Challenges before Cleaning Ganga

Why in news?

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National Green Tribunal has summoned union government's NMCG for its delayed actions in Ganga-cleaning projects.

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What is the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)?

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- It is a registered trust that runs the 'Namami Gange' mission, India's most ambitious endeavour to clean the Ganga River.
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- The NMCG has a Rs. 20,000-crore, centrally-funded, non-lapsable corpus and consists of nearly 288 projects.
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- The NMCG's thrust is on roping in the private sector to set up sewage treatment plants and also maintain them.
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- In return, the government offers to contribute 40% of the capital costs upfront and disburse the rest with a profit margin over 15 years subject to performance indicators being met.
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- The mission also has projects to clean the Ghats, rid the river of biological contaminants and improve rural sanitation and afforestation.
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What is NGT's decision on clean Ganga mission?

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- Recently the National Green Tribunal was hearing petitions around Ganga-cleaning projects, it pulled up the government for its tardy job.
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- The NGT showed its concerns that the stretches between Haridwar and

Unnao were “unfit for drinking and bathing” and that authorities should display “health warnings”.
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What are the implementation challenges with this project?

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- Most of the Ganga is polluted and it is due to five States on the river’s main stem Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.
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- Approximately 12,000 million litres a day (MLD) of sewage is generated in the Ganga basin, for which there is currently a treatment capacity of just 4,000 MLD.
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- Industrial pollution from tanneries in Kanpur, distilleries, paper and sugar mills in the Kosi, Ramganga and Kali river catchments is a major contributor.
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- So far, the State governments only have concentrated on superficially cleaning the river by using trash skimmers and improving crematoria-infrastructure.
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- A financial audit also suggested that while Rs. 20,601 crore had been sanctioned for 193 projects, only Rs. 4,254 crore had actually been spent on their implementation.
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What is government’s further plan on clean Ganga?

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- Union Water Resources Ministry has promised that 80% of the river will be cleaned by May 2019.
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- The Union Water Resources Ministry has been focussed on ensuring a transparent tendering and bidding process.
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- Only this year have treatment plants at Haridwar and Varanasi begun to be constructed.
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- In May 2014, there were 31 treatment plants with a capacity of 485 MLD. As

of May 2018, 94 projects, with a treatment capacity of 1,928 MLD, were under way.
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Source: The Hindu

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