

**Tribunal prohibits dumping of waste near Ganga banks - Today's Paper**

Solution in sight: A file photo of the garbage dumped on the banks of the Ganga. AFP

An area of 100 metres from the edge of the Ganga between Haridwar and Unnao has been declared a 'No Development Zone,' with the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday prohibiting dumping of waste within 500 metres of the river.

An environment compensation of Rs. 50,000 will be imposed on anyone dumping waste in the river.

The NGT also directed the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments to formulate guidelines for religious activities on the ghats of the Ganga and its tributaries.

The order said: "Till the demarcation of floodplains and identification of permissible and non-permissible activities by the State government, we direct that 100 metres from the edge of the river would be treated as no development/construction zone between Haridwar to Unnao in Uttar Pradesh."

**Order on PIL petition**

Giving its verdict on a 1985 PIL petition of environment activist and lawyer M.C. Mehta — which was transferred to the NGT from the Supreme Court in 2014 — a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar said the authorities concerned should complete projects, including a sewage treatment plant and cleaning of drains, within two years. "The Uttar Pradesh government is duty-bound to shift tanneries, within six weeks, from Jajmau in Kanpur to leather parks in Unnao or any other place it considers appropriate."

**Supervisory panel**

The court also appointed a supervisory committee, headed by the Secretary of the Water Resources Ministry and comprising IIT professors and officials of the Uttar Pradesh government, to oversee implementation of the directions passed in its verdict. The committee is to submit reports at regular intervals.

The Bench further noted that all industrial units in the catchment areas of the Ganga should be stopped from indiscriminate groundwater extraction.

The green court reiterated its earlier order of a ban on mechanical mining in the Ganga and said, "No in-stream mechanical mining is permitted and even the mining on the floodplain should be semi-mechanical and preferably more manual."

"Such mining should be permitted only after a detailed and comprehensive assessment of the annual replenishment of sand and gravel in the riverbed and ensuring that the connectivity of the river is not disturbed and that only a quantity less or equal to the annual replenishment is permitted to be removed from the riverbed or the banks," it said.

**END**