

## **National Mission for Clean Ganga Organises Ek Shaam Ganga Ke Naam**

River Ganga has been an unceasing source of livelihood for more than 40 percent of India's population. It has been unconditionally providing for our needs and has been the very essence of spirituality. In order to acknowledge the river's importance and celebrate its magnificence, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) organised a cultural evening – "*Ek Shaam Ganga ke Naam*" yesterday in New Delhi. On this date in 2008, Ganga was declared as the National River of India.

Intended to evoke Ganga consciousness, the event was attended by hundreds of people from all walks of life including bureaucrats, academicians, researchers, artists, students, teachers, water and river experts, engineers, media, and other stakeholders. The purpose of the evening was to bring all stakeholders together for a wonderful cause of Ganga rejuvenation and forge ahead in unison. Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Amarjit Singh also graced the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga, Shri UP Singh said: "Ganga is not just a water resource; it is linked deeply with the sentiments of millions of people. It is essential to rid the river of pollution. While the government is working hard to rejuvenate the river, the participation of people is of utmost importance."

The main attraction of the event was an enthralling dance drama – *Namami Gange* – produced by Padma Bhushan Dr. Saroja Vaidyanathan. The performance, a Bharatnatyam recital, depicted river Ganga's story with the contemporary relevance. The dance drama while illustrating the endurance the river observes, called for urgency to restore this flowing lifeline to its pristinity. The act beautifully captured the necessity of public participation in clean Ganga campaign, which under *Namami Gange* programme, has picked up pace. The audience witnessed in awe as the story of Ganga was told in a beautiful way.

The dance drama was preceded by a singing performance on popular songs on Ganga. Shri Partha Purshotam Dutta, his wife Smt. Binapani Dutta and their band charmed the audience by presenting the songs in their own unique style.

The evening began with a dance-ballet by the students of Heritage Public School on Namami Gange theme song that has been composed and sung by Trichur Brothers. It depicted an episode of Indian mythology where King Bhagirath does *Tapasya* to bring Ganga on earth to give salvation to his ancestors and Lord Shiva locks Ganga in his tresses before releasing it only after Bhagirath's plea. The brilliant performance of the students of 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> standard left the audience mesmerized.

Mother Ganga is lifeline of millions of people, sustains several aquatic species, and has been embracing us from times immemorial. It is our duty to play our part in ensuring that a *nirmal* and *aviral* Ganga continues to be with us in times of joy and sorrow. Under Namami Gange programme, no stone is being left unturned to take clean Ganga message to masses. However, the herculean task of cleaning river Ganga cannot be realised without unwavering public participation.

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