

National River of India - Ganga River

Ganga River or Ganges River was declared as the National River of India on November 4, 2008, by the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Since then, it has been a part of the [National Symbols of India](#). This article holds importance for the IAS Exam for its three stages – Prelims, Mains, and Interview.

Why was Ganga declared as Indian National River?

To achieve the objectives of the Ganga Action Plan (GAP), Indian Prime Minister declared Ganga as the National River in 2008. Ganga is also revered as the holiest river of India and signifies purity and spirituality. Read more about it below for the [IAS Exam](#).

National River of India & Ganga Action Plan (GAP)

The Ganga Action Plan was originally initiated by India's Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986. The Ganga Action Plan phase-I entailed:

- To abate pollution of the river
- To restore the quality of river water to the 'Bathing Class Standard'
- To improve the quality of the water
- To intercept, divert and treat the domestic sewage
- To prevent toxic industrial waste from entering into the river
- To put a stop to the unwanted entry of non-point pollutants into the river
- To promote research and development to maintain the purity and cleanliness of the river
- Development of new sewage treatment technology
- To rehabilitate soft-shelled turtles to abate pollution as it has been demonstrated successfully
- To use Ganga as resource recovery option so as to produce Methane for energy generation
- To impose similar action plans on other Ganga River stretches

Some key facts of GAP phase I are given in the table below:

When was the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I launched?	It was launched in June 1985
How many towns were covered in the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I	25 Towns (Class I) were covered. These towns included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Six towns in Uttar Pradesh• Four towns in Bihar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 towns in West Bengal
Ganga Action Plan Phase-II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase-II of GAP was launched in 1993, which covers seven states that include Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Delhi and Haryana. • In the second phase, Ganga action plan was created for all these tributaries. The national river conservation plan was started under the same program for the 2nd phase. • It included tributaries of Ganga — Yamuna, Mahananda, Gomti, Damodar.

National River of India and National Mission for Clean Ganga

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is the implementation arm of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA). The Governing Council and Executive Committee are two tiers of the NMCG.

Note: NGRBA is dissolved and National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (referred as National Ganga Council) is constituted in 2016.

NMCG focuses on pollution reduction interventions including interception, diversion and the treatment of wastewater that flows through the open drains. It aims to reduce pollution through bioremediation, apt in-situ treatment, pioneering technology, sewage treatment plants (STP) and effluent treatment plants (ETP).

Read more about the [National Mission for Clean Ganga](#) in the linked article.

Interesting Facts about National River of India – Ganga River/Ganges River

The table below mentions some of the interesting and relevant facts about the National River of India:

National River of India – Facts for UPSC

The National River of India Ganga flows through India and Bangladesh

The river flows through the Himalayas, Gangetic plains and empties into the Bay of Bengal

In Indian traditions and culture, river Ganga is personified as Goddess Ganga

It is a revered belief that to remit sins, one has to take a dip in river Ganga. It further channelizes the salvation, so is believed in Indian culture

Many sacred places are located alongside the stretches of Ganga river:

- Gangotri
- Haridwar
- Prayagraj
- Varanasi
- Kali Ghat

A Siamese festival called 'Loy Krathong' of Thailand includes a tradition of floating candles into the waterways praying to Goddess Ganga

Hindus consider the Ganga river the holiest of all the rivers

Ganga is also mentioned in one of the [four Vedas](#) – Rigveda

Various reptiles and mammals find their habitat in the Ganga river:

- Gharial
- [National Aquatic Animal of India](#) – Gangetic River Dolphin

The river starts from the Gangotri Glacier in the name of Bhagirathi river

The five confluences of Ganga river are revered as sacred and they are:

- Vishnuprayag – Dhauliganga joins the Alaknanda;
- Nandprayag – River Mandakini joins
- Karnaprayag – River Pindar joins
- Rudraprayag – River Mandakini joins
- Devprayag – Bhagirathi river and Alaknanda river form Ganga river

Ghagra river is the largest tributary of river Ganga

Note: It is largest with respect to the volume of the river

Mainly the Sediment-laden flows of Ganga with the Brahmaputra river form Ganges Delta which is

the world's largest delta.

