

## **DAY 5:**

It is the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the expedition. We woke up early, fresh and charged to reach Brijghat, Garhmukteshwar at sunrise. There was a sea of people from all walks of life who came to see us off and the energy in the surrounding was exuberant. After all, people from UP have always been excited about social work. Everyone was cheering for us and wishing us a safe journey. The Ganga was pure and serene as always. We sat at Brijghat for some time enjoying the scenic beauty. There were many devotees taking a dip in Ganga and what we experienced can only be defined as divine. It was then, Parveen Kumar-NDRF, proposed the idea of an unplanned cleaning drive. We requested the people who came to see us off to join us on the drive. All of them came forward to help us in the drive. Within minutes, there were people spread all over the Brijghat, cleaning it, definitely following the example set by our Prime Minister. We, along with Shri Vijaywardhan Tomar- SDM, Garmukhteshwar, also met local shopkeepers and requested them to not use plastic in any form to which they agreed to with much enthusiasm.

It was time to move ahead in our journey. We said our farewell to the people of Garmukhteshwar, and started moving forward, optimistic, ready and excited. The morning sun was welcoming, we could feel the mist settling on our rafts.

During our journey, we came across Avantika Mandir and we decided to stop and pray. Even though it wasn't planned, we were recognized by the head priest. He told us how he recognized the logo of Namami Gange and has been following our work. In that moment, our entire team was filled with pride and joy. We knew that we are on the right track if people are recognizing us.

We reached Narora around 3 PM and there was a huge crowd eagerly waiting for us. We could hear their cheering as soon as we were sighted. We were received by Shri Sanjay Sharma, MLA, Anoopsheher along with State Chairman-Jat Mahasabha, DFO and other government dignitaries from district administration. Hundreds of children from various schools, volunteers from Ganga Vichar Manch & other organizations and hundreds of local people were also present.

Addressing the gathering, Sanjay Sharma- MLA, Anoopsheher, said the Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan is not only about the adventure. The major idea is to spread awareness amongst people. He also congratulated the Namami Gange team on their tremendous work.

Then, the stage was taken over by the youngsters who performed a street play for us. It was an eye opening play. We all could feel our goose bumps as it was both emotional and reflective. They explained how there won't be any life left if we don't stop contaminating the environment.

The cultural evening continued with Sri Acharya Diwakar Varishtha singing a melodious song composed by him on Namami Gange. The song exemplified the spirit of Ganga and spoke about how we'll do everything in our power to maintain its sanctity.

The cultural program ended with Ganga aarti, making us all feel one with the universe and feeling extremely grateful for our mother Ganga and her generosity.