

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 16/2/17 in the

Hindustan Times	Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)	M.P.Chronicle
Statesman	Punjab Keshari (Hindi)	A a j (Hindi)
The Times of India (N.D.)	The Hindu	Indian Nation
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Tribune	Deccan Chronicle	The Times of India (A)
Hindustan (Hindi)	Deccan Herald	Blitz

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## SC refuses to defer SYL case hearing

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday reacted sharply and rejected a Punjab government request for posting the hearing on the crucial Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute matter after declaration of the Assembly poll results on March 11.

"What is the use of courts waiting for election results," a Bench comprising Justices P. C. Ghose and Amitava Roy observed after senior advoc-

ate Ram Jethmalani, appearing for Punjab, made the request.

The Bench then posted the matter for hearing on February 22.

"Kindly keep it (the matter for hearing) after March 11. The election result will be announced on March 11," Mr. Jethmalani had said earlier.

At the outset, the Punjab government told the Bench that it has not yet filed its response on Haryana's petition

seeking compliance of the apex court's earlier order and that it will be filed soon.

Jethmalani said they would also file a rejoinder to the reply filed by the Centre and sought time for it.

The Bench, which said that the interim order of status quo will continue till further order, asked Punjab to file the response by February 20. The apex court had earlier said that decrees passed cannot be flouted.

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## Yamuna needs people's movement

R PRABHAKAR RAO ST-16

### CAPITAL CORNER

The Yamuna is a snow-fed river and its waters are crystal clear at its source in Yamunotri in the Himalayan ranges. The water quality is quite good till it reaches the Wazirabad dam in Delhi. Thereafter the stretch of the river till it leaves Delhi at Okhla dam is toxic and polluted. The river supplies about a third of Delhi's drinking water, which gets channelled to a reservoir in the northernmost corner of the city just before the river turns toxic.

The 22 km it traverses in Delhi is the most polluted stretch of the river because some 18 drains discharge effluents directly into it. The dissolved oxygen is zero meaning that no river organism can survive in the river waters. The biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) level and coliform count is also critically bad. The main sources of pollution are the discharge of untreated municipal and household wastes, industrial wastes and agriculture replacing woodlands and the resultant runoff of chemical manure, herbicides, weedicides and pesticides.

Added to this is the fact that thousands of acres of fertile floodplain have been converted into real estate along the Yamuna Expressway. The major problem is that there is no flow in the river except during the short-lived monsoon. At the Wazirabad barrage, all the available water is impounded to meet Delhi's requirements. All that remains in the river is the discharge from 18 big drains which is a noxious mix of sewage and industrial effluents.

In 1994, the Supreme Court had stipulated release of 10 cu-

mecs of water in the lean months to ensure a minimum flow. Yet the situation on the ground remains unchanged. The barrage gates are opened only during the monsoon months to release floodwaters. The Yamuna water as it flows for 22 km in Delhi is totally putrid. Whitefrothing water at several places is testimony to the industrial and chemical waste from factories. The colour of the water is black and the stench is overbearing. According to the Central Pollution Board by the time Yamuna exits the city, the water quality is lethal. It contains a concentration of 1.1 billion fecal coliform bacteria per 100 millilitres of water. The standard for bathing is 500 coliform bacteria per 100 millilitres. Due to rapid urbanisation and migration, a third of Delhi's population lives in unauthorised settlements with no drainage connections.

Weak law enforcement is not able to stop illegal dumping of arsenic, zinc and mercury, prevent pouring of raw sewage into storm drains or stop illegal cultivation of crops on the contaminated floodplain. Huge loads of flowers, idols of deities, paper, plastic and coconut husks end up in the river.

The Yamuna is administered by about two dozen local, state and national government agencies. So it becomes difficult to fix accountability. For instance, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Central Water Commission (CWC), Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) regularly monitor the Yamuna at 19 locations. This has not resul-

ted in any improvement in the river. The situation was not always like this. As per the Gazetteer of the Delhi District, 1883-84, Mahseer species thrived in this stretch. Muggers in hundreds could be seen swimming in or basking on the edge of the water in the afternoon. The river teemed with fish and other life forms even as late as 1970s.

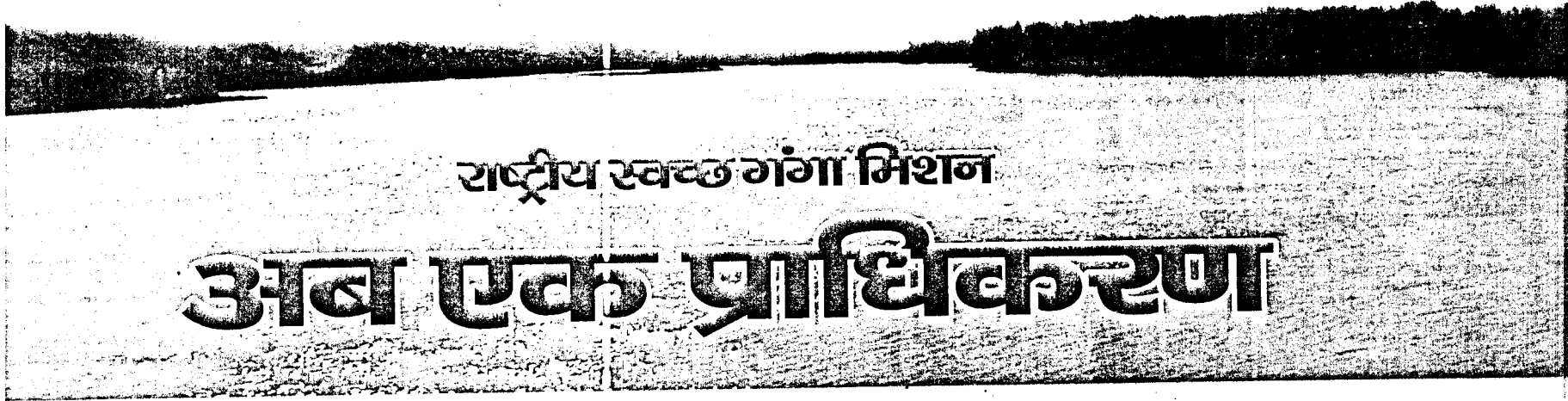
Despite judicial intervention, a strong civil society presence, media attention and several research reports and government action plans, the plight of the river remains the same. Delhi citizens have never taken out a mass people's movement on this issue. As long as there is supply of water for a few hours, citizens don't seem to be bothered though the sad state of the river is evident to lakhs of Delhiites who cross it in their daily commute.

The policy makers see the provision of water for Delhi as purely an engineering exercise. Water is being transported from long distances through canals and pipes. Construction of more dams has been planned in the neighbouring states. Unfortunately the river has never been seen as a living natural system that needs a minimum flow to maintain its ecological integrity. If all incoming waters is impounded at the entry point at Delhi and there is no fresh water addition in the entire stretch within Delhi, how will the river rejuvenate itself? Delhi citizens have to become proactive and force the government to have a flowing river in the city.

(THE WRITER IS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ZAKIR HUSAIN DELHI COLLEGE, DELHI UNIVERSITY)

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नमामि गंगे



### गंगा नदी प्राधिकरण आदेश, 2016 - मुख्य विशेषताएं

नीय प्रधानमंत्री की अध्यक्षता के तहत गंगा नदी बेसिन के पुनर्जीवन एवं उसके प्रदूषण की रोकथाम (पुनर्जीवन, संरक्षण एवं प्रबंधन) हेतु एक प्राधिकरण का गठन

- माननीय मंत्री, जल संसाधन, नदी विकास एवं गंगा संरक्षण की अध्यक्षता में अधिकार प्राप्त टास्क फोर्स का गठन

- पर्यावरण संरक्षण अधिनियम के अन्तर्गत राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन एक प्राधिकरण के रूप में गंगा को साफ रखने के सभी निर्देश जारी कर सकेगा
- राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन को सशक्त बनाते हुए 1000 करोड़ तक की परियोजनाओं की मंजूरी का वित्तीय अधिकार
- प्राधिकरण के रूप में सभी राज्य एवं गंगा के किनारे स्थित प्रत्येक जिलों में गंगा समितियों की रचना



नदी सतह की सफाई



विभिन्न घाटों का नवीनीकरण



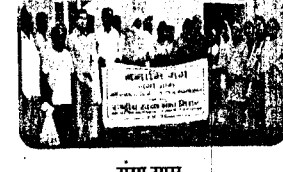
जैव-विविधता संरक्षण



सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट पुनर्वास एवं विकास



वृक्षारोपण



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