

RIVER POLLUTION: NGT DIRECTS STATES TO ACT

Relevant for: Environment & Disaster Management | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

A view of a polluted stretch of the Yamuna in New Delhi APR S Iyer

Taking suo motu cognisance of a report in *The Hindu* on the increase in polluted river stretches in the country, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed all States and Union Territories to prepare action plans within two months.

Stating that the action plans should aim at improving the polluted stretches for “at least bathing purposes”, a bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, “We are of the view that the situation is far from satisfactory and action is required to be taken on war footing. There has to be meaningful further action to restore the minimum prescribed standards for all the rivers of the country.”

The Hindu, on September 17, had reported, quoting data from the Central Pollution Control Board, that the number of polluted river stretches in the country had increased to 351 from 302 over the last two years.

The tribunal specified that Chief Secretaries of each State and administrators of UTs will be “personally accountable for failure to formulate action plan.”

The bench directed that four-member committees, comprising representatives of State pollution control boards and the State governments, be constituted for preparing and executing the action plans.

“The action plan will include components like identification of polluting sources including functioning or status of sewage treatment plants, common effluent treatment plants, solid waste management and processing facilities, quantification and characterisation of sewage generated in the catchment area of the polluted river stretch” the bench said.

Stating that the pollution control boards had failed to check pollution, the bench said, “They have not been able to stop dumping of waste, discharge of effluents in rivers and water bodies.”

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