

Comprehensive and Coordinated Efforts Required to Free Delhi of Air and Water Pollution

Shri Nitin Gadkari Lays the Foundation Stone for Nine Projects for Rejuvenating River Yamuna

Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Shri Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister of Delhi Shri Arvind Kejriwal today laid the foundation stone of nine projects for Yamuna Rejuvenation under Namami Gange Programme in New Delhi.

A total of 11 projects have been taken up by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) to conserve River Yamuna in Delhi. Most of the projects are for sewerage infrastructure. These projects under Yamuna Action Plan (YAP) III are located in three drainage zones namely Kondli, Rithala and Okhla in Delhi.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Nitin Gadkari emphasized on the imperative of comprehensive and coordinated efforts to free the National Capital from water and air pollution. He said that pollution levels of Delhi is a cause for major concern and that a plan has been prepared to address this critical issue with the help of all stakeholders.

Shri Gadkari said that the mandate of cleaning the tributaries of River Ganga was taken up with the launch of Namami Gange programme and with these projects the sewage water falling into River Yamuna, the most important tributary of Ganga will be stopped. Mentioning the Lakhwar multi-purpose project between six states, Shri Gadkari said that once that project is complete the *Aviralta* of Yamuna in Delhi will improve. He added that trash skimmer is already deployed for Yamuna in Delhi for river surface cleaning.

Shri Gadkari added that apart from Delhi, interventions for Yamuna cleaning are also being made in Haryana (Panipat and Sonapat) and Uttar Pradesh (Mathura-Vrindavan). He informed that a sewage treatment plant project of 180 Million Litres per Day (MLD) has also been approved in Agra. While extending all possible support for the development of Delhi, he urged all stakeholders to join hands and work on war footing to make Delhi free of water and air pollution.

Reiterating that Ganga will be 70 to 80 percent clean by March 2019, Shri Gadkari added that Ganga will be almost completely free of pollution by March 2020.

Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Science & Technology Shri Harsh Vardhan said that Yamuna is 1365 km long and the 22 km stretch in Delhi from Okhla barrage to Wazirabad is responsible for 80% of the pollution in the river. He also thanked Shri Gadkari for expressways in and around Delhi which will help in reducing pollution in the National Capital. He urged that a people's movement is required to rejuvenate Ganga. He

informed that the environment ministry has collaborated with Clean Ganga Mission on issues like high resolution survey of Ganga and real water quality monitoring.

Thanking Shri Gadkari for his help, Chief Minister of Delhi Shri Arvind Kejriwal said that he was happy that such an important step has been taken for Yamuna cleaning. He said that this programme is very important for the federal structure of the country and all should be on the same platform for development issues. He said that Yamuna cleaning was their priority also and hoped for continued support from the Ministry.

Welcoming the guests, Minister of State for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Dr Satya Pal Singh said that cleaning Yamuna is very important and all efforts are being made to clean tributaries of Ganga as well. Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Shri Manish Sisodia, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri U.P. Singh and Director General, NMCG Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra were also present on the occasion.

The current sewage generation for Delhi city is about 327 crore litres per day against the existing treatment capacity of 276 crore litres per day. YAP-I was taken up for Delhi during 1993-2003 and YAP-II was extended in 2003 to cover Uttar Pradesh and Haryana along with Delhi. Building on the success and lessons learnt from YAP-I and II, Government of India launched YAP-III with JICA assistance in Delhi at an estimated cost of Rs 1656 crore which has got integrated as a component of Namami Gange Mission. Delhi Jal Board is the executing agency for these projects.

Delhi, the National Capital, is a mega metropolitan with a population of around 2 crore. The city sprawls over an area of 1484 Sq.km. Rising population and growth of National Capital Region (NCR) have significantly contributed to rise in the flow of untreated sewage directly into the River Yamuna, one of the sacred rivers of India and largest tributary of Ganga, our National River.

The 9 projects for which foundation was laid today include eight sewerage infrastructure projects under YAP-III - creation of 56.4 crore liters per day STP capacity at Okhla, rehabilitation and upgradation of 38.6 crore liters per day STP capacity; rehabilitation of trunk sewer and Rising main of 35 km length in Kondli and Rithala zones. The sewerage projects are being taken up in four packages of Kondli (K1, K2, K3, K4), three packages of Rithala (R1a, R1b, R2) and Okhla zone (O). Of these, 7 nos of projects are at various states of implementation. One project of Okhla zone is under tendering process. In addition to these, foundation was also laid for one project of nine decentralized STPs (total 2.25 Crore litres per day) and water bodies rejuvenation at Chattarpur at a cost of Rs 65.24 Crores. These projects are being implemented by Delhi Jal Board in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Assistance (JICA).

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