

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



4th SAIARD International River Congress

6 Nov, 2025 | India International Centre, New Delhi

#IRC4



FINAL REPORT 2025



#IRC4



A Heartfelt Tribute to our Visionary Leaders

"We are the people who consider the river as mother...
We see every river as a form of mother"

-Hon'ble Prime Minister

We express our deepest respect and sincere gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, whose vision for a water-secure nation has transformed the way India perceives, protects, and manages its rivers. His national mission on river rejuvenation, conservation, and sustainable freshwater development has inspired policies, partnerships, and scientific advancements that strengthen India's water future.

We also proudly acknowledge the dynamic and dedicated leadership of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, whose consistent guidance and national initiatives continue to strengthen India's commitment to integrated water management.





PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Chairperson, SAIARD Group

It gives me immense pride to present this Presidential Message for the 4th International River Congress (IRC4) held on 6 November 2025 at the India International Centre, New Delhi. Rivers remain the lifelines of civilization—nurturing biodiversity, sustaining livelihoods, shaping cultures, and driving economic transitions, reminding us that the stewardship of our rivers is both a profound duty and a defining opportunity for our nation.

Over the years, the International River Congress has evolved into a distinguished and unique knowledge platform: the first edition in Kolkata reflected on civilizational and ecological river narratives; the second edition in Kathmandu deepened the discourse on transboundary cooperation in South Asia; the third edition in Colombo explored ancient water heritage and integrated water resource management; and now, the fourth edition in New Delhi brings focused attention to the Yamuna River—transforming a long-standing urban ecological crisis into an opportunity for global learning, collaborative partnerships, and collective rejuvenation. As India faces growing challenges of pollution, river degradation, climate variability, and rapid urbanization, IRC4 served as an essential platform to unite policymakers, technocrats, scientists, academicians, industry leaders, development partners, NGOs, and young researchers to collectively rethink the future of river governance.

This year's focal theme, "Global Partnerships & River Finance for Sustainable Future: The Yamuna Diary," emphasized the urgency of institutional collaboration, innovative financing, watershed resilience, nature-based solutions, and the integration of ESG principles into blue economy frameworks. The four Action Tracks enriched the Congress with multi-sectoral perspectives on river rejuvenation, watershed governance, sustainable river-based economies, and the role of industries and PSUs in strengthening ESG-driven outcomes.

I take this opportunity to extend my **deepest gratitude** to the distinguished dignitaries and esteemed guests whose insights elevated IRC4. I express my sincere appreciation to **Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal**, National Spokesperson for Economic Affairs, BJP and Board Director, BPCL & Bank of Baroda; **Shri Nitin Khade**, IAS, Joint Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Government of India; and **Ms. Mugdha Sinha**, IAS, Managing Director, India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India—whose presence and contributions enriched the Congress profoundly. I am also grateful to **Dr. M. Mohapatra**, Director General, India Meteorological Department; **Mr. Rajiv R. Mishra**, Former Director General, Namami Gange; **Dr. Ranbir Singh**, Chairman, Brahmaputra Board; **Prof. V. K. Sharma**, Senior Professor, IIPA; **Mr. Kenji Matsuno**, Embassy of Japan; **Mr. D.P. Mathuria**, Central Water Commission; **Mr. Peeyush Gupta**, NMCG; and all respected speakers, experts, and delegates who shared their knowledge with remarkable commitment. I also thank our partner institutions, including **NMCG, Brahmaputra Board, NECTAR, IIPA, IIC New Delhi**, and our many technical and strategic contributors whose support made IRC4 both substantive and impactful. The signing of key MoUs, the launch of the **International Institute of River Affairs (IIRA)**, and the inauguration of the **Indian Journal of River Affairs** mark significant forward strides in SAIARD's mission to build a strong, research-driven, and action-oriented river governance ecosystem.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to all delegates from across India and abroad, our collaborating institutions, our media partners, and the entire SAIARD family for their dedication in delivering this event with excellence.

Rivers are not merely natural systems—they are our heritage, our responsibility, and our shared future. As Chairperson of SAIARD Group, I reaffirm our unwavering commitment to fostering sustainable river governance, scientific innovation, institutional partnerships, and a people-centric river future for India and beyond.

-Dr. Biswajit Roy Chowdhury

Chairperson, SAIARD Group

South Asian Institute for Advanced Research and Development (SAIARD)



Organizing Committee



Dr. Biswajit Roy Chowdhury

Chairman, SAIARD Group



Dr. Simi Mishra

Advisor, Institutional Capacity Building,
SAIARD



Ms. Antara Kundu

Program Director, SAIARD



Ms. Ayantika Ganguly

Research Associate, SAIARD-RSIGST



Ms. Sumati Maity

Sr. GIS Analyst, SAIARD-RSIGST



Ms. Gairika Banerjee

Research Associate, SAIARD



Ms. Sharmi Khan

Chief Technology Officer,
SAIARD-Pentile Global Tech



Mr. Ankit Sengupta

Research Assistant, SAIARD



Mr. Suryadipta Bhattacharyya

Executive Director, SAIARD-Pentile Global Tech



Mr. Anik Biswas

Research Associate, SAIARD



Mr. Bishal Saha

GIS Analyst, SAIARD-RSIGST



Ms. Shreeparna Ghosh

Research Scholars, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji
Maharaj University, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh



THE CONGRESS

“If the Earth is a Mother, then Rivers are her Veins.” – Amit Kalantri

Rivers are the lifeline of all civilizations as they provide a plethora of life giving benefits. They have encouraged human kind to establish major human civilizations and their cities. Mostly in many countries rivers are worshiped as their sacred mother for they nurture us with life giving fresh water. As we look from pre-historic times all civilizations were established and flourished near rivers. It had played significant role in agriculture, transport and trade and thereby in the advancement human civilization. Rivers are an element of the hydrological cycle in which water collects via precipitation and its intensity expands as it collects more water from the many tributaries that feeds its drainage system. All rivers initiate from the apex point in an area and thereby flow downstream being born of snow rainwater or underground reserves. Rivers run through our history and folklore, and link us to people and their civilizations. They nourish and refresh us and provide a home to dazzling varieties of fish, wildlife trees and myriad varieties of plants. Be it the Amazon, the Mississippi or our very own indigenous, sacred ever flowing Ganges, every river has a unique identity and a character of its own which flows not just past landscapes, but through our cultures and rituals resonating with a tingling, sensation, vibrating and exciting every cell of the body when we witness its magnificence and grandeur, as it flows. Our minds and souls begin to rejoice and rejuvenate, refreshed and purified and devoid of any fatigue. They are life giving and nourishing life in all its varied forms therefore should be cared for with utmost reverence and affection. But what do we actually do to save the extinction of rivers or to take care of the rivers which needs rejuvenation? How many people actually feel that we should really do something to save our rivers! Even if we think, have we taken any measures? If we have taken any measures, do other people know about that? If they know, do they have any suggestions!!! May be they have, but they don't know that where to reach out with their ideas! Considering the significance of rivers and the consequences mankind will experience in near future if negligent now South Asian Institute for Advance Research & Development (SAIARD) is dedicated to the cause of conservation, restoration and protecting our largest ever flowing freshwater sources. The “International River Congress!” is endeavor on our behalf to bring together scientists & stakeholders who actually research for the wellbeing of rivers from all over India. All will come together on a single platform to share, enhance and deliberate with their ideas. It will be a platform where they can discuss and deliberate about River Basin Management, livelihoods of the people who live on the adjoining river banks and floodplains, river economies which promote economic sustenance. This seminar will also be an assembly of manifestos where the stake holders can share their views or the steps they have taken till date for management of river bank erosion, river rejuvenation & riverine ecosystem sustenance this will pave the path for integrated and sustainable planning in future. This colloquium will be an open stage for all those mindful souls who actually care about the River Sustainability & Development and want to create awareness to protect the rivers. SAIARD is dedicated to the cause and sincerely desires that this convention will help us toraise awareness and save countless numbers of rivers from obliteration.



FOCAL THEME:

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS & RIVER FINANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: THE YAMUNA DIARY

CONCEPT

Rivers have always been the epicenter of human civilization. They have nourished, nurtured, and shaped the very essence of societies across time and geography. From the ancient civilizations of the Indus, Nile, and Mesopotamia to the sacred Ganges, Amazon, and Mississippi—rivers are not just water bodies; they are living, breathing entities woven deeply into our history, ecology, culture, and spirituality.

At a time when rivers across the globe are under increasing threat due to urbanization, pollution, climate change, and unsustainable development, the International River Congress (IRC) was conceptualized by SAIARD as a strategic platform to bring together diverse voices and disciplines to deliberate on the future of rivers.



AIMS & OBJECTIVES



- To Create permanent platform for fostering global partnerships and knowledge exchange hubs for all river-related themes
- To explore sustainable financial models and climate finance mechanisms
- To strengthen policy and institutional frameworks through multi-stakeholder collaboration
- To showcase innovations in river management and restoration
- To interact with officials and provide innovative solutions and best practices from across the Globe for the river rejuvenation



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STRATEGIC SPONSORS



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भूमि संसाधन विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF
LAND RESOURCES





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THE BEGINNING



- FELICITATION
- SPECIAL ADDRESSES
- AWRADS AND RECOGNITION
- INAUGURATION & LAUNCH THE LOGO AND THE WEBSITE OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RIVER AFFAIRS (IIRA)
- ACTION TRACKS
- VALEDICTORY SESSION



ADDRESS BY THE GUESTS OF HONOUR



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

**DR. RANBIR SINGH, IAS (R) CHAIRMAN,
BRAHMAPUTRA BOARD, MOJS, GOVT OF INDIA**



Dr. Singh emphasized that Rivers are not merely natural resources but vital lifelines that sustain energy, ecology, and human civilization. Drawing attention to the recurring pollution of the Yamuna during Chhath Puja, he called for a structured and accountable framework to manage such challenges. He highlighted the urgent need for capacity building, organized dialogue, collaborative partnerships, and dedicated funding mechanisms. Dr. Singh reminded that while people have rights over rivers, rivers too possess intrinsic rights that must be respected and protected.



SPECIAL ADDRESS BY

**DR. V K SHARMA, SR. PROFESSOR, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (IIPA)**



Prof. Sharma echoed similar sentiments, stressing that every river and tributary holds ecological significance as part of a larger living system. Based on his 35 years of observation of the Yamuna and Delhi's pollution crisis, he noted that the issue extends beyond government capacity—it demands collective action from NGOs, industry, and individual citizens alike. Acknowledging the achievements of the Namami Gange program's five pillars, he underscored the importance of improving both the quality and quantity of water resources through sustained collaboration and social-scientific engagement.



SPECIAL ADDRESS BY

**MR. KENJI MATSUNO, COUNSELOR (ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS), EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN INDIA**



Mr. Kenji Matsuo has presented The sustainable river basin management on Tama river Tokiyo. He also highlighted that pollutants discharge into the river from the river sided industries. He also elaborate how education activities are important to restore rivers and he explained how we conserve water through underground storage in public facilities and retention function of agricultural land





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AWARDS & RECOGNITION



BEST RIVER GOVERNANCE AWARD



**NATIONAL DAM SAFETY
AUTHORITY, GOVT. OF
INDIA**



**BRAHMAPUTRA BOARD,
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
GOVT. OF INDIA**



**SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE
PORT, KOLKATA, MINISTRY OF
PORTS, SHIPPING AND
WATERWAYS, GOVERNMENT
OF INDIA**





AWARDS & RECOGNITION



BEST NATURE-BASED SOLUTION AWARD



**DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY, CHATRA
RAMAI PANDIT
MAHAVIDYALAYA
(BANKURA UNIVERSITY,
WEST BENGAL)**



INSTITUTE OF EMINENCE AWARD (FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN RIVER AFFAIRS)



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
(IIPA), GOVT. OF INDIA**



RIVER-BASED LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT AWARD



**DR. SUCHETA MUKHERJEE,
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY, SRIPAT
SINGH COLLEGE, JIAGANJ,
MURSHIDABAD, WEST
BENGAL**





AWARDS & RECOGNITION



SAVE RIVER CAMPAIGN AWARD



DISHARI SANKOLPO



JALANGI NADI SAMAJ



RIVER STEWARDSHIP AWARD



DR. ABHISEK SAHA,
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR,
DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY, CHATRA
RAMAI PANDIT
MAHAVIDYALAYA
(BANKURA UNIVERSITY),
BANKURA, WEST BENGAL





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AWARDS & RECOGNITION



PROF. S R BASU MEMORIAL AWARD



DR. VIMAL KHAWAS,
PROFESSOR, SPECIAL
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY
OF NORTH EAST INDIA,
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
UNIVERSITY (JNU), NEW
DELHI





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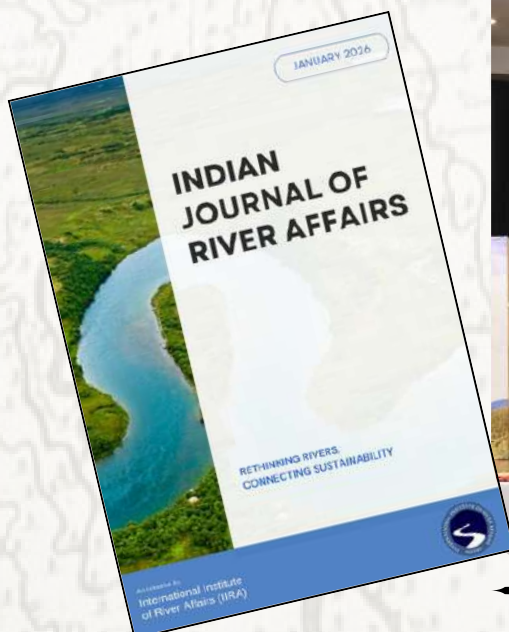
LAUNCH THE LOGO AND THE WEBSITE OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RIVER AFFAIRS (IIRA)



WWW.IIRA.ORG.IN



INAUGURATION OF THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF RIVER AFFAIRS BY SAIARD-IIRA



MOU SIGNING EVENT



A key highlight of the International River Congress was the signing of an MoU between SAIARD and the Brahmaputra Board. This partnership marks an important step towards collaborative work on river management, flood control, and sustainable development in the Brahmaputra basin. The agreement showcased the conference's role in bringing institutions together for research, capacity building, and improved river governance. It added significant value to the event by turning dialogue into actionable cooperation.



A key highlight of the International River Congress was the signing of an MoU between NECTAR and RSIGST. This partnership represents a significant step toward advancing collaborative efforts in river science, geo-spatial technology, and sustainable watershed management. The agreement underscored the conference's role in uniting institutions for innovation, research, and capacity building in the domain of river governance. It further enriched the event by transforming discussions into meaningful, action-oriented cooperation.





ACTION TRACKS

ACTION TRACKS



ACTION TRACKS- I & II

1. The Yamuna:
From Capital's Crisis to a Global Model
of River Rejuvenation

2. Watershed Governance in India:
An Integrated Approach to Empower the
Rural Livelihood & Panchayats



ACTION TRACKS- III & IV

3. Rethinking River Resources:
From the Perspective of Economic
Transition to the National Prosperity

4. ESG for Sustainable Blue Economy:
Role of Industries & Public Sector
Undertakings



The Yamuna: From Capital's Crisis to a Global Model of River Rejuvenation

Concept

The Yamuna River, flowing through the heart of India's capital, stands as both a lifeline and a stark reminder of urban ecological neglect. Once revered for its cultural and spiritual significance, the river today faces severe challenges from pollution, encroachment, and unregulated urbanization. However, Delhi's renewed focus on the Yamuna's revival offers a transformative opportunity—to turn this environmental crisis into a global model for integrated river rejuvenation. By combining strong governance, innovative financing, community participation, and technological interventions, the Yamuna can become a symbol of sustainable river restoration, inspiring similar efforts across the world.



Objectives

- To examine the key environmental, social, and policy challenges facing the Yamuna River.
- To explore innovative models of river financing, governance, and public-private partnerships for rejuvenation.
- To highlight replicable best practices from the Yamuna's restoration efforts that can inform global river management.
- To promote collaborative frameworks involving government, academia, civil society, and international partners for long-term sustainability.

Session Address & Chair

MR. RAJIV R. MISHRA, IAS (R), FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL, NAMAMI GANGE, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI, GOVT. OF INDIA

Key Speakers

- **DR. NUPUR BAHADUR**, DIRECTOR, NMCG-TERI COE ON WATER REUSE, TERI, CHAIR OF IWA-INDIA GOVERNING MEMBER COMMITTEE
- **DR. PRADIP KUMAR**, SCIENTIST E, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HYDROLOGY, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI, GOVT. OF INDIA
- **MR. D.P. MATHURIA**, CHIEF ENGINEER, CENTRAL WATER COMMISSION, MOJS, GOVT. OF INDIA
- **PROF. V. K. SHARMA**, SR. PROFESSOR, IIPA, GOVT. OF INDIA
- **DR. INDIRA KHURANA**, CHAIRPERSON, INDIAN HIMALAYAN RIVER BASINS COUNCIL; VICE CHAIRPERSON, TARUN BHARAT SANGH; & DIRECTOR, COASTAL SALINITY PREVENTION CELL



ACTION TRACK-I

SESSION ADDRESS & CHAIR

**MR. RAJIV R. MISHRA, IAS (R), FORMER DIRECTOR GENERAL,
NAMAMI GANGE, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI, GOVT. OF INDIA**



Mr. Mishra emphasized that river management is a multidisciplinary field. He explained the evolution from the pre-Namami Gange to post-Namami Gange phases and identified urbanization as the main cause of the Yamuna's degradation in Delhi. He advocated for involving youth, technology, public awareness, better management, ecological restoration, increased river flow, and flagship projects to revive the river.



KEY SPEAKERS

**DR. NUPUR BAHADUR, DIRECTOR, NMCG-TERI COE ON WATER REUSE, TERI,
CHAIR OF IWA-INDIA GOVERNING MEMBER COMMITTEE**



Dr. Bahadur discussed her extensive involvement in Yamuna projects and highlighted that the river's challenges stem not only from monsoon patterns but also from cultural interventions. She noted that river pollution is a global issue driven largely by human activities and stressed the need for nature-based solutions to improve water quality.

KEY SPEAKERS

**DR. PRADIP KUMAR, SCIENTIST E, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
HYDROLOGY, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI, GOVT. OF INDIA**



Dr. Pradeep Kumar presented strategies for maintaining environmental flow (E-flow) from the Hathnikund Barrage to sustain the Yamuna ecosystem. He pointed out critical issues such as water scarcity in the upper basin and river fragmentation. Based on field surveys, he recommended enhancing irrigation efficiency, regulating groundwater use, and creating storage facilities.



ACTION TRACK-I

KEY SPEAKERS

PROF. V. K. SHARMA, SR. PROFESSOR, IIPA, GOVT. OF INDIA



Prof. Sharma underscored the importance of capacity building and stakeholder mapping. He called for developing models, engaging private sectors and NGOs, integrating disaster management, ensuring proper urban planning, and introducing structured training modules.



KEY SPEAKERS

MR. D.P. MATHURIA, CHIEF ENGINEER, CENTRAL WATER COMMISSION, MOJS, GOVT. OF INDIA



Mr. Mathuria showcased maps of the existing Ganga-Yamuna system and provided updates on ongoing projects, including the Lakhwar Project (Dehradun), Renukaji Project (Himachal Pradesh), and Kisau Multipurpose Project, among 11 other active initiatives.



KEY SPEAKERS

DR. INDIRA KHURANA, CHAIRPERSON, INDIAN HIMALAYAN RIVER BASINS COUNCIL; VICE CHAIRPERSON, TARUN BHARAT SANGH; & DIRECTOR, COASTAL SALINITY PREVENTION CELL



Dr. Indira Khurana concluded by highlighting the interdependence of rivers and groundwater. She emphasized the need for decentralized water management practices to achieve long-term sustainability.



ACTION TRACK-II

Watershed Governance in India: An Integrated Approach to Empower the Rural Livelihood & Panchayats



भूमि संसाधन विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF
LAND RESOURCES

CONCEPT

Watershed governance in India lies at the core of sustainable rural development, linking natural resource management with community empowerment. Effective watershed management ensures water security, soil conservation, and climate resilience—directly influencing agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods. Integrating Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into watershed planning and implementation fosters local ownership, accountability, and long-term sustainability. By adopting an integrated and participatory approach, watershed governance can serve as a powerful mechanism to strengthen rural economies, enhance ecological balance, and empower local self-governance.



OBJECTIVES

- To promote integrated watershed management as a tool for rural livelihood enhancement and environmental sustainability.
- To strengthen the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in participatory decision-making and governance of local water resources.
- To identify innovative practices and technologies for sustainable land and water management in rural areas.
- To develop policy recommendations that bridge community-based resource governance with national development priorities.



SESSION ADDRESS & CHAIR

MR. NITIN KHADE, IAS, JOINT SECRETARY, DOLR, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

KEY PANELISTS

- **DR. RANJIT DEKA, FIE, DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER, ASSAM AND DIRECTOR, NEHARI, BRAHMAPUTRA BOARD, GOVT. OF INDIA**
- **MR. MANU BHATNAGAR, PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR, NATURAL HERITAGE DIVISION, INDIAN NATIONAL TRUST FOR ART AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**
- **MR. SAMEER SHUKLA, NATIONAL DAM SAFETY AUTHORITY, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**



SESSION ADDRESS & CHAIR

MR. NITIN KHADE, IAS, JOINT SECRETARY, DOLR, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



Mr. Nitin Khade presented on the Watershed Development Programme under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Vikas Yojana. He highlighted key issues such as desertification, land degradation, and the importance of soil conservation and moisture management to restore ecological balance and improve agricultural productivity.



KEY SPEAKERS

DR. RANJIT DEKA, FIE, DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER, ASSAM AND DIRECTOR, NEHARI, BRAHMAPUTRA BOARD, GOVT. OF INDIA



Dr. Ranjit Deka discussed the specific challenges of watershed management in Assam and the North-Eastern region, identifying earthquakes as a major concern affecting watershed stability. He emphasized the need for capacity building, good governance, and public awareness to strengthen local watershed management systems.

KEY SPEAKERS

MR. MANU BHATNAGAR, PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR, NATURAL HERITAGE DIVISION, INDIAN NATIONAL TRUST FOR ART AND CULTURAL HERITAGE



Mr. Bhatnagar elaborated on the concept of a water budget for effective watershed management. He stressed that river conservation efforts should be integrated with basin-level planning, technological applications, and community awareness to achieve long-term sustainability.



KEY SPEAKERS

MR. SAMEER SHUKLA, NATIONAL DAM SAFETY AUTHORITY, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



Mr. Shukla focused on watershed governance and the Dam Safety Act. He shared insights from the Indira Sagar Project, illustrating its impacts on watershed systems. He also mentioned the Dharma Portal of NPSA and identified issues such as dam leakage, percolation, and seepage problems, calling for better monitoring and maintenance.



ACTION TRACK-III

RETHINKING RIVER: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECONOMIC DIVERSITY TO THE NATIONAL PROSPERITY

Rivers have always been the cradle of civilizations and the arteries of economic growth. In the 21st century, rethinking the river from the lens of a sustainable river economy is crucial to achieving long-term national prosperity. Beyond their ecological significance, rivers hold immense potential as drivers of tourism, culture, energy, agriculture, transportation, and regional development. River-based tourism and cultural heritage corridors can create vibrant local economies while promoting conservation and community participation. Hydropower and inland navigation can support clean energy transitions and trade, while the preservation of river ecosystems ensures resilience against climate change and resource depletion. This roundtable aims to reposition rivers not merely as natural resources but as economic lifelines—integrating environmental sustainability with socio-economic growth and policy innovation.



OBJECTIVES

- To explore the multifaceted role of rivers in advancing tourism, cultural heritage, and creative economies.
- To identify strategies for integrating river-based energy, navigation, and agricultural development into sustainable economic planning.
- To promote inter-sectoral collaboration among government, industry, academia, and communities for inclusive and resilient river management.
- To highlight the river's contribution to national GDP and its potential to shape India's long-term economic and ecological prosperity

SESSION ADDRESS & CHAIR

MS. MUGDHA SINHA, IAS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, ITDC, MINISTRY OF TOURISM, GOVT. OF INDIA

KEY PANELISTS

- **MR. AMIT BHARDWAJ**, DEPUTY ADVISOR, TOURISM DIVISION, NITI AAYOG, GOVT. OF INDIA
- **MR. ANSSI MIKOLA**, FOUNDER DIRECTOR, RIVERRECYCLE, FINLAND
- **DR. ANITHA K. SHARMA**, SCIENTIST AND FORMER DIPLOMAT IN URBAN AND WATER SECTOR, DENMARK
- **DR ANKITA MENON**, CONSULTANT, INDO NORDIC WATER FORUM



ACTION TRACK-III

SESSION ADDRESS & CHAIR

MS. MUGDHA SINHA, IAS, MANAGING DIRECTOR, ITDC, MINISTRY OF TOURISM, GOVT. OF INDIA



Ms. Sinha emphasized that rivers must be recognized not only as natural resources but also as cultural entities deeply connected to people's identity and heritage. She highlighted the need for strong policy advocacy to protect rivers while promoting cultural tourism and sustainable development. According to her, rivers hold rich mythological and traditional significance, which can be used to build a model of balanced growth where people, planet, culture, and prosperity go hand in hand. She stressed that the local community should be at the heart of river conservation, ensuring that development is inclusive, respectful, and beneficial for both the environment and society.

KEY SPEAKERS

MR. AMIT BHARDWAJ, DEPUTY ADVISOR, TOURISM DIVISION, NITI AAYOG, GOVT. OF INDIA

Mr. Bhardwaj highlighted the importance of restoring old and traditional ghats to attract visitors and preserve cultural heritage. He emphasized creating a holistic model that integrates religious tourism, cultural tourism, and spiritual tourism so that riverfronts become vibrant spaces for both devotees and tourists. According to him, reviving these historic ghats can strengthen local identity, boost tourism, and promote sustainable, culturally rooted development.



KEY SPEAKERS

MR. ANSSI MIKOLA, FOUNDER DIRECTOR, RIVERRECYCLE, FINLAND



Mr. Mikola focused on the urgent need to keep rivers clean from plastic pollution, highlighting how the current linear economy contributes significantly to marine and freshwater contamination. He emphasized the importance of adopting a circular economy model to reduce waste at the source and prevent plastics from entering water bodies. He showcased innovative technologies that remove plastic from rivers, demonstrating practical solutions for cleaner waterways. His message stressed that circular business models are essential for long-term environmental protection and sustainable river management.

KEY SPEAKERS

DR. ANITHA K. SHARMA, SCIENTIST AND FORMER DIPLOMAT IN URBAN AND WATER SECTOR, DENMARK



Dr. Sharma emphasized that the river economy is not dependent only on large rivers; small rivers and tributaries also play a crucial role. He highlighted that these smaller water systems support local livelihoods, biodiversity, and regional development, and therefore must receive equal attention in planning, conservation, and policy-making.



KEY SPEAKERS

DR ANKITA MENON, CONSULTANT, INDO NORDIC WATER FORUM



Dr. Ankita Menon focussing on transformation of domestic and industrial wastewater operations with oxidation, chemical freeness.suggesting energy efficiency. She introduced nanobubbles technology to reduce water pollution.





ACTION TRACK-IV

ESG FOR SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY: ROLE OF INDUSTRIES & PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKINGS

Concept

The blue economy, encompassing the sustainable use of ocean, river, and coastal resources, is emerging as a key driver of economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social well-being. Integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into this domain is essential to balance development with ecological integrity. The theme “ESG for Sustainable Blue Economy: Role of Industries & Public Sector Undertakings” highlights the need for responsible corporate and institutional action in preserving aquatic ecosystems while advancing innovation, investment, and job creation. It underscores how industries and PSUs can lead through green technologies, circular resource use, transparent governance, and inclusive community engagement.



SESSION ADDRESS & CHAIR

- **MR. SUROJIT BOSE**, SR. FELLOW, SUSTAINABILITY DIV., SAIARD, FORMER DIRECTOR, PWC & COCA COLA

KEY PANELISTS

- **MR. AJAY GUPTA**, DFCCIL, GOVT. OF INDIA
- **MS. SHAILLY GUPTA**, SENIOR MANAGER FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND SUSTAINABILITY, COCA-COLA
- **PROF. (DR.) DEEKSHA KATYAL**, PROFESSOR, GURU GOBIND SINGH INDRAPRASTHA UNIVERSITY
- **MR. ASHISH BHARADWAJ**, PROGRAM LEAD, ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP
- **MR. INDRANIL BOSE**, SENIOR CONSULTANT- MDBS



Objectives

- To promote ESG-aligned strategies for sustainable industrial operations within blue economy sectors.
- To explore the role of PSUs in driving green transitions, pollution control, and resource efficiency.
- To develop frameworks for ESG reporting and accountability in water-based industries
- To foster partnerships between government, industry, and communities for a resilient and equitable blue economy.



ACTION TRACK-IV

SESSION ADDRESS & CHAIR

MR. SUROJIT BOSE, SR. FELLOW, SUSTAINABILITY DIV., SAIARD, FORMER DIRECTOR, PWC & COCA COLA



Mr. Bose highlighted the urgent need to strengthen the sustainable blue economy, emphasizing that healthy rivers and oceans are essential for long-term economic growth. He stressed improving water sanitation systems to reduce pollution and protect aquatic ecosystems. Bose also discussed the importance of understanding our global environmental footprint, urging countries to adopt responsible resource management, reduce waste, and promote circular practices. Overall, he called for collaborative action to protect water bodies and ensure a resilient, sustainable future.

KEY SPEAKERS

MR. AJAY GUPTA, DFCCIL, GOVT. OF INDIA



Mr. Gupta highlighted the need to focus on the “Road to Rain” approach in climate change mitigation. He discussed how their DFC (Dedicated Freight Corridor) project helps reduce CO₂ emissions, lower environmental impact, and contribute to climate-resilient infrastructure development.

KEY SPEAKERS

MS. SHAILLY GUPTA, SENIOR MANAGER FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND SUSTAINABILITY, COCA-COLA



Ms. Gupta emphasized the need for regional-level tracking facilities to monitor water systems and environmental actions more effectively. She highlighted that collective action is only possible when multiple organizations collaborate and share information, working together toward sustainable water management and environmental resilience.

ACTION TRACK-IV



KEY SPEAKERS

PROF. (DR.) DEEKSHA KATYAL, PROFESSOR, GURU GOBIND SINGH
INDRAPRASTHA UNIVERSITY



Dr. Deeksha Katyal stressed the need to strengthen skill development programs, especially those connected to environmental technologies. She highlighted the importance of experimentation and innovation in the environmental sector and emphasized focusing on town-level technological solutions that improve environmental quality.



KEY SPEAKERS

MR. ASHISH BHARADWAJ, PROGRAM LEAD, ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP



Mr. Bhardwaj emphasized the importance of local leadership and strong partnerships for effective river and environmental management. He highlighted the need for a standard-based approach to ensure quality and consistency in all interventions. Bhardwaj discussed identifying key stakeholders, collecting catchment-level data, and understanding risks to design better solutions. He stressed capacity building for communities and institutions, and encouraged creating a collective action circle where all stakeholders work together continuously for sustainable outcomes.

KEY SPEAKERS

MR. INDRANIL BOSE, SENIOR CONSULTANT- MDBS



Mr. Bose focused on the importance of promoting water transport as a cleaner and more sustainable mode of movement. He also suggested creating dedicated financial institutions to support water-based infrastructure, environmental projects, and long-term river management initiatives.



VALEDICTORY SESSION

SPECIAL ADDRESS BY

DR. M. MOHAPATRA, DIRECTOR GENERAL, INDIA METEOROLOGICAL
DEPARTMENT, GOVT. OF INDIA



Dr. Mohapatra stressed the urgent need for networking and collaboration among stakeholders to address river-related challenges. He highlighted that every country depends on its natural ecosystems, and in India, rivers support life, livelihoods, industries, the economy, and even the roots of ancient civilization. Therefore, it is our responsibility to conserve, preserve, and keep rivers clean. He also discussed the growing impacts of climate change, the complexities of interlinking river systems, and how heavy rainfall in upper catchments causes downstream flooding. He called for a holistic and integrated approach to river management for long-term sustainability.

ADDRESS BY SPECIAL GUEST

SHRI GOPAL KRISHNA AGARWAL, NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, BJP, BOARD DIRECTOR, BHARAT PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED AND BANK OF BARODA, GB MEMBER, ICSI, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE JALADHIKAR FOUNDATION



Shri Gopal Krishna Agarwal ji emphasized that rivers are vital for India, supporting life, culture, and economic growth. He highlighted that effective river management requires proper individual implementation and a sense of generational equity, ensuring that future generations inherit clean and healthy rivers. He stated that no single policy can solve everything, and success depends on positive thinking, stakeholder collaboration, partnerships, and individual participation.

Agarwal ji noted that policy interventions help significantly, but achieving sustainable development, including clean water and sanitation, needs continuous effort. He added that the Indian Constitution recognizes water as a fundamental element, encouraging social initiatives and responsible governance. He acknowledged that the government, especially under Modi ji, has taken major steps, but more funding, collaboration, social stock exchanges, and entrepreneurship are essential to strengthen progress in river conservation and water management.

MR. PEEYUSH GUPTA, RTIS, NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI, GOVT. OF INDIA

Mr. Gupta stated that people today have a much better understanding of the importance of water, and he praised SAIARD for its major role in creating this awareness. He highlighted the remarkable journey of SAIARD—from West Bengal to Delhi—and appreciated how the institution successfully brought together dignitaries, stakeholders, industrialists, and government officers on one platform. He described this collective participation as a significant and commendable achievement.





KEY TAKEAWAYS / WAY FORWARD

- Strengthening integrated river basin governance with collaboration between government, academia, industry, and communities.
- Promoting nature-based solutions, advanced technologies, and circular economy models for river rejuvenation.
- Empowering local bodies and communities, especially Panchayats and youth, in watershed and river management.
- Developing sustainable river-based economic opportunities through tourism, heritage conservation, navigation, and clean energy.
- Enhance monitoring, data systems, and climate-resilient planning for long-term sustainability.
- Converting dialogue into action through MoUs, partnerships, capacity building, and continuous stakeholder engagement.



VOTE OF THANKS



DR. SIMI MISHRA,
ADVISOR, INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING, SAIARD



MS. SUMATI MAITY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, SAIARD-RSIGST



MEDIA COVERAGE



Jalangi Nodi Samaj wins national river conservation award

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
Kridhugar, 9 November



In a proud moment for Bengal's river conservation movement, Jalangi Nodi Samaj — a citizens' collective formed to save the dying rivers of Nadia — has been conferred with the "Save River Campaign Award" at the 4th International SAIRD River Congress (IRC4), held recently at the India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi.

The award was received on behalf of the organisation by Dr Amitav Sengupta, a noted environmental researcher and senior member of Jalangi Nodi Samaj, whose leadership and sustained advocacy have played a key role in mobilising public awareness and scientific interventions for river restoration.

The recognition, presented by the Society for Advanced Research and Development (SAIRD) through its Centre for River Affairs (CRA), celebrates Jalangi Nodi Samaj's outstanding contributions in protecting Bengal's rivers from ecological degradation. The organisation has been at the forefront of efforts to revive the Jalangi, Anjana, Churni, Mathabhangra, and Ichamati rivers — lifelines of Nadia district — that have been pushed to the brink by siltation, pollution, and unregulated encroachment.

The Congress, held under the theme "Global Partnerships & River Finance for a Sustainable Future — The Yamuna Diary," brought together river experts, policymakers, researchers, civil society leaders, and development partners from across the world. Representatives from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the Alliance for

Water Stewardship (A4WS), and several national and international institutions participated in the event, which also included discussions on sustainable river finance, governance, and transboundary collaboration.

Accepting the award, Dr Sengupta and another activist Dr Kaushik Sarkar dedicated the honour to the collective spirit of the organisation and its volunteers. "This award is a recognition of people's love and resilience. Our members — fishermen, farmers, teachers, and students — have shown that local knowledge, when guided by science and sincerity, can save rivers from extinction," he said.

Jalangi Nodi Samaj, formed by concerned citizens and scientists, has built a strong community movement for river restoration. Its initiatives include awareness campaigns in schools and villages, the removal of post-immersion debris from riverbeds using cranes, and consistent dialogue with government departments to ensure scientifically planned dredging, desiltation, and wetland conservation.

The group also conducts Jalangi Pathshala — a people's classroom for river science — across Nadia's schools, teaching children and parents about the environmental and social importance of their local rivers.

The Statesman

Mon, 10 November 2025
<https://epaper.thesta>

আন্তর্জাতিক মঞ্চে পৌঁছে গেল আত্রৈয়ী নদী

পঞ্চম মহত্ত্ব

বালুরঘাট, ৬ নভেম্বর : বালুরঘাটের আত্রৈয়ী নদী পৌঁছে গেল আন্তর্জাতিক মঞ্চে। ৬ষ্ঠ আন্তর্জাতিক নদী ইকো-সিস্টেম সন্মেলনে আত্রৈয়ী নদীর প্রতিনিধিত্ব করেছেন জেলা পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান নীলমণি বসু।



সিলেটে আয়োজিত আন্তর্জাতিক রিভার কংগ্রেসে।

রিভার কংগ্রেসে আত্রৈয়ী নদীর প্রতিনিধিত্ব করেছেন জেলা পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান নীলমণি বসু।

নদী ইকো-সিস্টেম সন্মেলনে আত্রৈয়ী নদীর প্রতিনিধিত্ব করেছেন জেলা পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান নীলমণি বসু।

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« দিল্লিতে চতুর্থ আন্তর্জাতিক রিভার কংগ্রেস সম্মেলনে সম্মানিত করা হলো বালুরঘাটের 'দিশারি সংকল্প' সংস্থাকে



MEDIA & SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE

नदियों के अधिकार और सतत विकास की दिशा में वैश्विक भागीदारी की अपील

9 November, 2025, 7:05 pm



नई दिल्ली, 9 नवंबर 2025 |

भारत अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर नदी संरक्षण और 'सुदृढीकरण' को लेकर नई दिशा में बढ़ रहा है। इसी क्षण में 4th International River Congress (IRC4) का आयोजन इंडिया इंटरनेशनल सेंटर, नई दिल्ली में किया गया।

कार्यक्रम का आयोजन South Asian Institute for Advanced Research and Development (SAIARD) की ओर से किया गया, जिसका विषय था — "Global Partnerships & River Finance for a Sustainable Future: The Yamuna Diary"।

इस अवसर में देश-विदेश से आए विशेषज्ञों, नीति-निर्माताओं, निजी संस्थानों, और पर्यावरणविदों ने नदी संपत्ति, निजीय संप्रदाय और सतत विकास पर व्यापक चर्चा की। कार्यक्रम को राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन, जल शक्ति मंत्रालय, पृथ्वी संस्थान विभाग, राष्ट्रीय बंधुत्व अभियान, ब्रह्मपुत्र बोर्ड और कई अन्य संस्थाओं का सहयोग प्राप्त था।

"नदियां सिर्फ संसाधन नहीं, जीवित अस्तित्व हैं।"

कार्यक्रम का उद्घाटन करते हुए डॉ. रमजीत देका (अध्यक्ष, ब्रह्मपुत्र बोर्ड) ने कहा —

"नदियां केवल उपयोग की वस्तु नहीं, बल्कि जीवित संस्थाएं हैं जिन्हें अधिकार, संरक्षण और सम्मान की आवश्यकता है।"

उन्होंने कहा कि नदी के दौरे पर गहन नदी में ब्रह्मपुत्र का उदाहरण देते हुए सही नदी प्रबंधन की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया।

उन्होंने कहा कि सतत और पारिस्थितिकी के बीच संतुलन बनाते हुए जलवायु परिवर्तन से निपटारे के लिए नदी सतत विकास की दिशा में बढ़ रहा है।

कार्यक्रमीय के प्रो. पी. के. शर्मा ने कहा —

"हर सतत नदी और हर घाटा एक जीवित तंत्र का हिस्सा है। नदियों का प्रभाव केवल सतत नहीं, सतत की समृद्धि के लिए है। नदियों के लिए सतत विकास की दिशा में बढ़ रहा है।"

अंतरराष्ट्रीय दृष्टिकोण और नई पहल

आयन द्वायस के काउंसलर (इकोनॉमिक अफेयर्स) कैप्टीन मधुसूदन शर्मा ने दोषों के तमाम दिशा में विकास का उदाहरण देते हुए कहा:

"नदी पुनर्जीवन आयोजनाओं से शुरू होता है। जब हम नदी का सम्मान करना सीखते हैं, तो पुनर्स्थापन एक संवर्धन का संकेत बन जाता है।"

इस मौके पर "International Institute of River Affairs (IIRA)" नामक एक नई River Think Tank की घोषणा की गई। साथ ही Indian Journal of River Affairs का भी निर्माण हुआ।

कार्यक्रम में SAIARD River Awards 2025 के वरिष्ठ नदी संस्थाओं और विशेषज्ञों को नदी संस्था में बृहत् योगदान के लिए सम्मानित किया गया।

नदी अर्थव्यवस्था और नदी इकोनॉमी पर चर्चा

कार्यक्रम के "परमिट टैक" सत्रों में विशेषज्ञों ने वाटरशेड प्रबंधन, नदी-आधारित आयोजनाओं और औद्योगिक प्रदूषण पर विचार-विमर्श किया।

Department of Land Resources is at New Delhi

7 November at 10:16 · Delhi

Shri Nitin Khade, Joint Secretary (W.M.), DOLR, highlighted the WDC-PMKSY Scheme's approach to river rejuvenation by following watershed development approach to provide support to farmers living in drought prone and rainfed agriculture areas at the 4th International River Congress by SAIARD Group, New Delhi (6 Nov 2025). Advancing collaboration for a soil & water-secure future.

#DoLR
#WDCPMKSY
#RiverRejuvenation
#WatershedIndia
#SAIARD2025



DarjeelingTimes.com - Darjeeling News

7 November at 19:49

SAIARD Conferred Prof. S R Basu Memorial Award on Prof. Vimal Khawas at 4th International River Congress

The South Asian Institute for Advanced Research and Development (SAIARD) presented the prestigious Prof. S R Basu Memorial Award to Prof. Vimal Khawas, Professor at the Special Centre for the Study of North East India, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), during the 4th SAIARD International River Congress (#IRC4) at India International Centre, New Delhi on November 06, 2025. The award recognized his exceptional leadership and scholarly contributions to water resource management, ecological restoration, and sustainable development in the Eastern Himalaya and North East India.

Prof. Khawas, a distinguished geographer and environmental scholar with a PhD from JNU and an MPlan from CEPT University, has dedicated his career to advancing sustainable water resource management and climate adaptation in vulnerable riverine ecosystems. His research on environmental vulnerability of North East India including human-induced disasters like the Teesta flood catastrophe, and community-based resilience strategies has influenced policy and practice across the region.

With over 50 research publications, including journal articles and book chapters, his work emphasizes integrated approaches to environmental governance, including sustainable land use and early warning systems for river basins. Previously an Associate Professor at Silkgim University, where he headed the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Management, Prof. Khawas continues to mentor the next generation of researchers at JNU.

The Prof. S R Basu Memorial Award, named after the late Professor S.R. Basu, a pioneering geographer and retired faculty from Presidency College, Kolkata, celebrates individuals who have demonstrated outstanding dedication to river-related research, policy innovation, and community engagement. Past recipients include luminaries such as Dr. P.L.N. Rai, former Director of the North-Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), and Prof. H R Betal. This year's honour underscores Prof. Khawas's role in bridging academia, policy, and grassroots action to foster equitable river restoration.

The 4th SAIARD International River Congress builds on SAIARD's legacy of fostering dialogue through events like the 3rd International River Congress in Sri Lanka (November 2024) and the Youth River Festival in Kolkata (February 2025). SAIARD, a global think tank promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through cognitive research and policy advocacy, operates via its International Institute of River Affairs (IIRA) to revitalize river ecosystems for ecological, cultural, and societal benefits.

Prof. Khawas expressed his gratitude, stating, "This recognition is a profound honour and a testament to the collaborative spirit driving river conservation. I am committed to furthering the vision of resilient, river/water-centric futures."



Brahmaputra Board
@BBoard1982

Dr. Ranjit Deka, FIE, Deputy Chief Engineer, Assam and Director, NEHARI, Brahmaputra Board, took part as a Key Panelist in the Action Track-II session on "Watershed Governance in India: An Integrated Approach to Empower the Rural Livelihood & Panchayats" at the 4th SAIARD International River Congress. This crucial session, sponsored and hosted by the Department of Land Resources, Government of India, focused on leveraging integrated watershed management for rural livelihood improvement, environmental sustainability, and empowering local self-governance.



Welcome to



5th SAIARD-IIRA
International
River Congress

AYODHYA

www.saiard.co.in