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At Rain’s Mercy: No Good News On Yamuna Front

None Of 16 Drains Flowing Into River Meets Water Quality Standards

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New Delhi: The Yamuna continues to be highly polluted with no significant change in water quality, according to the latest report of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee. None of the 16 drains that flow into the river have met water quality standards with respect to biochemical oxy-

gen demand (BOD). On Friday, DPCC uploaded reports on the water quality of the Yamuna and its drains after a four-month hiatus. Among the eight locations from which samples were collected on June 25, the river was cleanest at Palla, where the Yamuna enters Delhi. The last monitoring station at Asgarpur (just beyond the confluence of Shah-

dara and Tughlakabad drains) was the most polluted. Dissolved oxygen (DO), which is the amount of oxygen present in the river and the acceptable standard is 5mg/l or above, met the standard at Palla and Wazirabad but was nil at the ISBT bridge, Nizamuddin bridge, Okhla barrage, Agra Canal at Okhla barrage and Asgarpur. Low DO level affects the survival

of aquatic life in the river. Similarly, a higher BOD indicates more oxygen is required for the oxygen-demanding species to feed on and, thus, signifies lower water quality. The prescribed BOD norm for the Yamuna is 3mg/l or less, but this was met only at Palla at 2mg/l. It was 28 times higher than the standard at Asgarpur at 85mg/l, 17 times higher at Okhla Barrage (50mg/l) and 16 times higher at ITO bridge (47mg/l).

The drains that flow into the Yamuna are also polluted with BOD levels surpassing the standard in 16 drains. Eleven drains had no water. Even faecal coliform levels, which signal the presence of sewage in water, were much higher at all eight stations than the prescribed standard.

River activist Bhim Singh Rawat, associate coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers, and People, said, “An analysis of the water quality status of the Yamuna compared with last year shows that the river has become a monsoonal, rain-fed river. When the upper catchment of the river receives rain and gets flow, the water quality shows improvement. When there is no rain, the Yamuna remains heavily polluted. There is no control, treatment or pollution abatement in the river.”

Another activist, Diwan Singh, said, “The levels of pollutants increase after the Yamuna enters Delhi. The river has also been absolutely deprived of its freshwater flow, worsening its condition. It continues to be a sewage canal.” He added that the river seemed to have no rights since the city was prioritised rather than the river at every step.

RIVER CLEANEST AT THE POINT IT ENTERS DELHI: REPORT

Locations	BOD (mg/l)	DO (Mg/l)	Water quality status of major drains
Water quality criteria (C class)	3 mg/l or less	5 mg/l or more	
Palla	2	8.6	Tughlaqabad drain BOD (mg/l) 70
Wazirabad	7	7.2	Najafgarh 50
ISBT bridge	47	NIL	Indrapuri 50
ITO bridge	30	2.8	Shahdara 120
Nizamuddin bridge	40	NIL	Sahibabad 100
Okhla	50	NIL	Barapullah 52
Agra canal at Okhla Barrage	44	NIL	Jaitpur 60
Yamuna at Asgarpur (after confluence of Shahdara and Tughlaqabad drains)	85	NIL	Powerhouse drain 60

Note | Dissolved oxygen (DO) is the amount of oxygen present in water. If dissolved oxygen in water drops below the standard mark, it can be harmful for aquatic life; biochemical oxygen demand (BOD). Higher BOD indicates more oxygen is required, which is less for oxygen-demanding species to feed on and signifies lower water quality



- > Yamuna continues to be highly polluted, shows DPCC reports
- > DO levels were found to be nil at five places
- > The water quality of drains shows that they are yet to meet prescribed standards
- > DPCC uploaded the water quality reports of Yamuna and drains after four months