A LIFELINE ENDANGERED
Ganga has been declared one of the world’s fastest shrinking and most threatened rivers by the United Nations.

For ease of understanding the threats facing the river we have illustrated into three major regions based on their geological similarities and the overarching and similar problems that each stretch faces.

Region A: Upper Ganga Region from Gaumukh to Haridwar (294 km)
Up to 80% of water is diverted for irrigation purposes
17 projects are operational and 26 are under construction. Some 2,400 MW of energy is currently generated with estimated over 9,000 MW potential
IPCC reports predict that the glacial stores of the Himalayas are fast retreating due to unsustainable development, massive deforestation and global warming
Tourism has increased by over 168% over the past 12 years before the 2013 floods.

Region B: Middle Ganga Region from Haridwar to Varanasi (1062 km)
Continued threats to overextraction occur as the river passes through the most populated state in the world.
2.9 billion liters of raw sewage are discharged into the Ganga, according to the Government of India figures
Chromium as well as other heavy metals from industries are found far exceeding limits, especially in Kanpur.
Solid waste and dead corpses are found in the river as it passes through some of the major cities in this region.

Region C: Lower Ganga Region from Varanasi to Kolkata (1134 km)
The Gangetic Dolphin, a National Aquatic Animal, has been declared the most endangered animal
Heavy silting and flood, drought and waterlogging occur frequently.
Major issue of arsenic in the drinking water is the sorrow of those living on the banks of River Ganga in Bihar
Pollution of sewage and industrial waste continues extensively throughout this stretch as well.
In Haridwar, 89 million liters of sewage is dumped into the Ganga daily.

In Varanasi, 70% of those that use the Ganga for bathing or drinking will contract a waterborne illness.

In Kanpur, industrial toxins emitted by tanneries cause cancer, organ failure, convulsions and death.

In Patna, 110 million liters of sewage is dumped into the Ganga daily.

In Allahabad, over 10,000 MPN/100 ML of fecal coliform exist (500 MPN/100ML is permissible for bathing).

In Kolkata, nearly 90% of municipal drinking water is contaminated with fecal matter.
Ganga Action Parivar brings together networks and partnerships of the world's preeminent researchers, environmentalists, engineers, religious and business leaders, as well as members of the general public. Together, we work towards thoughtful solutions to the numerous problems plaguing the Ganga River and its tributaries.

Ganga Action Parivar's mission is critical to filling and bridging the gaps left by ineffective efforts of the past, after which the Ganga's dire situation continues to worsen with each passing day. Waterborne illnesses due to bacteria, toxins and parasites in the water and foodborne illnesses due to agriculture contaminated by toxic irrigation are reaching epidemic proportions. With the Ganga irrigating the fields which feed more than one-third of India's population, the Ganga being the sole source of water for bathing, cooking and drinking for millions of people, and the Ganga symbolizing the national heritage and identity of India, the situation has become truly critical.

Even in the face of these challenges, Ganga Action understands that the power of unity and the spirit of cooperation are the only ways in which to herald sustainable change. It is through such unity that visions for a better world can become reality.
When Pujya Swamiji, Founder of Ganga Action Parivar, completed 60 years of life, everyone wanted to give Him birthday presents. He however declared that there is nothing He wants, nothing He needs, but only the gift of people committing themselves to the “6Ts” program, which signifies six-ty years of life.

Ganga Action Parivar’s Six Ts program provides a foundation for a cleaner, greener, more sustainable Ganga River Basin. Through its comprehensive, interlinked initiatives, the people, animals and ecology of the watershed are enabled to not only survive, but thrive.

In so doing, GAP has identified six categories of outreach that are designed to complement each other: Toilets, Trash, Trees, Taps, Tracks and Tigers.
Toilets.
Over 500 million people live near the Ganga River and its tributaries. Many have no access to sanitary facilities. Populations are forced to use the Ganga as a toilet out of necessity, fouling its waters and potentially spreading disease. We will be providing thousands of eco-friendly toilets to villages and other locations throughout the Ganga River Basin.

Taps.
Access to clean and safe drinking water is a basic human right. Yet, every year in India alone, 400,000 children die, and many more are sickened, by water-borne diseases such as typhoid, dysentery and cholera. Adding to the problem are contaminated and shrinking ground water tables alongside untamed pollution in the Ganga. GAP works to provide taps to the rural poor, as well as water filtration systems, while also teaching skills in proper water use management.

Trash.
In the Ganga River Basin, trash is often disposed of directly into or near the river, endangering wildlife, plants, and populations, while also spoiling the appearance of what should be pristine waters. GAP works with local populations, municipalities, and administrators to ensure proper trash disposal, including rubbish bins and recycling. Additionally, GAP provides mass awareness campaigns, aimed at motivating populations and visitors as to how to properly dispose of their waste before it reaches the Ganga.

Tracks.
The Indian train network is one of the most impressive in the world and also one of the dirtiest. GAP is providing the Ministry of Railways with concepts and ideas for new initiatives for cleaning and greening the land alongside the rail tracks. GAP also helps to advise regarding the improvement of sanitary facilities within India’s trains and train stations.

Trees.
Trees are crucial to life. Yet, to meet the needs of rapidly-expanding populations, far too many trees have been cut down, robbing the Ganga River Basin of its key benefactor. GAP is planting and maintaining thousands of trees as a direct response.

Tigers.
Under the Six T’s program, “Tigers” represents all endangered animals inhabiting the Ganga River Basin. Working side-by-side with conservation groups, GAP provides education and awareness programs, enabling populations and visitors to become protectors of their own environments, enabling nature’s creatures to flourish as they should.

Trees.
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Coming together for Mother Ganga

Ganga Action Parivar works every year with India’s foremost leaders, to help advise and promote avenues towards a clean and healthy Ganga. As part of recent advocacy efforts, in association with the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, meetings have been conducted with key leaders including the Hon’ble President of India, HE Sri Pranab Mukerjee, the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, HRH Charles, Prince of Wales, the Hon’ble Prime Minister of the UK, Mr. David Cameron, the Hon’ble Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Shinzo Abe, the Hon’ble President of South Africa, HE Jacob Zuma, the Royal Minister of Education for Saudi Arabia, HRH Prince Faisal Bin Badullah Bin Mohammed Al-Saud, the Hon’ble President of Guyana, HE Donald Ramotar, the Hon’ble Vice President of Nepal Shri Parmanand Jha, Hon’ble USA Congresswoman Ms. Tulsi Gabbard, as well as numerous other leaders from around the world and India’s Union Cabinet Ministers, including: Hon’ble Shri Rajnath Singh (Home Affairs), Hon’ble Smt. Sushma Swaraj (External Affairs), Hon’ble Shri Prakesh Javadekar (HRD/Education), Hon’ble Sadhvi Uma Bharti (Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation), Hon’ble Dr. Mahesh Sharma (Tourism and Culture), Hon’ble Shri Suresh Prabhu (Railways), Hon’ble Shri Radha Mohan Singh (Agriculture), Hon’ble Shri Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways) and many more.
Pujya Swamiji discusses GIWA’S AND GAP’S White Papers on the Ganga and Yamuna with Hon’ble Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Drinking Water, Sanitation, Rural Development, Road Transport, Shipping and Highways.

Pujya Swamiji discusses plans for cleaning the Ganga River with Hon’ble Uma Bharti, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji discuss plans for cleaning the Ganga River with Hon’ble Uma Bharti, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.

(now) HRD Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar and Pujya Swamiji discuss a revitalized Ganga and a Clean Revolution for India.

Hon’ble Union Minister of Railways, Shri Suresh Prabhu and Pujya Swamiji discuss the cleaning and greening of India’s renowned railroad system.

Pujya Swamiji discusses technologies within GAP and GIWA’s “Solutions for the Pollution in Mother Ganga” report with Hon’ble Shri TS Rawat, senior BJP leader and Convener of Namami Gange.
Every year, Ganga Action Parivar produces policy discussion papers regarding issues surrounding the Ganga River and her tributaries. These include: “The Ganga Grande Plan,” “The Yamuna: Life and Death of a Principal Waterway” and more. This year, Ganga Action Parivar teamed with TERI, Navdanya, and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance to produce a policy discussion paper that identified key problem areas as well as recommendations for actions that can be taken in order to safeguard lives and the ecology in the wake of the disaster in Uttarakhand.

Among the Findings Outlined in the Document:

1. Unstable and Unplanned Development:
   Including building too closely to the Ganga, its tributaries and other rivers.

2. Lack of Facilitated and Coordinated Disaster Risk Reduction: prevention, response and management.

2. Improper Re-Forestation: Since the time of British rule, indigenous trees, such as the Himalayan Banj Oak, have been replaced with species such as the Chir Pine. While fallen Banj leaves nourish undergrowth and absorb moisture for underground aquifers, shed pine needles do not, causing increased erosion, more susceptibility to landslides, and less water to be absorbed into underground aquifers.

3. Unregulated Tourism: Uttarakhand's Himalayan region, to which so many people travel every year, is geologically young and unstable, meaning the influx of crowds, as well as the infrastructure needs required to support them, can trigger dangers such as landslides. This can also exacerbate the deadly aftermaths of other disasters, such as earthquakes and floods. While ecologists have continually warned and predicted that more traffic would bring more landslides and add to micro-climatic warming in the Himalayas, it has been reported that Uttarakhand has seen a 1000% increase in vehicular traffic over the past eight years alone.
Photos: (top) Our policy discussion papers on the importance of sustainable development and the River Yamuna (Bottom) The Hon’ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Harish Rawat and (then) H.E. Uttar Pradesh Governor B.L. Joshi raise their hands with Pujya Swamiji and 1,000 journalists for the world’s first Media Social Responsibility Declaration, supporting green rehabilitation, WASH and more
Ganga is not only a river. She is a divine mother, giving freely to all with no discrimination, hesitation or expectation. She irrigates not only our farms, but also our hearts, minds and souls.

Yet, the Ganga is also one of the most polluted rivers and endangered rivers in the world. Understanding that people won't pollute the same place that they worship, GAP, led by Founder, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, began a mission to initiate Ganga Aarti ceremonies (lighting ceremonies) up and down the banks of Ganga and to convince as many ashrams as possible to turn their river fronts into temples.

The Ganga Aarti held every night at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, draws people of all faiths from across the world to enjoy a serene sunset ceremony of song, inspiration and lights.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, has also been the inspiration and founder of Ganga Aarti ceremonies in Varanasi (on the eve of the turn of the Millennium with H.H. the Dalai Lama and numerous other saints), Allahabad, Badrinath, Gangotri, Rudraprayag, Kanpur, and Jwalapur.
GAP’s New Initiative
The Mid-Day Fruit Tree Programme

Imagine a childhood without the simple, health-giving benefits of fruit. Unfortunately, far too many children living in the Himalayas go without, simply because their families cannot afford it. As a result, children become more at risk for contracting digestive problems, diseases such as scurvy, and even certain cancers.

GAP’s Mid-Day Fruit Program will enable schools alongside the River Ganga to present each child with his or her own fruit-bearing tree. As the tree is nurtured by the students on school grounds, they will learn valuable lessons about the wonders of nature. Later, they will experience the joys of harvesting their own fruits, which they can enjoy fresh from the tree.

In addition, their mothers will be empowered to add to their household incomes through the creation of Women’s Empowerment Cooperatives, which will enable them to produce, package and market wonderful products made from the uneaten fruits of their children’s trees.

Help children grow their own trees, so that they can reap the benefits of healthier diets and happier lives. Visit: www.gangaaction.org/mytree, or email hope@gangaaction.org.
Bringing Together Experts and Volunteers from Around The World

Ganga Action Parivar’s acclaimed volunteership programme enables people from across India and around the world come together in support of a rejuvenated River Ganga. Some may come for the day, to assist with a clean-up programme. Others may stay for months, to work on special projects, such as specialized research, the building of toilets and water filters, community outreach and more.
20th July- present: Clean and Green Kanwad Mela:
Using the opportunity when lakhs of young men will be coming to the banks of Ganga for the annual Kanwad Yatra in Haridwar and Rishikesh, the Ganga Action Parivar and Parmarth Niketan along with Global Interfaith WASH Alliance will seek to create awareness on keeping our land and our rivers free from pollution and open defecation. GAP will be using hoardings, signage, and other audio-visual messaging as well as providing clean water and dustbins to ensure that people are inspired to bring the message of a Swachh Kanwad Yatra: Swachh Bharat (clean pilgrimage and clean India) back with them to their states and their homes.

3rd July: Tree Plantation and Green Drive:
GAP inspired the creation of an International Peace Garden in Dorset, United Kingdom, donating 100 trees for the garden. The plantation also marked the official start of GAP’s monsoon tree plantation drive in India, in which plantations in dozens of schools and parks are being planned throughout the duration of the monsoon season.

14-16th June: Three Day Ganga Dussehra celebrations
During a three day Ganga Dussehra celebration, Pujya Swamiji and revered and respected saints made a call for declaring the National River a World Heritage Site. They brought together Interfaith Leaders to inspire a pledge to bring all stakeholders, from saints & faith leaders to safai karamcharis (sanitation workers), together to ensure a clean and free-flowing River Ganga for all.

23rd May, 2016: World Humanitarian Summit
Ganga Action Parivar met with the Director General of UNESCO at the World Humanitarian Summit to discuss the declaration of the National River Ganga as a World Heritage Site. She was glad to know that GAP had worked on a tentative list proposal and asked to share details and copy of the proposal with her.

14-15th January: Ganga Sagar Mela: Mela with a Message
A historic first-ever Clean and Green Ganga Sagar Mela, brought together the local administration, state government, with the technical support of UNICEF, and India’s revered interfaith leaders to ensure that the annual Ganga Sagar Mela was an example of a Mela with a Message, a message to keep our rivers and all our water bodies free from open defecation and pollution.

14-15th January, 2016: Ganga Sagar Mela: Mela with a Message
A historic first-ever Clean and Green Ganga Sagar Mela brought together the local administration, state government, with GAP, GIWA and India’s revered interfaith leaders to ensure that the annual Ganga Sagar Mela, and the beautiful ocean and Ganga River, were kept clean and green.
17th December, 2015: Green Village Project on the Banks of the River Ganga Launched
Ganga Action Parivar, working with the India Heritage Research Foundation and other partners, launched work to transform the village of Veerpur into a model defecation-free village, and a clean and green example to India and to the world.

14th November, 2015: World Children’s Day Celebrated
National Children’s Day, jointly organized by GAP, Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) and others, brought together our global family with the local school children as one team with one theme: to raise awareness on the crucial and critical need to protect our planet and its life-giving rivers.

7th November, 2015: Students complete month long study and are inspired for a Clean Ganga
Young students from the Norwegian University, in association with the IIPA-Delhi, studied dista risk and resilience for a city like Rishikesh, situated on the banks of the Ganga. They were inspired in their month-long stay to learn about the spiritual cultural and natural heritage of the river.

14-16th November, 2015: Center Inagurated with Hon’ble Education Minister of Uttarakhand After it is Rebuilt by GAP and Partners
GAP inaugurated a beautiful Chatra Vas (Hostel) and Meditation Centre at the Sanskrit Mahavidyala Rudraprayag at Sangam Ghat. These buildings were previously devastated in the floods of 2013 and new construction by the Swaminarayan Gurukul Parivar, in collaboration with the Ganga Action Parivar and the Divine Shakti Foundation, took place to restore the building. The opening programme was joined by the Hon'ble Education Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Mantri Prasad Naithanijji, head Acharyas of the school as well as all the students and their families. During the event, GAP inspired a pledge for all schools along the banks of the River doing their part to ensure that the river’s flow stays clean and free-flowing.

16th November, 2015: Swaminarayan Pledge for Clean Ganga
Hundreds of Swaminarayan saints joined GAP on the banks of Mother Ganga in Rishikesh to pledge to be River Ambassadors, inspiring their communities to keep their rivers free from pollution.

8th October, 2015: Mass Tree Plantations in Honour of Late President, HE Dr. APJ Abdul Kalamji
GAP inspired a very special tribute (shraddhanjali) to the Late President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalamji with a month-long plantation drive honouring H.E. the Former President for his dynamic, green, extraordinary leadership and divine example. The plantation drive included thousands of trees being planted in over 200 schools, more than 200 parks. Plans were also launched to plant 1 million trees in Kurkushetra. The first month-long plantation was completed with inspiring a series of plantations supported by Delhi Public Schools and a huge Green Drive that saw 1 lakh trees planted in Delhi, in association with the Times of India.

30th October, 2015: Danube and Ganga Come together with the Hon’ble Ambassadors of Austria and Nepal
A beautiful concert was held on the banks of the River Ganga with musicians from Austria and India, in the presence H.E. Bernard Wrabetz, Ambassador of Austria and H.E. Deep Kumar Upadhyay, Ambassador of Nepal. During this unique culture-sharing event, the stories of the River Ganga and the Danube River were shared, followed by a mass international pledge for the rejuvenation of the River Ganga in support of the Swachh Bharat Mission and Namami Gange.
7-8th May, 2015 Ganga Gyan Dhara Conference with the National Mission for Clean Ganga

Eminent environmentalists, scientists, revered spiritual-religious leaders, dedicated members of civil society and esteemed politicians came together in a conference organized by Ganga Action Parivar, in collaboration with Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance-India. The highly-successful, very informative conference was held under the flagship project entitled “Ganga Gyan Dhara,” an initiative of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

6th April, 2015: GAP Welcomes Hon’ble Rail Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhu, to Ganga Aarti and Brick Blessings for a New Bio-Toilet Complex for Rishikesh Railway Station

Ganga Action Parivar welcomed the Indian Railway Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhuji, to Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) for its renowned Ganga Aarti. During the beautiful lighting ceremony, Pujya Swamiji led the Hon’ble Minister in a symbolic ceremony, in which bricks were blessed for a planned Rishikesh Railway Station Bio-Toilet structure, which will be built in affiliation with GAP. The Hon’ble Minister commended and lauded GAP’s tireless efforts to bring interfaith leaders together to support the Swachh Bharat mission and Namami Gange.
22-23 March, 2015: World Water Day Celebrated at Banks of River Ganga, Broadcast Live Worldwide

Uplift, Unify the Shift Network, GAP, and GIWA came together for a World Water Day celebration that started with a beautiful live Ganga Aarti ceremony at Parmarth Niketan on the 22nd March. The next day, a highly-memorable commemorative programme that was connected to over 300 locations all over the world to celebrate, honour and revere our world’s waters, such as the Ganga River.


Participants came together for a mass clean-up of the banks of the River Ganga from nations including the USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Argentina, Europe, England, Norway, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Russia, China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Australia, Thailand and South Africa. All participants pledged to inspire and encourage volunteership for clean water everywhere.

13th-15th February, 2015: River Festival Inagurated with Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

GAP actively participated in and GAP Founder, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, inaugurated the 4th Annual River Festival (Nadi Mahostav) with Hon’ble Shri Shivraj Chouhanji, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, at Bandrabhan (near Bhopal), Madhya Pradesh (MP). The event was organized by Narmada Samagra and some of the eminent speakers included Justice Shri Devdutt Madhav Dharmadhikari, Former Judge, Supreme Court, Shri Sitasharan Sharma, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, M.P., Shri Amritlal Vegad, President, Narmada Samagra and many others.

The theme of the festival was “River, its Catchment Area, Chemicals & Crisis.” During the proceedings, participants discussed the challenges that the sacred rivers of India face by pollution and obstruction, as well as solutions. It was attended by over a thousand individuals who represented nearly 310 rivers of India.

5th February, 2015 Sustainable Development Summit

GAP and GIWA led the valevictory session of the 15th Annual Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS) organized by The Energy Research Institute (TERI). In so doing, leaders from multiple faiths were brought together to discuss the crucial importance of everyone coming together to ensure a clean, green and healthy future in which free-flowing water is available for all. This was the first time in previous fourteen years that the Valedictory Session of this vital summit was graced by interfaith leaders.
GANGA ACTION PARIVAR

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