Prime Minister chairs first meeting of National Ganga Council

Syllabus subtopic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Context: PM Modi chaired the first meeting of the National Ganga Council in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Background
A lot had been accomplished since the Government took up ‘Namami Gange’ in 2014 as a comprehensive initiative integrating various government efforts and activities with the aim of pollution abatement, conservation and rejuvenation of Ganga, notable achievements being zero waste creation by paper mills and reduction in pollution from tanneries; but much more needs to be done.

About National Ganga Council
- The Council has been given overall responsibility for superintendence of pollution prevention and rejuvenation of River Ganga Basin, including Ganga and its tributaries.
- The first meeting of the Council was aimed at reinforcing the importance of a ‘Ganga-centric’ approach in all departments of the concerned states as well as relevant Central Ministries.
- For the first time, the Central Government had made commitment of Rs. 20,000 crores for the period 2015-20 to the five states through which Ganga passes, to ensure adequate as well as uninterrupted water flows in
the river. Rs. 7700 crores have already been spent so far, prominently for construction of new sewage treatment plants.

- The Government has set up the **Clean Ganga Fund (CGF)** to facilitate contributions from individuals, NRIs, corporate entities for funding Ganga rejuvenation projects.

- For monitoring the work progress and activities from various schemes and initiatives under Namami Gange and Arth Ganga, PM also gave directions for the setting up of a Digital Dashboard where data from villages and urban bodies should be monitored on a daily basis by Niti Ayog and Ministry of Jal Shakti. Prime Minister also said that like aspirational districts, all districts bordering Ganga should be made a focus area for monitoring efforts under Namami Gange.