

Amma donates Rs 100 crore to 'Namami Gange' project

KOLLAM: Spiritual leader and humanitarian Mata Amrithanandamayi Devi Friday donated Rs 100 crore to the Prime Minister's 'Namami Gange' project and announced another Rs 100 crore for the Swachh Bharat Mission to provide cent per cent toilet facilities to Kerala.

Amrithanandamayi Devi, popularly known as Amma gave the demand draft for Rs 100 crore to Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley at a function in her Ashram in Kollam.

The donation will be explicitly used for constructing toilets in the poor villages surrounding the Ganges River as part of the Clean Ganga initiative.

"It is a gigantic step taken by the Amrithanandamayi Mutt towards Clean India campaign. The message will spread across the globe and people will take it as their own campaign," Jaitley said, while addressing a huge gathering at the ashram.

He noted that the mutt's involvement in the prestigious programme came in the wake of a discussion between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amma at New Delhi on March 28 this year. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Centre proposed to provide 60 million toilets by the year 2019.

Though the Centre had approved an outlay of Rs 20,000 crore for the next five years for the Ganga project, the Modi government wanted all-round participation to succeed. It called upon spiritual organizations, corporates and the global Indian community to fund specific projects of the programme. As part of the project, the Centre plans to construct toilets with proper waste disposal facilities in 600 villages situated along the banks of Ganga starting from Uttarakhand to West Bengal.

Speaking on the occasion, Mata Amrithanandamayi said water was precious and it was the symbol of life. But she was heartened to know that only 25 per cent of the water of Ganga was pure and the rest was polluted. Millions of people living on the banks of the river depends on the water from Ganga. Earlier water used to be purified in a natural way when it passed through medicinal plants. Now, it was the responsibility of every one to bring the river back to its past glory.

"We are planning a similar project for the entire Kerala. The mutt will provide toilet facilities to entire households across the state soon," she said, adding, the fund would be handed over by the month end.

The Mata Amrithanandamayi Mutt launched its Amala Bharatam Campaign (ABC) in 2010 a programme aimed at improving public health and restoring India's physical beauty.

Through ABC, lakhs of volunteers are regularly cleaning public areas and spreading awareness in schools regarding the proper way to dispose of trash and the importance of not spitting or urinating in public.

This has included massive annual cleaning of the world-famous Sabarimala pilgrimage site and Pampa River.