

Amma to Hand Over Rs 100-crore Cheque to Jaitley

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KOLLAM: Spiritual guru Mata Amritanandamayi Devi will hand over a cheque of Rs 100 crore, the contribution of her Math towards the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to clean up river Ganga, to Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley at a function to be held at Amritapuri Ashram at 10 am on Friday.

The fund will be used for constructing toilets in the poor villages surrounding the river as part of 'Namami Gange' programme, which integrates the efforts to clean and protect the river in a comprehensive manner.



The Prime Minister and Amma first discussed the possibility of Mata Amritanandamayi Math's involvement in the Clean Ganga Project during her visit to Delhi on March 28. Modi had expressed his gratitude to Amma for the Math's environmental initiatives, which were in line with his own Swachh Bharat Programme.

Math has successfully launched many cleanliness programme such as Amala Bharatam Campaign (ABC).

Launched in 2010, the programme aimed at improving public health and restoring India's scenic beauty.

Through ABC, lakhs of volunteers regularly clean public places and spread awareness in schools regarding the proper way to dispose off

trash and the importance of not spitting or urinating in public. It also included distribution of more than one million handkerchiefs to school children.

The volunteers had embarked on a massive annual cleaning programme at Sabarimala pilgrimage site and Pampa river.

The Math has also directly addressed the issue of open defecation and the lack of proper sanitation facilities by training women to build their own toilets and bathrooms.

Along with the technical vocational skills, women are also given awareness on the importance of hygiene, sanitation, proper toilet use, repair and maintenance.

The initiative was successfully piloted in Odisha in September 2014 and has since expanded to villages in 15 states across India.

Namami Gange programme

The programme, a poll promise of BJP, was approved in May this year with an allocation of Rs 20,000 crore over the next five years. Though successive governments at the Centre has spent over Rs 4,000 crore for the rejuvenation of river Ganga since 1986, the results were far from satisfactory. The Namami Gange mission was launched to address the shortcomings of previous programmes.