

GANGA CONNECT CONCLUDES IN LONDON: HIGH LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT & TANGIBLE OUTCOMES

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - UK

The Ganga Connect exhibition, that has been running across the UK from 8th November concluded in London on 25th November 2021. This has been a major effort of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, the High Commission of India and cGanga to engage with the international community of scientists, technology companies, policy makers, industry, investors and finance professionals.



In the concluding session, **Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Minister of Jal Shakti, and **Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra**, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga, hosted a virtual roundtable with eminent members of the Indian community who gathered in person at the Indian High Commission in London, UK and others via a digital bridge from elsewhere in the UK. The Minister Jal Shakti interacted with the community members who asked questions and offered

numerous suggestions on how they might be able to engage and support the NamamiGangeprogramme.



Both the Minister and Director General accepted the community members' requests to carry the exhibition across various community centres across the UK. Several other developments were reported to the Hon'ble Minister as decisions taken which were later announced during the reception.

The exhibition started in Glasgow and moved to Cardiff, Birmingham, Oxford before concluding in London. Shri Ashok Kumar Singh, Executive Director – Projects, NMCG was present at the Ganga Connect in Cardiff and Shri D.P.Mathuria, Executive Director - Technical represented NMCG at the exhibition in Birmingham. The end of the exhibition was marked by an evening reception hosted by H.E. Gaitrilssar Kumar, Indian High Commissioner to the UK and ShriRozy Agarwal, Executive Director – Finance,NMCG. Prof Vinod Tare and Shri Sanmit Ahuja of cGanga also participated.

Welcoming the guests, the High Commissioner said that the NamamiGangeprogramme is a flagship initiative of Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister and that India places top priority towards climate change and cleaning up its environment.

In further engagement with the guests, Mr. Agarwal made 10 key strategic announcements that summarised the highlights of the two weeks long exhibition. These are:

Ganga Connect UK Community Engagement Chapters: The primary objective of the Ganga Connect exhibition was to engage with the UK community and major support hasbeen receivedfrom community members from all across the UK. The community leaders are forming chapters across the country that will establish a link between members and the NamamiGangeprogramme. The chapters established are:Scotland – Ganga Connect, Wales –Ganga Connect, Midlands – Ganga Connect, London – Ganga Connect.

Each chapter will have convenors who will connect various interest groups with the NamamiGangeprogramme including scientists, technology companies, investors and community

members. The chapters will host workshops and outreach programmes throughout the year to raise awareness about the Namami Gange programme. Nearly 100 members have joined the four different chapters already.

Twinning of Rivers: Twinning of rivers to share knowledge, best practices and experiences of river basin management including community engagement programmes.

Scotland – India Water Partnership: This partnership builds upon the MOU of National Mission for Clean Ganga and Government of Scotland MOU of 2017. This collaboration will support in channel the high level of interest amongst Scottish entities specialising in water into entering the Indian market and the Namami Gange programme will act as a major platform for Scottish entities to enter the Indian market.

Impact Project using Arth Ganga Framework: A major impact project has been conceived to generate major economic activity of a select region along the banks of river Ganga. This initiative will create significant livelihood opportunities and bring new economic activities but in a manner that creates a model approach of environmentally sustainable development. The initiative will include many aspects such as sustainable tourism, river front development, sustainable transport and other activities. The project will be developed on the model of rejuvenation and economic development of the River Clyde in Glasgow. It will be led by the City of Glasgow College and Strathclyde University.

Ganga Finance and Investments Forum: A number of investors and finance companies have come together to establish the Ganga Finance and Investments Forum (GFIF). The group will develop state of the art financial instruments such as river bonds, blue bonds, impact and outcome bonds, credit enhancement and guarantee instruments. They will go on to establish specialist vehicles to channel investments from around the world into the Namami Gange programme. The group has agreed to develop the first of its kind River biodiversity and conservation bond to channel long-term investments into ecosystem conservation. It will also provide ongoing support to NMCG and the Namami Gange programme for continuous funding and project finance for various initiatives.

Technologies enrolled into the Environment Technology Verification (ETV) programme: In continuous expansion of the ETV programme, three innovative technology companies were selected and on-boarded onto the ETV programme: Technology 1: Floating water treatment systems | Company: SmartOps; Technology 2: Forward Osmosis | Company: Forward Water Technologies; Technology 3: Odour Control | Company: OSIL

This takes the total number of companies in the ETV programme to over 40 of which 14 are from the UK.

Tech & Innovation Financing: The Environment Technology Verification (ETV) programme has now started to graduate companies successfully that are ready to scale up. In doing so they need venture funding to start rolling out the projects across the country. To support the successful candidates a partnership with OPG Power Ventures, a company listed on the AIM segment of the London Stock Exchange, is being established that will create upto a GBP 3mn (INR 30 crore) facility to fund technologies and innovations.

UK-India Scientific Collaboration: A number of scientists and research institutions have agreed to come together to form a knowledge pool for exchange of scientific and technological ideas leading to development of collaborative research. The scientists

agreed to focus the collaboration towards applied innovation for rejuvenation of rivers systems, conservation of biodiversity, measures to combat the impact of climate change on ecosystems and create sustainable models for economic development.

Scientists and academics from the following institutions have agreed to establish a collaboration bridge between India and the UK: **James Hutton Institute, City of Glasgow College, Strathclyde University, Cardiff University, Birmingham City University, Oxford University, University College London and University of Surrey and Queen Mary University.**

Global Youth for Ganga: The Global Youth for Ganga will be an association of youth from India and other countries on a common mission to exchange knowledge and expertise, through advocacy for a clean Ganga, and all rivers at large. The association will engage in interdisciplinary discussions, raising worldwide awareness, and encouraging engagement in the Clean Ganga Mission, bringing together young students, researchers and professionals across the globe. The aim is to make Clean Ganga a reality and also to inspire the rest of the world to take similar initiatives in their states down to the very grassroot level. A mission empowered by the youth, is a mission which can keep thriving for future generations to come, constantly gaining momentum. The youth today are more aware about climate change than ever before, and it is their care and commitment that shall be supported for a more sustainable future ahead.

Finalisation of Clean Ganga Charity in the UK: With the establishment of Community Engagement Chapters, the establishment of the Clean Ganga UK charity has received a lot of support from the grass-roots and activated the necessary enabling environment. The charity set up process has been expedited and it will be set up soon with a view to start mobilising communities and friends of Ganga in the coming months.

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