

Supreme Court stays Uttarakhand high court's order declaring Ganga and Yamuna 'living entities'

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the landmark judgement that accorded the Ganga and [Yamuna](#) rivers the status of "living human entities".

On March 20, this year, the Uttarakhand HC accorded the status of "living human entities" to the two rivers. This was to enable the "preservation and conservation of the two rivers and to protect the recognition and faith of society".

Following which the Uttarakhand government moved to the apex Court challenging the state high court order.

"Let me be very clear that we are not against according of living entity status to the two holy rivers Ganga and Yamuna," Uttarakhand minister [Madan Kaushik](#) had said in May.

He was unhappy though with the ambiguity regarding the accountability of damage done to these rivers.

"How can the chief secretary here be held accountable if the river is polluted in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand or UP?" Kaushik said, adding, "We just want an opportunity to put forth our views in the SC."

In its verdict, the state high court had cited New Zealand's bill which made the Whanganui river, revered by the indigenous Maori people, the first in the world to be recognised as a living entity with full legal rights.

However, legal experts told TOI at the time that treating the rivers as "living entities" would mean that polluting the rivers would be seen as akin to harming a human being.

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