

# Rafting expedition “Mission Gange” to begin from October 5th

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has partnered with Tata Steel Adventure Foundation (TSAF) to launch a month-long rafting expedition of a team of 40 members which will be led by the first Indian woman to scale Mount Everest Ms. Bachendri Pal. The expedition will start from Haridwar on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 traversing a distance of around 1500 km encompassing 8 major towns including Bijnor, Farrukhabad, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi and Buxar. It will conclude in Patna in Bihar on 30<sup>th</sup> October.

Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari addressed the team through a video message. He said that Namami Gange is working hard for cleanliness of Ganga River. “Several projects like sewage infrastructure, ghat cleaning, river surface cleaning etc. are going on and are at various stages of completion. But, these efforts need to be supported by all of us. Hence, public participation is one of the key components of the Namami Gange programme and this expedition also will create awareness at the local level through Ganga Chaupals and other interactions the expedition team will have with the local inhabitants”, the Minister added.

Speaking on the occasion, DG, NMCG Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra said: “During the month-long expedition, the team will stop at all major locations and carry out cleaning drives in coordination with NMCG stakeholders like Ganga Vichar Manch, Ganga Praharis, District Ganga Committees, local voluntary organizations and people from all walks of life. Awareness campaigns will be conducted in schools to sensitize students towards Ganga cleaning. Events such as Ganga Chaupal will be conducted along the Ganga to create conversations between stakeholders.”

TSAF Chief and “Mission Gange” expedition leader Ms Bachendri Pal said: “Our expedition is inspired by Government of India’s Namami Gange mission, which has been a very important step towards cleaning the Ganges that has been a life-supporting river for millions in our country. The aim of our expedition is to reach out to as many people as possible, heighten the awareness around keeping this great river clean and make a people’s movement out of the Mission that had started four years ago.”

In the expedition team of 40 members, several are trained mountaineers. Seven of them have climbed Mount Everest. Besides, professionals from backgrounds as diverse as engineering, environmentalists, science etc. are part of the expedition team that is prepared to meet all challenges that they may encounter during the expedition. The team during its stay in the towns will carry out cleanliness drives at ghats and surrounding areas by engaging and motivating more and more people.

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