

RIVER CONSERVATION BIODIVERSITY AND RESTORATION

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The River Cities Alliance (RCA), a pioneering initiative launched by Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in November, 2022, promotes a comprehensive approach to urban river management, strengthens institutional capacity, fosters inter-city collaboration within river basins and supports creation of Urban River Management Plans (URMPs).

In a significant step towards sustainable urban river rejuvenation, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has approved an action plan for RCA for the year 2025, 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 platforms, development of technical tools, expert guidance and thematic case studies, all focused on integrating river sensitive urban planning within India's growing cities. The major thrust of the plan is to promote river considerations within city master plans by organizing River Sensitive Master Planning training programs across different States.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti in association with the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun has carried out ecological assessment of Ganga River and its tributaries (Yamuna, Ghaghra, Ramganga, Kosi, Gandak, Chambal, Sone, Gomti, Damodar, Rupnarayan and Ajay) with funding from NMCG, and seven other Indian rivers, namely Barak, Narmada, Mahanadi, Godavari, Cauvery, Periyar, and Pamba under the project funded by National River Conservation Directorate.

In order to highlight freshwater biodiversity conservation efforts, an information dashboard (www.rivres.in) has been developed by Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun to disseminate information in respect of biodiversity profile of rivers and identified pollution hotspots. It also provides information on conservation efforts in terms of community engagement, capacity development, rescue and rehabilitation and conservation education carried out across Ganga River basin and other studied rivers.

Himachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board conducts regular inspections to check illegal dumping of wastes near or into water bodies and penalties are imposed in accordance with the '*Polluter Pays*' principle. The Government of Himachal Pradesh has constituted a committee in each district for monitoring and preventing illegal dumping of debris and garbage from road construction activities across the State including river banks.

This information was provided by THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

MAM/SMP

(Rajya Sabha US Q894)

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