

- It is a 21 member council that will advise PM on science, technology, as well as innovation.
- It will actively aid in formulation and timely implementation of major science and technology missions and evolve interdisciplinary technology development programmes.
- It will be headed by Principal Scientific Advisor to government.
- It will replace earlier Scientific Advisory Committee to Prime Minister and to Cabinet.

2 YEARS OF RERA

In News:

It's been two years since the deployment of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) across the country and the Centre's aim enforce it in each state is gathering visible momentum. Even the north-eastern states including Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim – which earlier shied away from it – have agreed to officially notify RERA rules soon.

West Bengal is the only state which notified its own real estate law under West Bengal Housing Industry Regulatory Authority (WBHIRA).

In Brief:

It may be recalled that RERA intended to cover developers as well as real estate agents seamlessly across the country. As it stands now, 22 states and 6 Union Territories have already notified their RERA rules, out of which 19 states have active online portals. West Bengal too has an active portal for its own real estate law.

If we look closely into each of the states with active portals, project and agent registrations have been on the rise since November 2018.

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More so, even while buyer's have been continuously fretting about the dilution of the rules notified, they are bestowing their faith in the law and coming forward in bulk to raise their complaints against faulty developers for myriad reasons including project delays. For instance, Maha RERA has received as many as 6,631 complaints (as on April) since inception, out of which the state authority claims to have disposed more than 64% of the complaints.

However, there are also cases wherein despite RERA notifications to defaulting builders who have been summoned to pay penalty to buyers, they are delaying payments or not attending hearings.

Nevertheless, things are changing for the better. Generally, players are far more accountable and cannot easily get away with breaking the RERA rules. In several instances, developers have been reprimanded by the concerned authorities and have had to pay penalty amounts to their buyers. While the redressal of complaints is not satisfactory for many, consumers are coming forward in large numbers to register complaints across states. The Wild West days of Indian real estate are definitely over.

Registration Numbers Picking Up

Project and real estate agent registrations have been on the rise across most states from November 2018 to April 2019. For instance, in Andhra Pradesh as many as 307 projects were registered under RERA as on date – up from mere 61 in November 2018. Maharashtra is currently the most active state having the highest project registrations with more than 20,718 projects under MahaRERA so far, and nearly 19,699 RERA-registered real estate agents. Project registration in Karnataka currently stands at 2530 projects and 1342 RERA-registered real estate agents so far.

As the heatmap below showing the latest RERA deployment on the ground shows, Maharashtra still leads the 'race,' if it can be called that, followed by neighbouring Gujarat with 5,317 RERA-registered projects and 899 registered agents and agencies.

Key provisions of RERA Act:

- Register with RERA: Requirement for developers to now register projects with RERA prior to any advertisement and sale
- Approval and Sanctions: Developers are also expected to have all sanction plans approved and regulatory clearances in place prior to commencement of sale
- Updates on the Website: The Act stipulates an electronic system, maintained on the website of RERA, where developers are expected to update on a quarterly basis the status of their projects, and submit regular audits and architectural reports
- Action for non-compliance: If there is non-compliance, RERA has the power to order up to three years imprisonment of the promoters of a project
- Separate Escrow Accounts: It requires developers to maintain separate escrow accounts in relation to each project and deposit 70% of the collections in such an account to ensure that funds collected are utilised only for the specific project
- Agents & brokers to register: The Act also requires real estate brokers and agents to register themselves with the regulator.

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