

'GANGA UTSAV 2021 – THE RIVER FESTIVAL' TO BE CELEBRATED FROM 1ST TO 3RD NOV

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

[Curtain Raiser]

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) celebrates Ganga Utsav every year to mark the anniversary of announcement of River Ganga as the 'National River' i.e. 4th November. This year's Ganga Utsav is being organised from 1st to 3rd November, 2021. 'Ganga Utsav 2021 – The River Festival' will be celebrating not just River Ganga but all the rivers across the country. Activities have been planned across 150 districts – 112 in the Ganga belt and the remaining along other major rivers. The celebrations this year will be part of the ongoing celebrations for 75 years of Independence and Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.

This year, the aim will be to take Ganga Utsav 2021 to the various river basins in India and promote the celebration of 'Nadi Utsav' (River Festival) which was highlighted by Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on the occasion of the World River Day on 26th September 2021, in order to connect with the traditions which are associated with rivers for centuries in our country.

Inspired by the Prime Minister's call for River Festival, this year's event is being organised under the leadership of Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. Dignitaries for the inaugural function will include Minister of Tourism and Culture Shri G. Kishan Reddy, Ministers of State for Jal Shakti, Shri Prahalad Singh Patel & Shri Bishweswar Tudu, Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Shri. Pankaj Kumar and many Olympic players.

The objective of the Utsav (festival) is to promote stakeholder engagement and ensure public participation under the aegis of the Ganga Knowledge Center. The Utsav highlights the significance of "Jan Bhagidari" in the revival of Ganga, with a focus on encouraging stakeholder engagement and public participation towards the rejuvenation of river Ganga.



Through Ganga Utsav, NMCG targets strengthening of the public – river connect. Since the last four years this event has acted as an important platform to establish connect with people from all walks of life.

The Utsav celebrates the mystical and cultural river Ganga through storytelling, folklore, dialogues with eminent personalities, quizzes, displaying traditional artforms, dance and music performances by renowned artists, photo galleries and exhibitions and much more. Celebrating the glory of the holy river Ganga, this year the Utsav will also appreciate living and practised cultural richness along river Ganga. Some prominent music and dance performers like Anuradha Paudwal, Prachee Shah Pandya, Rahul Sharma, Revati Sakalkar and Prahalad Tipaniya will be performing at the Utsav.

The message of river rejuvenation will be communicated through stories at Kahani Junction organised by Rituparna Gosh's Yourstorybag. Himanshu Bajpai too will be performing Dastangoi. In Ganga Dialogue, well-known personalities like Ashok Chakradhar, Piyush Mishra, Divya Prakash Dubey and Rajeev Khandelwal from different fields will engage in interesting conversations.

Continuous Learning and Activity Portal (CLAP) will be launched at the Utsav. CLAP will be providing a forum for continuous year-round engagement through its portal at <http://www.clap4ganga.com/> (active from 1st November post formal launch). In partnership with TREE Craze Foundation, it is especially attractive to children and youth.

The Utsav also includes the launch of the promo of the movie 'Ganga: River from the Skies' which will be followed by a webinar, moderated by Shri. Mike Pandey, Environmentalist, Iconic Wildlife film maker and 3-time winner of the Green Oscars, joined by Shri. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director General, NMCG, Prof. Vinod Tare, Founding Head, C- Ganga, IIT Kanpur and Shri. Srikrishna Mohan, and Shri Ramkumar Mohan, renowned Carnatic musicians and composers of the Ganga Anthem.

An expedition 'Ganga Mashal' led by the Ganga Task Force would be flagged off in a ceremony from Delhi and will travel the route including 23 stations along the river Ganga which will help sensitization of the local people and bodies like NYKS, Ganga Mitras, Ganga Praharis etc. The event will also comprise, launch of the Ganga Tarang Portal, curtain raiser on Ganga Knowledge Portal and many more.

At the state level, 75 events at 75 different locations, Ganga Deepotsava, Ganga Aartis along the Ghats, Ganga Exhibitions, participation in the Meri Ganga Meri Shaan Campaign – Ganga Mashaal being executed through Ganga Task Force, and other activities like painting competition, afforestation drive, organizing blood donation camps, quiz, Ganga runs, Ganga Dialogues, signature campaigns, and others. Additionally, activities such as cultural evenings, shramdaan activities, selfie points at prime locations in the cities and Yoga and Meditation on the Ganga Ghats will also be held.

Last year because of COVID protocols, the event was organised virtually and more than 3 lakh people from across the country participated in the event. This year too people can participate in the Ganga Utsav through <https://gangautsav.in/> and the social media handles of Namami Gange.

BY/AS

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