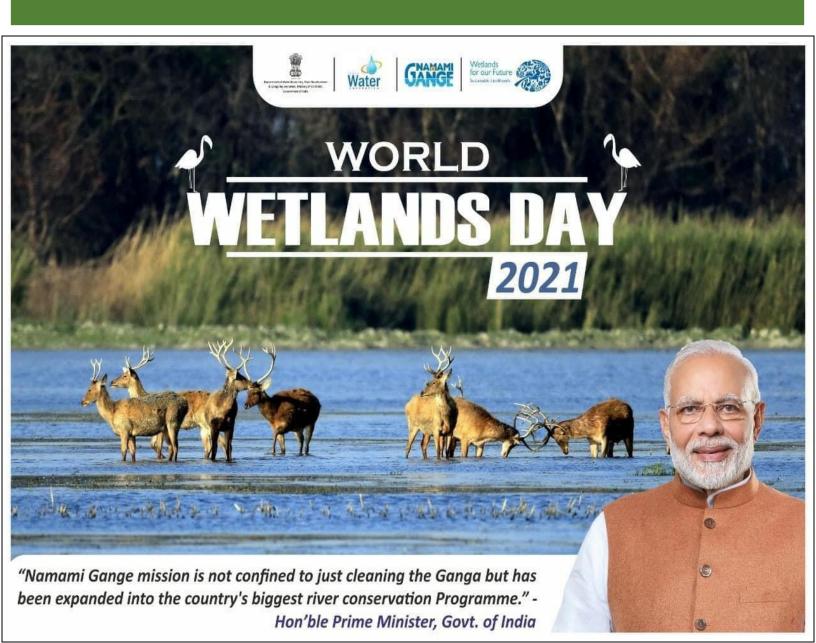
Report

Water, Wetlands, Life: Inseparable Coexistence

Safeguarding biodiversity, delivering water & food in the face of changing climate



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Each year World Wetlands Day is celebrated across the world with renewed commitment to raise



awareness towards conserving the wetlands and its biodiversity. This year's theme threw spotlight on wetlands as a source of freshwater and encouraged actions to restore them and stop their loss. We are facing a growing freshwater crisis that threatens people and our planet. We use more freshwater than nature can replenish, and we are destroying the ecosystem that water and all life depend on most — Wetlands. The 2021 campaign highlighted the contribution of wetlands to the quantity and

quality of freshwater on our planet. Water and wetlands are connected in an inseparable coexistence that is vital to life, our wellbeing, and the health of our planet. Given the total wetlands in India amounting to 7,57,860, occupying 4.63% geographical area of the country and 42 Ramsar sites it becomes more important to have cumulative approaches with water-energy-food nexus approach as well as Ecosystem-based Adaptation and Integrated Water Resources Management towards conservation and management of wetlands.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resource, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India, and India Water Foundation (IWF) jointly observed the celebrations of the 'World Wetlands Day' on 2nd February 2021. The main objective was to have a holistic understanding on various facets of

Wetland Management and transform them into an indicator of economic development and understand linkage between Wetlands and water, Wetlands and food security, Wetlands and climate change, Wetland biodiversity in a changing climate. By the advent of the guidelines for the implementation of Wetlands Rules 2017 in January 2020 this brainstorming facilitated taking it to the next level. It



showcased promising outcomes to be incorporated to inflate the 'relationship between waterwetland-biodiversity and to provide an opportunity for augmenting scope of work and future partnerships for capacity building, sustainable funding and to turn river and wetland conservation into a public movement as envisioned by our hon'ble Prime Minister. Some ministries have adequate infrastructural facilities, some lack in resources and others lack in trained personnel and technical expertise. Convergence and right synergy enablethese ministries to pool together their energy, resources, and technological expertise in dealing with particular problems within a stipulated period and manageable costs. Also, to jointly define critical local and national wetland



conservation plans as well as advocate for actions to safe-guard wetlands. Conservation of wetlands would also go a long way in achieving our PM's dream of 'Nal se Jal' in each household.

Highlighting the interconnectedness of all water bodies and their role in maintaining each other's Aviralta (flow) and Nirmalta (cleanliness), Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Jal Shakti said, "NamamiGange is the first of its kind program where Wetland Conservation is integrated with Basin Management Plan." He added, "The innovative work done by NMCG for wetland conservation linked to River Rejuvenation would help the entire country as a model framework". He said that all stakeholders have to act as

custodians of the environment for creating a sustainable future. On the occasion of Wetland Day, a massive scientific and community-based program to develop Health card and management of 10 wetlands in each of the 50 plus Ganga districts was launched.

Shri Rattan Lal Kataria, MoS Jal Shakti Ministry while emphasising the integral role of wetlands in the socio-ecological system said, "Wetlands are very important for maintaining the country's biological diversity." He said that a lot of information is available on wetlands, regulatory frame work is also present, but there is a need to strengthen them at the grassroots level and raise awareness among the people.

Speaking about role of wetlands in addressing various environmental issues, Mr. Atul Bagai, Head India Country Office, UNEP said, "We need to see how wetlands can be useful to address

the issues of desertification and migratory species. We hope in regards to wetlands conservation, India will again show the leadership that it has shown in a lot of other areas."

Shri Pankaj Kumar, Secretary of Jal Shakti, while sharing that the awareness about wetlands has heightened in recent times said, "NMCG not only looks at rejuvenation of Ganga but the overall river basin including its cities and their



wetlands." He said that events like World Wetland Day encourage us to continue this holistic approach.

Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director General, NMCG added that, "This is not just a celebration but a call for action to conserve wetlands and that is why we have organised capacity building workshops for wetland conservation." Mr. Mishra shared that a futuristic guideline for monitoring of Ramsar sites and wetlands through Wildlife Institute of India and support of MoEFCC is being developed.

Dr Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation, shared that this year commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Ramsar Convention and by now India has around 42 Ramsar sites. He suggested encouraging cooperation among several ministries to further scale up wetland conservation.

The works of Wetlands are widely known, although when it comes to maintaining these functions, municipalities lack knowledge. An innovative attempt to develop Guidelines for protection and conservation of Urban Wetlands by NMCG with the help of the prestigious School of Planning and Architecture in the form of a toolkit called, 'Urban wetlands/water body management guideline - a toolkit for local stakeholders' was released at the event. 'Framework for Ecological Monitoring of Ramsar Sites and Other Wetlands in India' was also released. The Wetland Quiz, received enthusiastic participation throughout India and winners were announced by Ms. Bhawna Badola, CEO, Tree Craze Foundation during the function. Posters for spreading awareness on wetlands by WWF-India were unveiled by the Minister and MoS, Jal Shakti.

Recommendations

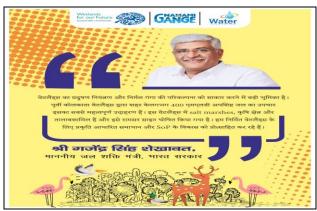
- To create multi-stakeholder partnership opportunities and alliances at all levels for capacity building and identifying funding opportunities, best practices and lessons learned based on existing projects and programs and documentation that demonstrably links management of wetlands to improving ecosystem services.
- Integrated wetlands wise approach for the scientific management and governance of incorporating various components like Biodiversity, Ecosystem management, Riparian erosion control, Natural Resource Management, Natural & Human capital, etc.
- Conservation and rejuvenation process should prioritize actions in holistic way and to bring behavioral change among stakeholders.
- Understanding the linkages among water, wetland, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development

AGENDA

Time (IST)	Sessions
Inaugural Session	
10.00AM – 10.25AM	Tea
10.30AM- 10.40 AM	Welcome Address
	Dr. Arvind Kumar, President, India Water Foundation
10.40AM – 10.55AM	Introduction & Key Address
	Sh. Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, DG, NMCG
10.55AM – 11.10AM	Keynote Address
	Mr. Pankaj Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of JalShakti
11.10AM- 11.25AM	Address by
	Sh. Rattan Lal Kataria, Hon'ble Minister of State, Ministry of Jal
	Shakti, Govtof India
11.25AM – 11.55AM	Chair address and release of 'Urban Wetland/ Water Bodies
	Management Guidelines – A toolkit for local stakeholders'
	Sh. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Hon'ble Union Minister of Jal
	Shakti, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Govt of India
Panel Discussion	
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12.00Noon-01.00PM	Mr. Atul Bagai, Head, UNEP India Office (Moderator)
	Department of Science and Technology, Govt. Of India
	Mr. Dhananjay Mohan, Director, Wildlife Institute of India
	Dr. Ritesh Kumar, Director, Wetlands International South Asia
	Mr. Suresh Babu, World Wide Fund
	Mr. Brijesh Sikka, Senior Consultant, NMCG
01.00PM onwards	Vote of Thanks & update on NMCG's initiatives under Arth Ganga
	by Executive Director (Finance)

Link to the full video of the celebration-

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oe1btZAUHnU

















Media Coverage

















