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News: National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) implements Namami Gange Programme.
- Namami Gange is an umbrella program which integrates all activities undertaken to clean Ganga.
- Pillars of Namami Gange Programme are Sewerage Treatment Infrastructure, River-Surface Cleaning, Afforestation, Industrial Effluent Monitoring, River-Front Development, Bio-Diversity, Public Awareness and Ganga Gram.
- Recently, NMCG issued a directive which seeks to impose a fine of 50000/- to those people who immerse idols in Ganga River or its tributaries during festivals.
- World Bank recently approved a loan of 3000 crore (\$400 million) to develop and improve infrastructure projects to abate pollution in the river basin.
- Species like Ganges River Dolphin, Smooth-coated Otter, Small-Clawed Otter, Eurasian Otter, Black bellied Tern, Sarus Crane, Indian Skimmer, River Tern, River Lapwing, Marsh Crocodile, Salt-water Crocodile, Gharial, Red -crowned Roofed Turtle, River Terrapin, Narrow - headed softshell turtle, Three-striped

roofed turtle, Ganges soft-shell turtle, Peacock soft-shell, Black Spotted Turtle, Indian Tent Turtle, Cascade Frog, Marbled Frog, Jerdon's Bullfrog, Indian Bullfrog, Annandale's Paa Frog, Himalaya Paa Frog, Dudhwa Reed Frog, Tytler's Pond Frog, Nepal Paa Frog, Wallago, Golden Mahseer, Spotted barb, Bronze featherback and Bata are protected under the category Priority Species of Ganga as part of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

- Recently, **Chacha Chaudhary** was declared as the mascot of the **Namami Gange Programme**.
- Chacha Chaudhary is an **Indian comic book character**, created by cartoonist Pran Kumar Sharma.
- The comic comes in ten Indian languages including Hindi and English and has sold over ten million copies.
- It has also been made into a television series with Raghubir Yadav playing the role of Chacha Chaudhary.

News: Migratory birds found dead near Chilika lake in Odisha

Chilika Lake

- Chilika Lake is a **brackish water lagoon**, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of **Odisha**, at the **mouth of the Daya River**, flowing into the **Bay of Bengal**, covering an area of over 1,100km.
- It is the **largest coastal lagoon in India and the second largest brackish water lagoon in the world** after The New Caledonian barrier reef.
- Chilika lake hosts **20% of the seagrass found in India**. It has got the highest concentration of Seagrass in India.
- It has been listed as a **tentative UNESCO World Heritage** site.
- It is the **largest wintering ground for migratory birds on the Indian sub-continent**. The lake is home to a number of threatened species of plants and animals.
- The **Nalabana Island or the Nalabana Bird Sanctuary**, inside the lake, continued to be the most favoured destination for the birds.
- The lake is an ecosystem with large fishery resources. It sustains more than 150,000 fisher-folk living in 132 villages on the shore and islands.

- The lagoon hosts over 160 species of birds in the peak migratory season. Birds from as far as the Caspian Sea, Lake Baikal, Aral Sea and other remote parts of Russia, Kirghiz steppes of Kazakhstan, Central and southeast Asia, Ladakh and Himalayas come here. These birds travel great distances; migratory birds probably follow much longer routes than the straight lines, possibly upto 12,000 km, to reach Chilika Lake.
- In 1981, Chilika Lake was designated the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. It was a designated Montreux Site but delisted from it due to the actions of Gov.
- Recently, 5 Great Knots were seen in Chilika Lake after 5 years.

News: National Green Tribunal on Petrol Pumps

- The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the State Pollution Control Boards and the Central Pollution Control Board to make it mandatory for new petroleum outlets to obtain consent to establish and consent to operate.
- The NGT also directed the retail petroleum outlets, irrespective of their turnover, to obtain consent to operate within six months.
- If they did not do so, the State Pollution Control Boards could take action.

National Green Tribunal (NGT)

- NGT was constituted in 2010 as per the provisions of **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010**.
- India became **the third country in the world after Australia and New Zealand, for setting up a specialized environmental tribunal** and also the **first developing country** to do so.
- NGT consists of a **Chairperson and a minimum of 10 to maximum of 20 Judicial and Expert members**. Chairperson is a **retired judge in SC** and other judicial members are retired judges in HC. Experts must have a professional qualification and a minimum of 15 years of experience in forest conservation / environment protection.
- NGT follows the principles of **sustainable development, precautionary principle** and the **polluter pay** principle.
- The Chairperson of NGT is **constituted by Central Government in consultation with Chief Justice of India**.
- Term of the members **of NGT is 5 years** and they are **ineligible for reappointment**.

- National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 provides for the application of the principle of no-fault while determining the liability of the responsible person to provide relief or compensation to the affected persons.
- Appeals against the orders of Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region also lies with the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

No Fault Liability Principle

- Generally, a person is liable for his own wrongful acts and one does not incur any liability for the acts done by others.
- If an individual commits a fault, he is liable for it.
- However, there is a principle that claims an individual liable without his being at fault. This is the 'no-fault liability principle'.
- Section 3 of the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991 provides for 'no-fault liability principle'.

It reads as

- Where death or injury to any person (other than a workman) or damage to any property has resulted from an accident, the owner shall be liable to give such relief as is specified in the Schedule for such death, injury or damage.

- This act has the major aim of providing immediate relief to the persons affected by accident occurring while handling any hazardous substances for matters connected with the incident. It has the goal of providing public liability insurance.
- This act says that every owner who works with hazardous substances and hires employees to control those dangerous things, shall have policies and insurances where he will be insured against liability to give relief in case of death or injury to a person or damage to property arising from the accident caused while carrying on the hazardous activities.

Powers

- Tribunal has jurisdiction over all civil cases involving substantial question relating to environment.
- The tribunal is not bound by the procedures under Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
- Apart from original jurisdiction side of filing an application, NGT acts as an appellate jurisdiction.
- The order/decision/award of Tribunal shall be executable as a decree of a civil court.

- NGT can provide for a penalty of **Imprisonment upto 3 years, or fine upto 10 crore or both.**
- NGT is mandated to make **disposal of applications finally within 6 months of filing the same.** An appeal against order of NGT lies to the SC within 90 days of communications.
- NGT has 5 places of sitting; New Delhi being the principal place of sitting and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai being the other four.
- The **Madras High Court has recently disapproved a 2017 Central notification which terms the north zone Bench in Delhi as the principal Bench,** and reiterated that **all five zonal Benches of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) are equally powerful and that their orders would be applicable pan India.**
- NGT Act of 2010 does not speak about any principal Bench, the court said.

The NGT deals with 7 laws related to the environment

- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977
- Forest Conservation Act, 1980
- Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution Act), 1981
- Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991

- Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- However, NGT avoids **Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972;**
and **The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition
of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (simply Forest Rights Act).**