ANNUAL REPORT
2012-2013
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Overview

Vision

Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) is a global family dedicated to:

- The conservation of the River Ganga and Her tributaries in their free-flowing and pristine, natural state,
- The protection of over a half a billion people dependent upon the river's clean waters for their lives and livelihoods and
- The preservation of India’s rich cultural, spiritual, historical heritage of which Mother Ganga forms the very essence

Mission

GAP is an initiative launched by the hands of H.H. the Dalai Lama, H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati (Pujya Swamiji) as well as many other revered saints and prominent leaders. GAP has since been committed to finding viable, effective solutions to the problems of pollution and obstruction and to raising awareness amongst and inspiring individuals, organizations, NGOs, religious leaders and their congregations, as well as local, state and national governments, in the value of stewardship and social responsibility.
**GAP Bridges the gap**

There have been various plans and much investment that has gone into massive river restoration efforts, such as Ganga Action Plan Phase 1-3 undertaken by the Government of India, which while well intentioned still leave the river and its tributaries polluted and obstructed, as a result countless lives every year are lost due to waterborne illness and other diseases. Ganga Action Parivar believes that unlike Ganga Action Plan the shift from Plan to Parivar (sense of family) leads to an increased sense of inclusiveness and cooperation between all sectors of society. In doing so, Ganga Action Parivar bridges the previous gaps formed from previous efforts and brings together everyone in mutually beneficial, win-win solutions that satisfy the needs and requirements of the various stakeholders, working on the Gandhian value that there is enough to meet everyone’s needs but not enough for even one man’s greed.

**Guiding Principles**

Inspired, led and guided by the divine vision and example of Pujya Swamiji, GAP is rooted in three basic principles and values:

- Only Mother Ganga is the centre and the head of this family, GAP has no other President or Head. Every member of GAP therefore works as a Ganga Parivar Sevak (GPS) (dedicated volunteer) to protect Her.
- With the spirit of *Vashudheva Kutubhakam*, or one world family, serving with the spirit of giving more and taking less—we strive to become more like the Ganga who gives, gives and gives with no discrimination, no expectation, no hesitation and no vacation.
- Much time and energy has been spent in criticizing the system and the previous plans but today we must acknowledge our important and collective role in the solution not the pollution. We agree to own our individual and collective social responsibility and become a better, more efficient system.

**No Head, No Overhead**

GAP is based on the model of no heads and no overheads, this lowest cost model allows GAP to invest all donations directly to the various dynamic programmes and projects that help achieve the vision of protecting and restoring the river with devoted volunteers, non-salary based members, that pledge to volunteer their 3T’s (Time, Talent and Technology) to selflessly serve this vital cause.

**International Alliances and Partnerships**

With the power of ‘each one, reaching ten,’ GAP has formed alliances and partnerships with various established and reputed organizations to spread its wings, welcoming more and more to be part of this world family. Some of our partners include but are not limited to DRDO, FICCI and Organic India amongst many others. GAP has also joined with international organizations
such as the Alliance of Religions in Conservation, the Wockhardt Foundation, the Global Citizens Forum, Jacob Soetendorp Institute for Human Values and many others to share, create and apply innovative solutions to the world’s environmental and social challenges.

GAP’s diverse partnerships and alliances are motivated by the strong believe that Mother Ganga is an ambassador for the environment and the welfare of humanity-- a true world heritage bringing people from all over the nation and the world to be on its banks. GAP is also expanding to collaborate with many other river restoration movements around the world such as the Thames, Amazon, Colorado, Rio, Jordan and others to exchange viable solutions and ideas that can help restore and protect all rivers and our precious environment for it is the true heritage and bounty that we can pass on to the future generations.

**Interfaith Initiative**

GAP believes that it is no longer enough for the world’s religious leaders to instruct their followers in tolerance, acceptance and non-violence. In the 21st century, far more people will lose their lives due to lack of clean drinking water, lack of nourishing food and a polluted environment than by violence through guns or bombs. Therefore, the role of religious leaders must expand to include exhorting their followers to live mindfully, consciously and in accordance with a sustainable future. They must emphasize to their followers the importance of protecting and preserving our Earth’s natural resources.

GAP, therefore, is a strong interfaith and international environmental movement with leaders of the world’s top religions-- Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Bahai from India and from across the world—being respected and esteemed patrons who are committed to joining together to discuss the crucial role that religious/spiritual leaders need to play in protecting and preserving our environment, especially a world heritage and lifeline of millions such as Mother Ganga, for the safety and security of humanity. Pujiya Swamiji often says that both Hari (Hindu) and Ali (Muslims) need to come together in a country like India for true Haryali (greenery and prosperity) to happen. In this way, GAP is bridging the chasms between organizations and diverse faith groups to realize that we must worship our own but respect all and pledge to support each other and to promote clean and green initiatives and actions in our everyday lives and within our communities.
**Esteemed Ganga Parivar Sevaks**

On April 4th, 2010, **His Holiness Dalai Lama** graced the “Sparsh Ganga” event at Parmarth Niketan in Rishikesh which launched Ganga Action Parivar. He moved the participants with a powerful speech about the effects of global warming he has witnessed within his own lifetime and the need to rectify and become conscious of our actions in order to live in harmony with our environment.

“I support Pujya Swamiji in His efforts to unite Hari (Hindu) and Ali (Muslim) for I believe that this is the key to true and sustainable Haryali (greenery, prosperity) in our nation.”- **Imam Umer Ilyasi, the President of All India Imams Association**

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 during the auspicious occasion of the Kumbh Mela, Pujya Swamiji presented a special sapling of neem, rudraksh and kalpa vriksh to Imam Umer Ilyasiji, the President of All India Imams Association. They joined hands symbolizing the union of the religions to work together for peace, unity and for protection and preservation of the natural environment, particularly the waters of Mother Ganga.

On November 5th, 2011, **Janab Maulana Kalbe Sadiq**, Vice President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, gathered with interfaith leaders at a function in Varanasi entitled “Ek Sham Ma Ganga Ke Naam” (“A Night Dedicated to Mother Ganga”). At this event, he gave a compelling and inspiring speech highlighting the importance Ganga holds for people of all faiths and how everyone must come together to see that She remains clean and free-flowing. He emphasized that Ganga belongs to all. On the 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, he has also pledged to support GAP in bringing together Naqwa, largest international Muslim University in Lucknow, to work alongside community members and students of Lucknow University in restoring the clean and green banks of River Gomti, a major tributary of Ganga.
On November 3, 2013 Rabbi David Rosen, Former Chief Rabbi of Ireland and Advisor to Chief Rabbinate of Israel, flew in from Jerusalem to show his support for an event dedicated to Environmental Preservation for World Peace on the auspicious occasion of Pujya Swamiji’s 60th Jyanti. He strongly agreed with GAP that in the 21st century, far more people lose their lives due to lack of clean drinking water, lack of nourishing food and a polluted environment than by violence through guns or bombs. Therefore, the role of religious leaders must be to come together and inspire their followers to live mindfully, consciously and in accordance with a sustainable future.

Giani Gurubachan Singh, Chief Jathedar Golden Temple Head, Akal Takhat Sahib also was present on November 3rd, 2013 for the grande Sant Sammelan, bringing together the world’s top religious leaders for the vital cause of Environmental Preservation for World Peace. He expressed that we must all become dedicated Ganga Parivar Sevaks like Pujya Swamiji serving for the welfare of all and restoring the cultural, spiritual and natural heritage that is Mother Ganga and Mother Earth.

Archbishop Vincent Concessao, Archbishop of Delhi, and Father Dominic Emmanuel, Spokesman for the Catholic Diocese, are avid and dedicated supporters of the clean and green Ganga movement and continue to emphasize that Mother Ganga, Mother Earth and Nature belongs to all and therefore preserving and protecting them is everyone’s responsibility. This important social responsibility can be met by coming together as one world family, one Ganga family, no matter what our individual faith, and acting today.

Dr. Acharya Lokesh Muni, Ahimsa Vishwabharti works closely as a patron of GAP supporting its 3G’s movement, Gau (Cow), Ganga and Goaw (Village). He strongly believes these three G’s are inter-related and inter-dependent. Strengthening and protecting anyone of the G’s will positively
impact the other two. He believes that Pujya Swamiji has inspired a very synergistic and sustainable solution and that by preserving the Indian cow culture we can nourish the rich biodiversity and ecology of India, strengthening organic farming practices and reviving the soil and natural resources of the land.

When Pujya Swamiji shared the Ganga Action Parivar project with Dr. Pranav Pandya, Head of All World Gayatri Pariwar, Dr. Pandya emphasised his support for this noble and crucial project. He said that Shantikunj would absolutely be a strong and staunch part of Ganga Action Parivar and that he personally as well as on behalf of Shantikunj would help the effort in every way possible.

Dr. AK Merchant, Head Bahai Foundation of India and Director of Global Warming Reduction Centre, inspired by Pujya Swamiji leadership and vision for GAP supports the cause by sharing with his community the crisis that our environment faces and encourages them to reconsider the current model of development in India with one that is more sustainable and one that promotes cleaner and greener practices for not only our health but our economic and environmental security.

“*The Ganga not only merges with the Yamuna and the Saraswati, but also represents the confluence of the economic well-being of the Indian people and their abiding reverence for the country’s natural resources. If we pollute the Ganga, we are polluting the very basis of all forms of life in India.*” — Dr. R.K. Pachauri, Nobel Laureate, Director General of TERI and renowned environmentalist Dr. R.K. Pachauri has truly been a pillar of support for Ganga Action Parivar and has been involved greatly in developing sustainable solutions to all the issues Ganga and Her tributaries face.

Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Modi, Global Chairman of Spice Global, Producer and Founder of Global Citizens Forum is a long-term supporter and member of GAP. He believes that with continual interfaith dialogue and innovations in spirituality
society can be inspired and catalyze a shift in consciousness, the seeds of change and restoration of human values. This catalytic new beginning can significantly help in addressing the major social and environmental challenges of the world and that GAP, spearheaded by Pujya Swamiji, is making great strides in this direction.

Sant Rameshbhai Oza, World famous speaker on the scriptures, in May 2013 took part in a 8 day Green Katha, upholding as Pujya Swamiji said his Kathakar Social Responsibility and inspiring all audience and spiritual seekers to take the nectar of the Bhagawad Gita and apply it to their lives allowing for the color of green and the action of green to pervade their selves and their communities.

Anil Kapoor, Hollywood actor and famous Bollywood actor, also deeply moved by Pujya Swamiji and GAP pledged to support the vital cause at a divine gathering on the banks of Mother Ganga in Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) on the 3rd November, 2012. He expressed that he is committed to being a bridge that connects Bollywood and Hollywood to support this crucial initiative.

“We pledge in the waters of Mother Ganga, the greatest spiritual energy in the universe, at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, to come forward to serve these beautiful mothers, these divine rivers that have given us so much.” - Vivek Oberoi, popular Bollywood action hero and actor, came to GAP camp in the Kumbha Mela 2013 on 25th February, 2013 to pledge his support for GAP’s Green Initiatives and volunteer his sponsorship of the first two fixed bio-toilet complexes in Allahabad and the sacred teerth of Badrinath.
Shri Manoj Tiwari, Bollywood actor, singer and entertainer, on May 23-24\textsuperscript{th}, 2013 was inspired by the Green Katha being held at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) by Pujya Sant Rameshbhai Ozaji and inspired by Pujya Swamiji and GAP pledged to uphold his media social responsibility and to inform all about the crisis that our rivers face through his shows and songs, touching and educating millions to join GAP and act now.

“What our nation needs today is a paradigm shift where our sewage and toilet waste is not seen as useless but converted into a resource that can help us meet our much needed energy demands. In this way our nation’s greatest challenge can become our greatest strength.” - Dr. Vinod Tareji, Coordinator of Ganga River Basin Ecological Management Plan (GRBEMP) executed by the consortium of seven IITs under the NGRBA and esteemed professor from IIT Kanpur who is a expert member of GAP.

Shri Paritosh Tyagiji, Former Chairman Control Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and long-term expert member of GAP guides the family “to take a fresh approach regarding the way we understand our rivers not just as water bodies but as living entities that have their own rights to flow freely and unpolluted, thereby preventing and abating any type of pollution or obstruction to these sacred and complex living ecological entities.”

Rajneesh Mehra, Solid Waste Management Expert and Entrepreneur is also an expert member of GAP who helps think of innovative ways to address the pressing challenges that the river and the country is facing. He says that by incentivizing and shifting our paradigm about waste the nation can turn the
mountains of trash into a boon for the economy and the environment. He strongly believes that dynamic, practical and inspiring spiritual and religious leaders such as Pujya Swamiji, President of Parmarth Niketan and Founder of GAP, can support this shift in paradigm and raising community awareness.

“The states and various stakeholders sharing the river bodies have to come together as one to address these challenges as the Centre can only be successful if each one owns up and takes their social responsibility to address a challenge which will soon threaten our very existence. GAP is a global family working to bridge these gaps from previous action plans and to take responsibility so that we can preserve Mother Ganga and Her tributaries before it really becomes too late.” - Shri RP Sharmaji, Former Joint Secretary of the Rajiv Gandhi Mission and CEO of Mokshda

Key Meetings and Events: May 2013- Sept 2011

During the 2011-2013 year several noteworthy meetings and events took place. A partial list of key meetings and events of these includes, starting with the most recent event first:

19th-26th May 2013: Green Katha

- Pujya Sant Rameshbhai Ozaji (Bhaishri) lead a sacred Bhagwat Green Katha Gyan Yagna, organized in remembrance of the late industrialist Shri Deen Dayal Jalanji.
- The "Green Katha" - an eco-friendly approach (such as, using no plastic, etc.) to the organization of kathas, as an example of kathakar social responsibility, which are meant to spread wisdom and connect us with the Divine - and thus also, the Divine's creation.
- The participants were encouraged to completely stop using plastics and use jute and cloth alternatives in their everyday lives. They were inspired to plant at least three trees this monsoon season and to take the wisdom of the ancient scriptures to transform their inner environment to become clean and evergreen.
- The event was blessed by the presence of many divine saints, including Pujya Swamiji, M.M. Pujya Swami Asanganandji, M.M. Pujya Swami Gurusharanandji Maharaj, Pujya Brahmaswaroop Brahmacharyaji, M.M. Pujya Swami Kailashanand Brahmacharyaji, Pujya Mahant Narendra Giriji, and Pujya Mahant Shri Ramanand Puriji, among many other saints, spiritual seekers, environmentalists, celebrities, professionals and Ganga volunteers.
The green initiative inspired many eminent leaders, celebrities and artists including Manoj Tiwariji, popular Bollywood actor, who pledged to exercise his Media Social Responsibility and spread the awareness about the issues and challenges surrounding Mother Ganga and Her tributaries to millions of people that he meets in his live stage and TV shows. He also pledged to create an album and group called Gangs of Ganga Bhakt, inspired by his recent film Gangs of Wassepur, to reach out to more Ganga devotees, volunteers and youth before the national river is gone.

14th May 2013: Anna Hazareji comes to Parmarth Niketan for Ganga Aarti

Respected and beloved Indian leader Anna Hazareji came to Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, to visit with Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji on the holy banks of Mother Ganga, to perform Ganga Aarti and to take a sankalp to continue serving the nation on the scared occasion of Akshaya Tritiya.

Pujya Swamiji honored Annaji with a Rudraksh sapling, symbolizing the small and simple beginning that has the potential to change and transform the world for the welfare of all, including the restoration of a cleaner and greener Ganga.

11th May 2013: Pujya Swamiji brings the message of Haryali to the banks of Gomti

Pujya Swamiji, Shri Anil Singhji, convener of Lok Adhikar Manch, and Dr. Raj Kumar Singh HOD Department of Social Welfare of Lucknow University (LU) met with NSS and NCC Scout Representatives of LU discussing their plans for cleaning and greening the banks of the River Gomti.

Pujya Swamiji later went on to meet Respected Maulana Dr. Syed Kalbe Sadiq, Chairman of Unity College and internationally renowned Islamic scholar, thinker and reformer, who agreed to come together with the Ganga Family and bring true Haryali in the state’s capital and in India.

Amongst many other things, they scheduled Pujya Swamiji’s next meeting to address the students of Naqwa University, the largest international university in Lucknow for Islamic studies and plan their collective efforts to install and implement more bio-toilets to keep the banks of Gomti clean and green.

10th May 2013: Meeting with Honourable Shivpal Yadavji and Ministers in Lucknow

Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Swami Kailashanand Brahmacharyaji and Pujya Swami Narendra Giriji met with Honourable State Minister of Irrigation, Shri Shivpal Yadavji, and Honourable State Minister of Revenue, Shri Ambika Chaudharyji to discuss ways in which religious and spiritual leaders can work together and support the government in addressing the many challenges that the nation and the environment face today, including solid waste, energy, agricultural management and creating green and eco-friendly pilgrimage cities and towns.
Later in the evening a meeting with Honourable State Minister of Forest, Environment and Horticulture, Shri SP Yadavji, was also held discussing ways in which he can support these efforts.

10\textsuperscript{th} May 2013: Pujya Swamiji is Honored with Noble Person’s Award in Lucknow

- Pujya Swamiji was given the Noble Person’s prestigious award in Lucknow by Noble Parivar, a national family that brings together divine souls that are excelling in their respective fields and are giving back to society.
- Pujya Swamiji was honored by Dr. Arun Bhatt, Director PGI Noida, Shri Bhimjibhai Patel, Chairman of Standing Committee Surat Municipal Corporation (Gujarat) and Shri Chanyaka, Chief Editor Nobel India in excellence in the service of the environment and humanity.

8-9\textsuperscript{th} May 2013: Pujya Swamiji is Honored with Noble Person's Award in Lucknow

- Ganga Action Parivar, Parmarth Niketan, Sarva Dharma Sansad, Green Pilgrimage Network, The Clean Ganga Initiative, World Conscious Pact and many other organizations inaugurated a two-day National Workshop to find and implement innovative and effective solutions and suggestions to address the challenges that face the National River Ganga.
- The workshop was led by Pujya Swamiji and joined by eminent experts such as Dr. Vinod Tareji, Coordinator of Ganga River Basin Ecological Management Plan (GRBEMP), Shri Paritosh Tyagiji, Former Chairman Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Shri RP Sharmaji, Former Head, NRCD, MoEF and many other scientists, engineers and professionals from different fields of expertise.
- Lists of recommendations were prepared for the Honourable PM of India, Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Environment and Forests and other concerned decision makers for solutions that can satisfy the various stakeholders associated with the river and to preserve the sanctity of the national river.

28\textsuperscript{th} April 2013: Meeting of organizations serving the tributaries of River Ganga, Organic India joins GAP and the Honorable Governor of UP pledges to support

- Pujya Swamiji was the special guest and inspiration to a gathering of experts, organizations and individuals working for small tributaries of Ganga and Yamuna in Lucknow.
- The meeting was followed by a visit to the Organic India farm in Lucknow to meet the new GAP team who would be dedicated to bringing the success model of sustainable and organic farming model all along the banks of Gangaji and Yamunaji.
- Directly after the meeting Pujya Swamiji, Paul Stamets, Bharat Mitra and Krishan Gupta of Organic India proceeded to the Governor House to share their action plan. His
Excellency the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Shri B.L. Joshiji was very receptive of the idea and pledged to support the cause.

- Pujya Swamiji also met with the Honourable Minister of Revenue for the State of Uttar Pradesh on ways that initiatives to sustainably develop and conserve the banks of the river could be undertaken by the state. Amongst the important topics of discussion were the prospects of alternative energy generation through solar, biomass and bio-gas as well as bringing bio-toilet technology to Uttar Pradesh.
- The eventful day concluded with an Aarti ceremony at the Kurdhi Ghat on the sacred banks of the River Gomti.

**26th April 2013: Pujya Swamiji & Saints Meet with Shri Narendra Modiji**

- Shri Modiji performed havan with a number of the saints, including Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Morari Bapuji, Pujya Ramdevji, Pujya Gurusharanandji Maharaj, Pujya Sant Rameshbhai Ozaji (Bhaishri), and Pujya Pranav Pandayaji, requesting blessings from the revered saints that were present not for His own political agenda but rather so that the power, love, respect and trust that people have of him continue and that he can be a leader who does good for all of humanity, not just a certain group such as Hindus.
- Shri Modiji fully agreed with Pujya Swamiji that “Haryali” – which means “green” in Hindi” – is the true progress of the nation. As Pujya Swamiji says “Haryali” will be when “Hari” (representing Hindus) and “Ali” (representing Muslims) come together.
- Modiji pledged to be a leader for all, dedicated to the welfare of the nation, doing all that he can to preserve the rich heritage which identifies and symbolizes India, especially Mother Ganga and all Her tributaries.

**22nd April 2013: Pujya Swamiji Discusses Eco-Tourism with Honourable CM of Uttarakhand**

- An official meeting took place at the CM Office in Dehradun with the Honourable CM of Uttarakhand, Shri Vijay Bhagunaji, and concerned officials about the action and pilot plan to develop the banks of Ganga as an eco-hut culture and not hotel culture.
- This sustainable model of development would bring back organic farming and restore the clean and green nature of both sides of the riverbed.
- Pujya Swamiji explained that eco-tourism would not only restore the economy of Uttarakhand but preserve the environment and rich heritage of the land and its culture.

**17th April 2013: Meeting with Minister of Urban Development of UK for Biodigester Toilets**

- Pujya Swamiji and members of GAP met with the Minister of Urban Development Shri Pritam Panwar Singhji and officers from 7 districts to chalk out the way forward for the
construction of a cluster of eco-friendly biodigester toilets and Waterlife Clean-water taps in Uttarakhand.

- It was agreed upon that fast track NOCs would be completed in 15 days and the project would be started at the very earliest.

**16th April 2013: TECHMA Conference-ITM Mussoorie DRDO**

- Pujya Swamiji was the keynote speaker and guest of honour at a very special technology conference at the Institute of Technology Management (ITM)- Mussoorie, which offers training and workshops to the nation’s top scientists of the DRDO.
- Pujya Swamiji inspired all the attending senior scientists to dedicate their 3T's (time, talent, technology) for the welfare of the nation and to the preservation of its sacred heritage, Mother Ganga.

**11-12th March 2013: Agreement for Yamuna with Ministries of Water Resources and Environment**

- For three days, high level meetings took place with the Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Environment, pad yatris from Vrinadavan/Braj area, representatives of the union of farmers and other concerned parties over the dire situation with the Yamuna river.
- The meetings and discussions made a way forward as historic agreements were reached regarding Yamuna, which included complete separation of sewage from the most polluted stretch of the river in Delhi and the maintenance of minimal ecological flows in the river in Vrindavan.

**1-7th March 2013: International Yoga Festival**

- International Yoga Festival ran from the 1-7 March at Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh with more than 475 official participants from 41 countries; however, taking into consideration those who came just for a few classes or programs, the total number of participants were nearly 800 people from 50 countries!
- Parmarth Niketan has been hosting International Yoga Festival since 1999, first in cooperation with Uttar Pradesh Tourism and then in cooperation with Uttarakhand Tourism.
- This year the Yoga styles included Ganga Yoga and talks about the importance of environmental preservation for true world peace were shared with participants.
- Reflections of the lessons of the Kumbha Mela and collective efforts to preserve Mother Ganga and Her tributaries to preserve the authentic roots and traditions of Yoga were also discussed.
• The divine evening Ganga Aarti was also, as every year, a highlight for all the participants of every country, culture, religion and language, symbolizing the power of this river of life to unite and bring together people from all walks of life.

14th Jan-26th Feb: Kumbha Mela 2013

• Every day during the Kumbha Mela was filled with environmental awareness rallies and outreach programmes, from clean-ups to environmental marches to Sangam Aarti and Sankalp.
• The Ganga Action Parivar’s camp, under Pujya Swamiji’s divine leadership, was in the electronic, print media as well as regularly covered by national and international television for its unique and inspiring messages of restoring and protecting Mother Ganga and Her tributaries and being the change.
• Some of these special events included, but were not limited to (please see GAP’s special Kumbha Mela newsletter online for more information and details):
  • 26th February: Ganga Samvaad organized by Life Okay at the GAP Camp
    o A special discussion bringing together top religious leaders, key experts and scientists on the holy banks of Sangam to pledge that Life will only be Okay if Ganga is Okay.
    o The cast and crew of popular Hindi television series ‘Devo ka Dev Mahadev’ has extended their media social responsibility to include Mahadev for Ganga, pledging to bring awareness to their viewers and reaching out to include the youth and students of the nation.
  • 26th February: Honourable Minister of Irrigation of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Shivpal Yadavji comes to the GAP camp.
    o Pujya Swamiji showed Respected Shri Shivpal Yadavji several films which GAP has made on the urgent need for toilets, the benefits of solar energy and the current state of pollution in Mother Ganga.
    o Deeply inspired by the film and by detailed discussions with Pujya Swamiji, the honorable Minister pledged that the State of Uttar Pradesh would construct eco-friendly bio-digester toilets-- as per the model developed in partnership between Ganga Action Parivar, DRDO and FICCI -- along the banks of Ganga and Yamuna throughout Uttar Pradesh.
    o He pledged also for a new vision for a Green Kashi and Green Prayag. Upon the honourable Minister’s departure he received the prasad of saplings of sacred trees which Pujya Swami Chidanandji has been giving out as prasad since the beginning of Kumbha.
  • 25th February: Vivek Oberoi Pledges to Clean Ganga
    o On the final snan day of the Kumbh Mela, Vivek Oberoi, his mother and aunts went for Sangam Snan, along with other devotees, led by Pujya Swami. Vivek
gave a special Sankalp, one in Hindi and one in English, about protecting Mother Ganga.

- The next day before leaving the camp, Vivek Oberoi took a pledge for the construction of the first 2 toilet complexes being built by a partnership between Ganga Action Parivar, DRDO and FICCI. Led by Pujya Swamiji, Vivek performed puja, yagna and a ceremonial “bhoomi puja” blessing for bricks to be used in the eco-friendly, bio-digester toilet complexes. The 2 toilet complexes sponsored by Vivek will be located in Allahabad and in the sacred teerth of Badrinath.

- **24th February: An Evening Dedicated to Humanity**
  - The day before the last major snan of the Kumbha Mela, an evening was organized and hosted by GAP with music and poetry dedicated to the welfare and service of humanity. Special guests were famous Bollywood actor Vivek Oberoi with his family, Hon’ble Home Minster Maharashtra Shri Kripa Shankar Singh, former CM of Goa Shri Digambar Kamat and Chairman of the All-India Anti-Terrorist Front Shri Maninderjeet Singh Bitta.
  - The event had many talented Hindu and Muslim poets share their inspiring poetry. Although unable to make the event physically, Respected Kalbe Sadhiq Sahib and Respected Imam Umer Iliasji sent their support and blessings for this enchanting evening and the larger message of harm.

- **23rd February: Honourable Minister of Water Resources, Shri Harish Rawatji, launches the Ganga Rights Campaign**
  - The National Ganga Rights Movement is being spearheaded by Ganga Action Parivar, is promoting the National Ganga Rights Act to protect and restore one of the world’s most precious and beloved river systems.
  - Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, “If Ganga dies, India dies. If Ganga thrives, India thrives. In violating Her, we are violating basic human rights, and we are putting at risk the bright futures our children so greatly deserve. Now is the time for action. Let us all stand up and say, it’s time for the National Ganga Rights Act.”

- **22nd February: Spirituality in Leadership Conference in Varanasi**
  - A Spirituality in Leadership conference was held in the School of Management Sciences (SMS), Varanasi in which Pujya Swamiji and prominent Indian film director, producer and screenwriter, Shri Mahesh Bhattji, as well as Padmashri Professor Geshe N Samten, Hon’ble Vice Chancellor of Central University of Tibetan Studies, were the guests of honor.
  - Amongst many inspiring words by all the speakers the resounding message was that spirituality begins with oneself, and that in we must be the change, starting by preserving and protecting our environment and our cultural, spiritual and natural heritage.
o Pujya Swamiji inspired all participants to reach out to friends and family to urge them to take a pledge to be the change and make our communities and our rivers “clean and green.” Pujya Swamiji invited all to join GAP to dedicate their time, talent and technology to the cause.

• 19th February: Maha Sangam Aarti
  o Pujya Swamiji led a special aarti at the VIP ghat on the sangam which was graced by the presence of Pujya Shankaracharya Vasudevanandji, Pujya Shankaracharya Narendranandji, Pujya Shankaracharya Adhokchajanandji, Pujya M.M. Swami Avdhesanand Giriji and other revered saints and leaders.

• 17th February: Sangam se Sansad ka Sandesh
  o Organized by the Prabhatam group at the Ganga Action Parivar Camp, which was then telecast internationally in many countries.
  o Pujya Swamiji, Pujya M.M. Swami Kailashanandji and other leaders gave talks on the importance of the protection of Mother Ganga by the Parliament and what steps can/should be taken by the Parliament. Consul General of Argentina, Sergio Lais said, “As a Christian, I am sure that if Jesus Christ were alive today, He would say ‘Love Ganga as Thyself.’”

• 14th February: Make Ganga your Green Valentine
  o With members of 45 different countries present at the GAP camp and many local and national Ganga volunteers, GAP held a special Valentine’s day rally illustrating, as Pujya Swamiji says, that Ganga is our Valentine every day.
  o The event was a big hit inspiring many all over the nation and the world to get connected and act today to protect the beloved Valentine and love of billions.

• 13th February: H.H. Pujya Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji and CM of Uttarakhand visit GAP Camp to take the Ganga pledge.

• 10-11th February: Mauni Amavasya
  o Famous actress Preity Zinta came to GAP camp at the Kumbha Mela with members of the Hinduja family. After participating in the sacred yagna at the camp, Pujya Swamiji led her and the Hindujas to the Sangam for a holy dip and prayers in the sacred waters. Later on, Preity spoke to the media about her sadness at seeing so much trash and pollution in the holy waters.
  o She pledged herself to become part of the Ganga Action Parivar and to do whatever she is able to for the protection and preservation of Mother Ganga.
  o World-famous drummer Sivamani came to the Ganga Action Parivar also was present during this time and awed and inspired all present with divine Ganga music dedicated to the noble and vital work Pujya Swamiji was inspiring all over the nation and the world.
  o 4th February was the official launch of the Global Citizens Forum and message of Haryali
The occasion was graced by the presence of Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Imam Ilyasiji, the first official “Global Citizens” and other members of Dr. Modiji’s family.

Pujya Swamiji presented special saplings of neem, rudraksh and kalpa vriksh to Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasiji, the President of All India Imams Association. They joined hands symbolizing the union of the religions to work together for peace, unity and for protection and preservation of the natural environment, particularly the waters of Mother Ganga.

Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Imam Sahib declared that they will unite the temples and the mosques of India in the service of safeguarding the natural environment of India and the river Ganga. They will unite the Hindus and the Muslims together in a joint effort toward a “Clean & Green Ganga, Clean & Green India, Clean & Green World, and Clean & Green Century.”

- **3rd February Sangam Aarti: Sangam se Sangam ka Sandesh**
  - Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji led a special Ganga Aarti ceremony, graced by the presence of Pujya Swami Ramdevji and many revered saints and spiritual leaders of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism and Christianity as well as distinguished guests and dignitaries.
  - The Aarti delivered the great message of unity of the leaders of the world’s religions in the importance of protecting our national environment and particularly the sacred and lifegiving waters of Mother Ganga. As the revered saints waved the brightly burning aarti lamps, it brought a message of light and peace to the world.
  - In the evening after the Sangam Aarti, Pujya Swamiji and Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Modiji, Chairman of Spice Global and President of the Global Citizens Forum, hosted a conference on the theme of “Innovation in Spirituality,” to explore how spirituality is crucial to innovative, creative and “green” development today. The event featured renowned faith and business leaders, who discussed the interconnectedness of today’s world, as well as the importance of spirituality and service.
  - Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji spoke about how spiritual innovators make the world a better place by balancing the needs of development with the importance of preserving our environment for future generations. Other speakers at the conference included the President of the All India Imams Association Imam Ahmed Umar Ilyasiji, Global Chairman of Spice Global Dr. B.K. Modiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, a leader of the Earth Traditions lineage Rev. Patrick McCollum, CEO of Dragon Gate Entertainment William Pfeiffer, and leader of the World Conscious Pact Pujya Swami Paramadvaitiji.

- **24th Jan-29th Jan: Divine Shakti Festival**
  - On the 24th Jan which is the National Day of the Girl Child, GAP celebrated with a unique ceremony in which 60 daughters of fishermen were worshiped by
the Parmarth Rishikumars as goddesses led by Pujya Swamiji. The purpose of the ceremony was to shed light on India’s girl children as worthy of respect and reverence. Pujya Swamji spoke about how girls, just like Mother Ganga, represent the past, present, and future of Mother India, and that for India to grow and thrive, they must be allowed to grow and thrive.

- On the 25th, GAP held a special Shakti and Prakriti conference with the inspirational environmentalist Dr. Vandana Shivaji as guest speaker at an afternoon conference held to discuss the protection of Mother Earth, in connection with the celebration of the divine feminine.

- On the 26th Jan: Republic Day Parade for Ganga
  - More than a thousand people – from across India and around the world - marched together to celebrate India’s Republic Day on the banks of the Sangam, as part of an environmental parade to call for India’s independence from pollution and to pay homage to the war heroes, who have faithfully served India's past.
  - Led by Pujya Swamiji, participants from all castes, creeds and cultures came together to call for an Indian “Clean Revolution.” The parade-goers, hailing from more than 54 countries, as well as students from the Northeast states of India, waved their national flags, colorful banners, costumes and slogans calling for all to keep Mother India and Mother Ganga pollution-free.

- 22nd Jan: Harvard University visits GAP camp
  - On the 22nd of January, students from Harvard University along with Harvard Professor Dianne Eck, who were visiting the Kumbh Mela to study it from numerous perspectives, joined with GAP to help clean the Sangam.
  - When they expressed to Pujya Swamiji that their research team was interested in the administrative management and infrastructural support of the world's largest gathering, Pujya Swamiji said that during the Kumbha Mela people come not to check if toilets are flushing or not but rather they come to flush their selves so the can go back to their communities purified and sanctified by the waters of Mother Ganga. He said they don’t come for the infrastructure the come for to rewire their inner structure and it was this real Self Management that makes India and Mother Ganga so unique and sacred.

- 21-23rd Jan: The Ganga Sansad (Ganga Parliament), came to conclude the day at the Ganga Action Parivar camp.
  - Participants in the Sansad included Pujya Swamiji, retired General Shri V.K. Singhji, Jal Purush (“Water Man”) Shri Rajendra Singh, Pujya Swami Harichetanandji, and Shri D.N.S. Subbaraoji among other esteemed guests.
  - The esteemed members of the Sansad spoke about how now on the banks of Triveni, it is time for results, taking a pledge to stand for Ganga and Ganga's rights.
They also praised how now not only India’s great saints, soldiers, workers and people are coming together, but indeed how all of the world is coming together for Ganga. Famed pioneer and leader of the Youth Revolution, Shri D.S.N. Subbarao closed the conference by leading all the esteemed guests along with audience members in an inspirational musical moment as everyone sang together “Jai Jagat! Jai Jagat! (Victory to the Universe)

- **20th Jan: 5,000 Students and Governor Uttar Pradesh come to GAP camp**
  - Ganga Action Parivar organized a special procession of 5,000 school children from thirty Allahabad-area schools, to inspire them in solidarity and support for saving the Ganga and Yamuna Rivers.
  - The students paraded through the grounds of the Kumbh Mela, singing songs and carrying hand-made signs, some of which stated, “Ganga’s Rights are Our Rights”, finishing their march at the Ganga Action Parivar camp.
  - His Excellency Uttar Pradesh Governor, Shri B.L. Joshi ji was guest of honor at the event, whom Pujya Swamiji named our “Green Governor.”
  - The program was organized in order to harness and channel the energy of the youth to protect and preserve the rivers and environment of India.
  - The children were inspired by to the stirring words of Pujya Swamiji and the Hon’ble Governor, who appealed that all must come together to take action to clean and restore the Ganga.
  - Afterwards, all special guests and dignitaries received tree saplings, which they pledged to plant in their own communities.

- **19th Jan: Green Pilgrimage Mayor’s Meeting**
  - His Excellency, Uttarakhand Governor, Dr. Aziz Qureshiji, Pujya Swamiji, distinguished Mayors and Government officials met to discuss ways to make the pathways of pilgrims as clean as the temple they pray in.
  - This conference will enable the sharing of information and ideas about how India’s cities and pilgrimage places can become cleaner and greener.
  - His Excellency, Uttarakhand Governor, Dr. Aziz Qureshi, alongside DRDO, FICCI, and Ganga Action Parivar launched the Ganga Tat Pe Ganga Jal Initiative. The historic program is to place Waterlife water filtration systems on the banks of the Ganga for the use of pilgrims visiting some of India’s holiest places and festivals.

- **14th Jan: First Makar Sakranti Kumbha Snan**
  - The first snan had started with involving and honoring the boatman community as Green Ambassadors of change. They were empowered to tell people about the pollution and a major clean up was done with everyone on the first snan of the Kumbha Mela because Pujya Swamiji said that, ‘time had come that before taking a snan in Mother Ganga we must give a snan to Gangaji.’
26th December, 2012: A workshop dedicated to the promotion of Homa Organic Farming all along banks of Mother Ganga

24th-23rd November, 2012: Green Pilgrimage Network

- The meeting was hosted by the Bhumi Project, ARC and the Ganga Action Parivar. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati opened the meeting of religious representatives, conservationists and civil authorities, including the mayor of Benares and Chairman of Rishikesh, by calling on all participants to take action to green their holy sites during times of pilgrimage.
- Waste, pollution, traffic, high energy use and large crowds of people inside nature reserves are some of the threats posed by pilgrimage that were addressed at the meeting.
- Delegates pledged to develop green pilgrimage action plans for their holy cities and towns.
- After the commencement of a two day Green Pilgrimage workshop, the city of Rishikesh, under the able leadership of Municipal Commissioner, Shri Deep Sharmaji, joined the eco-network. By planting a tree outside the civic centre the workshop participants along with city members declared that they committed to a cleaner and greener Rishikesh.


- Parmarth Niketan and GAP was proud to host the annual World Heritage Week, organised by the dedicated team of Archeological Survey of India-Dehradun.
- The event featured notable speeches from Mr. Ram Boojh, National Programme Officer of Environmental Sciences, and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, dedicated volunteer and representative of Parmarth Niketan and Ganga Action Parivar, on the importance of protecting and preserving our cultural and natural heritage as the true wealth and identity of our nation.
- Honorary dignitaries also declared their support and both UNESCO and ASI pledged to continue there work with GAP to declare the Upper Ganga Region, from Tapovan to Rishikesh, a World Heritage Site.
- Children from local schools joined throughout the week for art and debate competitions. Empowered by the week-long exhibition of the nations most treasured heritage sites, students were motivated to become stewards of their state and their nation’s rich cultural and natural wealth.

19th November, 2012: Declaration of the National River Day

- Mr. Harish Rawat, Minister of Water Resources, Government of India and Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Founder of Ganga Action Parivar, inaugurated the river conference organized by Tarun Bharat Sangh and Rashtriya Jal Biradari on 19th November. On this occasion the Ministry of Water Resources declared the 19th of
November as the national ‘River Day’, showing their support for the NGOs and the citizens of India who are working hard to raise more awareness on this vital and necessary issue.

3rd November, 2012: Pujya Swamiji’s 60th Birthday Celebration

- A huge interfaith gathering in honor of Pujya Swamiji's 60th Janam Utsav, with the top leaders of the world's religions coming together in the name of Environmental Protection for World Peace was hosted at Parmarth Niketan.
- There were leaders of Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and Bahai from India and from across the world, joining together to discuss the crucial role that religious/spiritual leaders need to play in protecting and preserving our environment.
- Revered religious/spiritual leaders, distinguished dignitaries and industrialists, politicians from both major parties and Bollywood celebrities came together, on this momentous occasion, to join hands on the banks of Mother Ganga, and pledge themselves to the cause of Environmental Protection and Preservation, with an emphasis on preserving the holy waters of Mother Ganga.
- Great emphasis was placed by all speakers on the crucial need today for all leaders to join together -- breaking barriers of religion, race and politics -- to save Mother Earth. A special emphasis was placed on the dire need to join hands for the protection and preservation of Mother Ganga.
- Also, the event included the signing of a historic MOU between Ganga Action Parivar (which Pujya Swamiji founded in 2010) and DRDO and FICCI for the construction of thousands of bio-digester toilets on the banks of Mother Ganga to prevent villagers from having to use the sacred river as their toilet.
- The event also included the launch of By God's Grace, a beautiful Amazon best seller coffee table book biography of Pujya Swamiji's life, published by Mandala Publications of California, USA. The foreword has been written by H.H. the Dalai Lama and the preface is by Rabbi David Rosen. The book highlights Pujya Swamiji’s life and service and His dedication now to serve Mother Ganga and Her tributaries aviral and nirmal once again.
- A newsletter of this particular event is attached for more details.

15th October, 2012: Bio-digester Toilet Inauguration

- On the 15th October, esteemed government leaders, scientists and sevaks gathered together to officially inaugurate the new eco-friendly, bio-digester toilets built at Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh through the cooperation and hard work of DRDO, FICCI and Ganga Action Parivar.
- These toilets, which provide an environmentally-friendly and sustainable solution to the major sewage crisis India is facing, are the beginning of a partnership between these three entities which will help to bring eco-friendly toilets throughout the Ganga River Basin. In the first stage alone, 5,000 toilet blocks will be built hand-in-hand along the banks of Ganga in Uttarakhand.
- To dedicate this historic step towards a clean and green India, many top leaders from both the Uttarakhand state government as well as the Central government alongside top
scientists and directors, including the Hon’ble Governor of Uttarakhand Dr. Aziz Qureshi, the Hon’ble Minister of Rural Development of UK Shri Pritam Singh, the Hon’ble Minister of Social Welfare of UK Shri Surendra Rakesh, the Hon’ble Member of Lok Sobha Shri Satpal Maharaj, the Hon’ble Union Minister of Water Shri Harish Rawat, the Senior Director of FICCI Shri Nirankar Saxena, Director of Life Sciences of DRDO Dr. Lokendra Singh, Director of DI2TM of DRDO Shri S. Radhakrishnan, Director of HR, BHEL Shri R. Krishnan, and Chief Controller R&D of DRDO Shri S. Sundaresh.

- The Hon’ble Governor of Uttarakhand praised the resolve of DRDO, FICCI, GAP and the Parmarth family in its dedication to environmental protection and the betterment of of India’s homes, villages, towns and cities.
- Pujya Swamiji spoke about how building toilets is necessary for maintaining Gangaji’s purity and cleanliness, as well as protecting the health and safety of people, especially women, and that by building eco-friendly toilets within the Ganga Basin will not only help keep the environment clean, but will help our culture shine everywhere.

22nd August, 2012: Clean Prayag, Green Prayag

- A workshop was held in Hotel Prayag Inn, Allahabad in preparation for a Clean and Green Kumbh 2013.
- Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Founder of Ganga Action Parivar, envisions this highly anticipated, largest human gathering to be the golden opportunity for the nation to set an example for a clean and green India.
- This workshop was a follow-up from the one held earlier this month, focused this time more specifically on school organizations.
- It signified a coming together (sangam) of educational institutes, NGOs with Allahabad and Kumbh Mela Administration. Hon’ble Chief Guest Commissioner of Allahabad, Shri Devesh Chaturvedi, dedicated his valuable time to lay out the three main objectives he would like to focus on during this campaign and in the coming months:
  - Tree Plantation to Green Prayag
  - Polythene Free Campaign to Clean Prayag
  - Adopt Portions of Your Prayag to maintain the Clean and Green Prayag
- The workshop six month long environmental campaign and awareness programmes in Allahabad schools that blossomed into the highly anticipated Kumbha Mela.

28th June-Sept, 2012: Tree Plantations in the Ganga River Basin

- Ganga Action Parivar inspired and planted over 3,000 trees in this monsoon season in the cities of Rishikesh, Veerpur and Kotdwar.
- GAP teamed up with partner NGOs and Forest Departments to inspire plantation of thousands of shading giving and fruit bearing trees in the cities such as Haridwar and Allahabad.
- Every year right after the big Kanwad Mela, the Hindu month celebrating Lord Shiva, all the special festival police force are invited by H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji to a big celebratory feast at Parmarth Niketan Ashram (Rishikesh). This year the commencement of the event also included massive tree plantation and clean-up campaign to raise awareness that it is not merely enough to worship the creator but we must also worship and respect His creation.
20th June, 2012: World Heritage Site Conference

- A conference to discuss the plan of proposing the Upper Ganga region as a UNESCO World Heritage Site was held at Parmarth Niketan, and to create definite action items to move this idea forward.

- On the 20th, eminent spiritual and social leaders gathered at Parmarth to bless the conference, including Maulana Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasiji, President of the All India Organization of Imams of Mosques, and renowned environmental activist Shri Sundarlal Bahugunaji.

- The meeting began with the blessings of Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Sant Balbir Singh Seechewalji. Many eminent experts also attended the meeting, including Sri Atulkumar Bhargavaji, Dr. AN Shuklaji, Dr. DS Bhargavaji, Dr. Anil Guptaji, Dr. VC Tiwariji, Dr. PS Negiji, Sri RK Acharyaji, Shri Raj Deo Singh Chandellaji and Dr. Pankaj Jainji, as well as many Ganga Action sevaks.

18th May, 2012: Ganga White Paper Conference

- A workshop was held at Parmarth Niketan to discuss a new Ganga White Paper which is being written by Ganga Action.

- Experts from all different fields gathered together to help write the Ganga white paper together, brainstorming ideas for the paper and suggesting what improvements can be made. This workshop was led by Pujya Swamiji, esteemed environmental activist and scientist Dr. Vandana Shivaji and Dr. BD Tripathiji, member of the National River Ganga Basin Authority.

- The workshop was very productive and greatly helped to move the Ganga white paper to the next step. When this paper is finished, it will be presented to the Prime Minister of India as well as other members of the Central and State governments.

12th April, 2012: Guru Sangamam

- Members of the Guru Sangamam – a confederation of the great spiritual leaders of India’s indigenous religions and spiritual traditions – gathered in New Delhi.

- Approximately 100 of India’s leaders from all its indigenous traditions – which included Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism – came together for this gathering.

- While at the Guru Sangamam, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati ji, who serves as the General Secretary of the Guru Sangaman, spoke to the Gurus about the urgent need to restore, protect and maintain the river Ganga and her tributaries to their free-flowing and pristine state, as Ganga is both a lifeline to the millions who live along her banks as well as representative of the spiritual and cultural heritage of India.

8th April, 2012: National Ganga and Yamuna Workshop
From 8-10th April, 2012, dedicated scientists, environmentalists, scholars, and activists gathered together for the annual, solution-focused National Ganga Yamuna Workshop at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh organized by Ganga Action.

The three-day workshop was chaired and led by Dr. RK Pachauri (Nobel Peace Prize recipient and Director General, TERI), Jalpurush Shri Rajendra Singh (Magsaysay Award recipient), Dr. Vandana Shiva (renowned environmental activist), Dr. Vinod Tare (Coordinator of the GRBEMP) and many others.

At the end of the conference a resolution was created to pave the way for the actions that Ganga Action and Yamuna Action will take to serve their common cause.

Additionally, on the morning of the 10th, all the participants of the workshop came together with local volunteers and community members, including the community of Prem Babaji (a well-known saint in Rishikesh and member of Ganga Action), in the Lakshman Jhula area of Rishikesh to clean the banks of Ganga, a continuation of the cleaning efforts that began one week before on April 3rd with Prem Babaji and his community.

12th March, 2012: Pujya Swamiji Meets with Honourable CM of Delhi

- Pujya Swamiji met with the Chief Minister of Delhi Smt. Sheila Dikshit and discussed with her the dire state of the river Yamuna – particularly Her state as She runs through Delhi – and what needs to be done to restore and protect Yamuna, the largest tributary of Ganga. Smt. Dikshit was very open to any suggestions in the effort to clean Yamuna, and the Government of Delhi, Ganga Action and Yamuna Action will now work together to bring back Yamuna to Her pristine state for all.

5th November, 2011: Ek Sham Maa Ganga Ke Naam

- A large function that drew thousands was conducted by Ganga Mahasabha in collaboration with Ganga Action on the well-known Assi Ghat in Varanasi entitled “Ek Sham Ma Ganga Ke Naam” (“A Night Dedicated to Mother Ganga”). Hindu saints and respected Muslim leaders such as H.H. Shankaracharya Swami Jayendra Saraswati, H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati (Founder of Ganga Action), Sant Shri Morari Bapu, Pujya Swami Gyanswaroopanand, Janab Maulana Kalbe Sadiq and Janab Maulana Fazlur Rahman, as well as eminent Ganga sevaks such as Justice Giridhar Malaviya and Advocate Arun Kumar and many other eminent environmentalists and activists participated in the event.

- They inspired thousands to wake up and be the change, and collectively called for the Government of India to support this cause by promptly implementing a National Ganga River Basin Act to protect India’s National Identity and National River. The mere presence of these great inter-faith saints and leaders together sent out a strong message that Ganga is not only for Hindus but for everyone, as she gives unconditionally to all people.
4th November, 2011: First National Students’ Conference on River Basin Planning at IIT-Kanpur

- The First National Students’ Conference on River Basin Planning was held at IIT-Kanpur in which selected students from all of the IITs as well as other universities across India attended.

- Pujya Swamiji delivered an unforgettable and inspiring speech to all of the students about the need to restore and maintain Ganga and the important role youth play in being the change.

- Eminent experts and scientists, such as Dr. Vinod Tare, Dr. Rajiv Sinha, Dr. TV Prabhakar, Shri Rajinder Singh and many others, all of whom are members of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) or are a key part of the Ganga River Basin Ecological Management Plan (GRBEMP), shared their knowledge and motivated students to act now.

- Some two hundred students were carefully selected from hundreds of applicants based on their interest and desire to serve the important cause of restoring, protecting and maintaining Ganga. Sessions were held to learn about and discuss the various aspects of river basin planning, with an emphasis on the Ganga River basin, such as geological, socio-cultural, legal, and ecological and many other thematic areas of management.

14th October, 2011: Sangam se Udgam Ka Sandesh

- Recognizing the severe condition of Sangam Prayag (the point of convergence between the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Saraswati Rivers) and understanding its significance in the upcoming 2013 Maha Kumbh Mela,

- Ganga Action’s Global Green Organization of Allahabad organized a week-long Ganga and Yamuna Sangam Se Udagam Jan Yatra (“People’s Journey along Ganga and Yamuna Rivers”).

- The main purpose of this yatra was to raise awareness of the essential nature of the Sangam and the need to restore it to its rightful state of divine purity, and to serve as a bridge between the government and the people to bring about sustainable change in time for the Mahakumbh Mela of 2013.

- Starting from Allahabad passing through Lucknow, Agra, Mathura, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Gangotri, Yamunotri, and Dehradun the yatra commenced in the nation’s capital, New Delhi, where the reflections and evaluations of the current condition of Sangam and proposed solutions were presented to Shrimati Jayanti Natrajan, Respected Minister (Incharge) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

20th September, 2011: INTACH Seminar

- A two-day seminar held at Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, organized by INTACH and hosted by Ganga Action discussed the standards, methods and means by which to conserve and sustain the sacred and precious Upper Ganga Region (from Gangotri to Haridwar). Prominent experts and professionals gathered together to form a resolution
and way forward that preserves the rich cultural, natural, and geo-physical heritage of this region. Participants in the conference also determined that the declaration of the Upper Ganga Region as a World Heritage Site would be a milestone and important first achievement in the right direction.

11th June, 2011: Ganga Dussehra:

- Throughout the entire stretch of the river Ganga, thousands celebrated this day as Ganga Dussehra, marking the day the Goddess Ganga is believed to have descended from the heavens to the Earth. Many varied events happened in cities and towns up and down the Ganga. In Rishikesh, a special puja was performed to Ganga, and then 108 beautiful colorful saris were tied around the Goddess’ murti (statue). Inspired by H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati (Founder of Ganga Action) members of Ganga Action organized a special and large clean-up in Rishikesh where hundreds from all over India and abroad participated actively to clean the ghats and streets around the Ganga River.

Programmes and Projects

Ganga Action Parivar is working in all areas of the issues facing Ganga, and is working both from the “Grand Plan” – programs on the national and the international level – to “Ground Plan” – local awareness, outreach and action. Some of our exciting projects and programs include:

6T’s Program / “Temple to Toilets” Program – Toilets, Trash, Trees, Taps, Tracks & Tigers

When Pujya Swamiji 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 that the only gift He would like is for people to commit themselves to the following ‘6T’ program (6T’s for sixty years of life).

The 6T’s program provides a foundation for a cleaner, greener, more sustainable Ganga and environment. Through its comprehensive, interlinked programs, we are working to help the people, animals and ecology of the watershed not only survive, but thrive. In so doing, GAP has identified six categories of outreach that are designed to complement each other:

- Toilets, to provide proper sanitation in every school and community along the 2,500 kilometer stretch of the Ganga Basin
- Trash, to provide solid waste management and recycling
- Trees, to help clean and restore the environment, mitigate erosion, and provide for all
• Taps, to provide access to clean water for drinking, cooking and bathing to all who live in the Ganga Basin
• Tracks, to “green” one of India’s most vital networks which connects the entire country
• Tigers, to protect India’s endangered wildlife

**National Ganga Rights Act**

- The draft National Ganga Rights Act and Petition, prepared by Ganga Action Parivar under Pujya Swami Chidanandji’s leadership, can be found at [www.gangarights.org](http://www.gangarights.org). Be sure to visit and add your name in support of this important cause!
- The National Ganga Rights Movement, which is being spearheaded by Ganga Action Parivar, is promoting the National Ganga Rights Act to protect and restore one of the world’s most precious and beloved river systems.
- Mother Ganga is polluted by nearly 3 billion litres of sewage and chemical waste every day. Her rights are being violated, and in turn, our rights to clean water are being violated. People are getting sick. Children are dying. It’s time we say no more. Ganga has the right to flow in her clean, pristine form. Ganga’s Rights are Our Rights.
- The National Ganga Rights Act is proposed with the purposes of establishing, securing, and defending the inalienable and inherent rights of the Ganga River, its tributaries, and watershed, and the rights of the people of India to a healthy, thriving river basin. Further, the Act establishes the rights of the people of India and their governments to defend and enforce the rights of the Ganga.
Green Pilgrimage Network
With the idea that the environment leading up to these sacred pilgrimage sites of India is just as sacred and in need of reverence as the holy places themselves, Ganga Action Parivar is working in partnership with the Green Pilgrimages Network to “green” not only the temples, mosques, shrines, gurdwaras, churches and other sacred buildings along Ganga, but also to “green” the pilgrimage routes used to reach these places. The aims of the programme include:

- Developing, renovating and beautifying India’s sacred pilgrimage areas along Ganga and Her tributaries to make them truly “green” pilgrimage destinations, such as the Char Dham
- In this line, also “greening” the actual routes to reach these sacred areas, with the belief that the environment along the journey to the holy places is just as sacred and just as important to protect as the sacred area itself
- Includes plans to create solid waste systems, eco-friendly toilets, clean water facilities, relocation of haphazard constructions that encroach on the rivers and the temples, tree plantation programs, and ways to reduce vehicular congestion and pollution

The pilgrimage sites and cities that the programme is taking up include:

- Nai Kashi, Naya Prayag, Nai Ayodhay, Naya Prayas
  - Clean and green initiative in holy pilgrimage sites of Ayodhay, Allahabad, Varanasi are actively being planned and details worked out with respective leaders and authorities so that regular clean-ups, trash management, anti-plastic campaigns, sacred Aarti ceremonies and massive community tree plantations can be carried out in the years to come.
- Namisharan
  - A small town near the river Gomti holds great significance to Hindu pilgrims is now being planned by GAP to carry out massive tree plantation in this town in honour of the thousands of rishis that have preformed sadhana here.
- Gangotri and the Char Dham Yatra
  - A complete programme of preserving the local eco-hut culture while at the same time attracting eco-tourism has been proposed by GAP. The 6T’s approach to clean and green this yatra so that thousands of pilgrims travelling to these yatras each year can at least have basic necessities of toilets and clean water provided to them.
Restoration of the River Yamuna:

- Almost 97% of Yamuna's original waters are diverted from the river just a few kilometers from her source at Yamunotri. In the state of Haryana, more than 80,000 million liters of water are being held back by an irrigation dam – a highly contentious issue, as the holding of water is against federal regulations, yet thousands of people in Haryana now depend on this water – depriving the Yamuna of the water it so desperately needs to flush out pollution. Despite the fact that Delhi relies on Yamuna for 70% of its water needs, by the time Yamuna reaches Delhi, not a single drop of natural, fresh water of the river is left in Yamuna.

- The Yamuna Action Parivar, a branch of GAP is working to:
  
  o Working to clean existing pollution in the Yamuna
  o Working to develop waste management solutions so the dumping of millions of liters of sewage and industrial waste into her waters can be stopped
  o Working with communities and the government to restore and maintain adequate water flow in Yamuna in order to flush out pollution, and to end over-harvesting of her waters
  o Educating all through mass awareness campaigns, such as public service announcements and documentaries on the issues, social networking, and outreach at key events such as the upcoming Maha Kumbh Mela in 2013
  o Educating and inspiring youth to care for Yamuna by creating environmental, value-based curricula and organizing Yamuna clean-up days in schools
  o Organizing local communities to become active stewards of their Yamuna by educating them on the issues and training residents on how they can make a difference

Ganga Aarti:

Pujya Swamiji has initiated Ganga Aarti at numerous locations along Ganga’s banks and throughout the world. So far, Pujya Swamiji has personally inspired and initiated Ganga Aarti in Badrinath, Gangotri, Rudra Prayag, Uttarkashi, Allahabad, Kanpur, Varanasi and Jwalapur in
addition to the world-famous Ganga Aarti each evening in Rishikesh, as well as Ganga Aartis in Spain, Africa and the USA.

- To instill a deep sense of reverence, awe and devotion toward Mother Ganga by those living along her banks
- To transform the banks of Ganga truly into temples – symbolically if not literally – by the performance of evening aarti, so that people are immediately dissuaded from using the same area as a toilet or trash can during the day

**Solar India Plan:**
- While many technologies have been considered and tried to generate electricity in India, one of India’s biggest resources has remained largely untapped – that is, the sun. In a country that receives full sun for most the year, the potential to generate solar energy is much greater than elsewhere in the world. By concentrating on using solar technology, not only would energy demands be met, but the environment would also be protected, as current schemes such as hydroelectric dams and coal mining damage the fragile ecosystems where they are set up.
- GAP is serving to popularize a new plan that taps into India’s enormous capacity to harvest and provide solar power, meeting 100% of the nation’s future energy needs by 2050, providing an alternative to fossil fuels, coal and hydropower alternatives.

**GAP Awareness and Outreach:**
- Ganga Action has helped to organize Ganga festivals, dramas, and school and community activities to bring environmental awareness and reverence of Ganga to people, inspiring thousands to help protect and restore Ganga.
- Powered by Pujya Swamiji’s vision of Each One can Reach Ten. GAP is inspiring communities, schools, NGOs and schools to reach out and connect all to the Ganga Family.

**Proposal of the Upper Ganga Region as a World Heritage Site**
- Proposing the declaration of the Upper Ganga Region as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognizing this area as not just an area of local or national concern, but truly of global importance.
**Interfaith WASH Alliance**

- Approximately 780 million people worldwide lack access to safe and sustainable drinking water. Some 2.5 billion people live without access to adequate sanitation. Because of this, reports UNICEF, one child dies every 15 seconds.
- The Interfaith WASH Alliance was co-founded by Ganga Action Parivar with the understanding that the world’s faiths can play a pivotal role in enabling the survival and improved health of children and adults in the developing world. It does so through the development of networks and partnerships that will enable faith leaders to motivate and educate their congregations towards healthier lives. Working alongside faith-based institutions and other partners, I-WASH will also make available improved sanitation and water facilities though the provision of eco-friendly toilets and safe water systems.
- Through its unique mission, the Interfaith WASH Alliance represents a historic partnership of the world’s faiths alongside civil society, private and governmental sectors in order to provide improved Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in the places that need it the most.
- I-WASH’s partnering organizations include: the Jacob Soetendorp Institute for Human Values, Ganga Action Parivar, the Alliance of Religions in Conservation, the United Religions Initiative, the All India Organization of Imams of Mosques, Sarva Dharma Sansad: the Parliament of Religions of India, the Wockhardt Foundation, FICCI, the Green Pilgrimage Network, and others.

**About GAP’s Founder and Inspiration**

H.H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji’s motto in life is, "In the service of God and humanity." He was touched by the hand of God at the tender age of eight and later traveled to the Himalayan jungles and forests under the guidance of His spiritual master, in order to live a life devoted to God and in the service of humanity. Pujya Swamiji spent his youth in meditation, yoga, seclusion and silence in the Himalayas, bringing His body, mind and soul into union with the Divine. Today, he is world renowned as a spiritual leader, visionary and divine guide.

**Spiritual Leader and Inspiration:** Pujya Swamiji is President and Spiritual Head of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, India of the largest spiritual institutions in India. He is also Founder/chairman of India Heritage Research Foundation (IHRF), an international, non-profit, humanitarian foundation. Under Pujya Swamiji’s leadership, IHRF runs and sponsors free schools, women’s vocational training programs, a medical clinic, orphanages/gurukuls, frequent free medical health camps, “Clean, Green and Serene” programs, organic gardening programs, Cow-Care programs, an extensive rural development program, and innumerable other humanitarian projects including the first ever Encyclopedia of Hinduism as well as ashrams and medical clinics in the sacred land of Mansarovar and Mt. Kailash in Tibet. Under
Pujya Swamiji’s vision and leadership, IHRF also published the first Encyclopedia of Hinduism in history, an 11-volume compendium of the breadth and depth of Hindu culture, history and civilization.

After decades of multi-faceted humanitarian and charitable projects for the poor, underprivileged and sick, Pujya Swamiji has dedicated Himself now fully to the preservation and protection of Mother Ganga, from Gangotri to Ganga Sagar. He founded the Ganga Action Parivar (GAP), a world family of engineers, scientists, environmentalist and volunteers who are dedicated to serving the holy river which provides life and livelihood for approximately 450 million Indians. Under His vision GAP has thrived to include dozens of programs, ranging from organic farming programs to trash collection and recycling programmes to minimize not only trash but also chemical effluents in Ganga’s waters. The comprehensive program also includes detailed and in-depth plans for proper treatment of chemical, commercial and toxic waste for the tanneries and other industries that lie on Ganga’s banks. Uniting people from across India and across the world for the cause of saving Ganga, Pujya Swamiji is giving a new direction to this crucial crisis.

The Teaching of Unity:

Pujya Swamiji’s religion is unity, and he has been a leader in numerous international, inter-faith summits and parliaments, including the Parliament of World Religions, the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the United Nations, the World Economic Forum, the World Council of Religious Leaders at the United Nations, the World Conference of Religions for Peace, the Global Youth Peace Summit at the United Nations, the Hindu-Jewish Summit and the Hindu-Christian dialogue initiated by the Vatican. He is also a leader of frequent world peace pilgrimages across the world.

Awards and Recognitions: Pujya Swamiji is the recipient of innumerable awards, including the Mahatma Gandhi Humanitarian award, Hindu of the Year Award, Prominent Personality Award by Lions’ Club, Best Citizens of India Award, the Uttaranchal Ratan (Jewel of Uttaranchal) Award, The Noble Person’s Award and the Bharat Vikas Parishad 1st Utkrishtta Samman Award.

The True Sanyasi: “Giving is Living” is Pujya Swamiji’s motto; He is always in the midst of dozens of projects, each one a noble and tenaciously dedicated effort to make the world a better place for all of humanity. However, Pujya Swamiji seems unaffected by this incredible list of accomplishments and remains a pious child of God, owning nothing, draped in saffron robes, living a life of true renunciation. His days in Rishikesh are spent offering service to those around him. Thousands travel from across the globe simply to sit in his presence, to receive his "darshan." He travels the world, bringing the light of wisdom, inspiration, upliftment and the divine touch to thousands across the world.