

The Sunday Standard - 11- February-2024

NGT asks panel to check drains into Ganga, Yamuna ahead of Kumbh

JAISON WILSON @ New Delhi

THE National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed a committee to inspect all the drains joining the Ganga and the Yamuna and all Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in Prayagraj district on a plea raising concern over pollution of the rivers and how it would affect devotees during the Kumbh Mela, to be held in 2024-2025.

A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava asked the five-member panel to carry out spot inspection, collect samples of discharged water and conduct sample analysis besides collecting information on the functioning of the STPs. The bench also comprising judicial member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil Vel asked the report to be placed before the NGT at least a week



before the next hearing.

According to the National Mission for Clean Ganga report, the estimated sewage generation is 500 million litres per day (MLD). The capacity of existing STPs is 340 MLD, but their capacities are stretched to treat up to 533 MLD of sewage.

Pryagraj Mela Pradhikaran said treated water (around 67.82 MLD) is being discharged into the Ganga and the Yamuna, in compliance with the standards

for the bathing of pilgrims.

NGT seeks remedial steps

The NGT has sought response of civic authorities in relation to the allocation of funds for sewage waste management in Faridnagar town in Ghaziabad district, while asking them to take actual effective remedial steps at the ground level.

In relation to the present discharge of the daily generation of sewage, the bench noted, "It appears that whatever sewage is being generated, it is untreated and is being discharged directly into storm water drain, ultimately meeting some river."

The bench directed assessment of sewage generation and establishment of sewage treatment facilities suitable to local needs, adding, "Utilization of treated sewage for raising plantation or for irrigation purpose should also be considered."

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The Hindu - 11- February-2024



Expedite projects to construct check-dams, says Minister

The ongoing projects to desilt the Cauvery basin and construct check-dams and other storage structures across the State must be completed before the onset of northeast monsoon, Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan said in Chennai on Saturday. Chairing a meeting at the Secretariat to review the ongoing projects, he instructed Water Resources Department officials to accelerate works to restore flood damages in various waterways and waterbodies, and carry out permanent flood mitigation projects. Similar measures must be expedited in flood-hit southern districts as well, he said. The Minister also discussed schemes to be taken up during the next fiscal, according to a release.

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The Hindu - 11- February-2024

What are the changes in the new Water Act?

Will the amendments weaken the laws that protect rivers and water bodies from industrial pollution?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

The Lok Sabha this week passed the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 2024. The legislation, which was introduced and passed in the Rajya Sabha on February 5, makes important changes to the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

What is the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974?

This Act was the first piece of legislation in independent India that identified the need to have an institutional structure to address contamination of water bodies. This led to the creation, in September 1974, of the Central Pollution Control Boards (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB) that were charged with monitoring and preventing public water resources from getting contaminated by sewage and industrial effluents. This Act made it mandatory for industrial units to get permission from their respective State boards before setting up factories and submitting themselves to checks on whether their manufacturing and other processes were complying with prescribed norms.

"The Parliament of India in its wisdom enacted the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act in 1974 with a view to maintaining

A key change in the new Act is that it removes the provisions of imprisonment for several violations, deemed 'minor', and replaces them with fines, to the tune of ₹10,000 extending up to ₹15 lakh

pollution," the website of the CPCB notes. While the CPCB is empowered to conduct checks and provide guidance on technical standards to be adhered to, the SPCB files cases and is expected to enforce compliance. Violating the provisions of the Water Act can mean industries being shut down, monetary fines as well as imprisonment of up to six years. That said, there have been no instances of companies or people in India having been imprisoned due to environmental violations.

and restoring wholesomeness of our water bodies. One of the mandates of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is to collect, collate and disseminate technical and statistical data relating to water

What are the amendments?

Water is a State subject, and the Centre cannot directly pass legislative laws influencing water management. However, the Centre can create legislation, if two or more States demand it, and this can be made applicable by States over their territories if they adopt the legislation in their Assemblies. The amended version of the Act, passed by both Houses of Parliament, will currently apply to Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and the Union territories. The original Act, passed in 1974, is applicable in 25 States. The most important change is that it removes the provisions of imprisonment for several violations, deemed "minor", and replaces them with fines, to the tune of ₹10,000 extending up to ₹15 lakh.

As per the original Act, the SPCB's permission is needed for establishing any industry or treatment plant, which could discharge sewage into a water body, sewer, or land. In the amendment, the Bill specifies that the Centre, "... in consultation with the CPCB, may exempt certain categories of industrial plants from obtaining such consent..."

However, operating or establishing an industrial unit without SPCB consent can still land you in jail for six years along with a fine.

The Bill also adds that the Centre may issue guidelines for the grant, refusal, or cancellation of consent granted by the SPCB. It also penalises tampering with monitoring devices used in determining whether any industry or treatment plant can be set up. The penalty will be between ₹10,000 and ₹15 lakh. The amended Act also empowers the Centre to frame rules to select the chairpersons of SPCBs and frame guidelines that States can follow on matters for establishing industries and new operating processes.

What has been the response?

Explaining the rationale behind the amendments, Environment Minister, Bhupendra Yadav, who steered the Bill, said outdated rules and regulations caused a "trust deficit." The imprisonment provisions for minor violations, which are simple infringements and did not lead to any injury to humans or damage to the environment, often caused "harassment" to businesses and citizens and was not in consonance with the spirit of "ease of living and ease of doing business," he added. In discussions on the Act in the Lok Sabha, Members of Opposition parties raised concerns that the amendments weakened the laws that protected rivers and water bodies from industrial pollution. They argued that the fear of imprisonment acted as an effective deterrent to industrial units that were lax with complying with strict regulations.

Dainik Navjyoti - 11- February-2024

राजस्थान में सिंचाई के लिए जल आपूर्ति से संबंधित मुद्दों पर निर्देश केन्द्रीय जल शक्ति मंत्री गजेन्द्र सिंह शेखावत ने नई दिल्ली में ली बैठक

नई दिल्ली। केन्द्रीय जल शक्ति मंत्री गजेन्द्र सिंह शेखावत ने पंजाब में हरिके बैराज से निकलने वाले फिरोजपुर फीडर के पुनर्वास पर शनिवार को नई दिल्ली में एक बैठक की अध्यक्षता की। बैठक के दौरान फिरोजपुर फीडर के माध्यम से राजस्थान में सिंचाई के लिए पानी की आपूर्ति से संबंधित कई मुद्दों पर विस्तार से चर्चा की गई। जिसमें सांसद निहाल चंद, विधायक

जयवीर सिंह बराड़, केन्द्रीय जल आयोग, सीडब्ल्यूसी के अध्यक्ष कुशविंदर वोहरा, सीडब्ल्यूसीए राजस्थान के जल संसाधन विभाग और पंजाब के सिंचाई विभाग के अधिकारी, राजस्थान के गंगानगर और हनुमानगढ़ क्षेत्र के किसानों के साथ उपस्थित थे।

केन्द्रीय जल शक्ति मंत्री ने बताया कि पंजाब सरकार द्वारा फिरोजपुर फीडर, 51 किमी लंबी की

रिहैबिलिटेशन और रीलाइनिंग के लिए केन्द्रीय जल आयोग को सौंपी गई प्री फिजिबिलिटी रिपोर्ट को मंजूरी दे दी गई है।

यह नहर बीकानेर नहर को पानी की आपूर्ति करती है। जिससे राजस्थान के गंगानगर और हनुमानगढ़ जिलों को लाभ होता है। बैठक में पंजाब और राजस्थान के अधिकारियों को जल्द से जल्द डिटेल प्रोजेक्ट रिपोर्ट केन्द्रीय जल

आयोग को सौंपने के निर्देश दिए गए। मंत्री ने सीडब्ल्यूसी के अधिकारियों को निर्देश दिया कि वे जल्द से जल्द प्रस्तुत किए गए डीपीआर की जांच करें और बाद में डीओडब्ल्यूआरए आरडी और जीआर की सलाहकार समिति द्वारा अनुमोदन करें। उपरोक्त के अलावा पानी और सिंचाई से संबंधित अन्य मुद्दों पर भी चर्चा की गई।

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