

Keeping Ganga free from pollutants

1285. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government has recently promised before the Supreme Court that Ganga would be pure and free of pollutants by 2020;

(b) if so, to what extent the measures taken by the Central Government to keep Ganga free from pollutants have been effective, so far;

(c) whether Government proposes to seek the help of NGOs to keep the Ganga free from pollutants; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) In a Writ Petition (Civil) No. 3727/1985 before the Supreme Court of India, the Central Government has filed an affidavit dated September 28, 2010 stating that the Central Government has constituted the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) on February 20, 2009 as a planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority for effective abatement of pollution and conservation of river Ganga. The Authority has decided that under 'Mission Clean Ganga', it will be ensured that by year 2020, no untreated municipal sewage and industrial effluents flow into Ganga.

The Central Government has been implementing Ganga Action Plan (GAP) since 1985. The pollution abatement works taken up under the Plan include interception and diversion of raw sewage, setting up of sewage treatment plants, creation of low cost sanitation facilities, setting up of electric/improved wood crematoria and river front development. Sewage treatment capacity of 1055 mild (million litres per day) has been created so far under GAP. Water quality monitoring of Ganga by reputed independent institutions shows improvement in river water quality over pre-GAP period in terms of indicators such as Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Dissolved Oxygen (DO). The level of bacterial contamination in terms of fecal coliform, however, exceeds the maximum permissible limit at most of the monitoring locations.

The State Governments have been requested to take steps for community mobilisation, creating public awareness and public participation in formulation, implementation and monitoring of the projects by involving local communities, NGOs, youth and public representatives.