

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No.3396**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.03.2018

**Protection of Gangetic Dolphins**

3396. SHRI MAJEED MEMON:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state

- (a) whether it is a fact that Ganga has been ranked as one of the most polluted and dirtiest rivers in the world with WWF listing Ganga as amongst the world's most endangered rivers;
- (b) whether it is also a fact that Gangetic River Dolphin is placed on the red list of the International Union Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and that the species are on the verge of extinction; and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to counter issues such as poaching, industrial and municipal waste dumping, siltation, mechanized boats to protect these aquatic animals and preserving their habitats?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)**

- (a) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has not received any specific report indicating that Ganga has been ranked as one of the most polluted and dirtiest rivers in the world. The WWF in their March 2007 report titled "World's top 10 rivers at risk" has indicated that water withdrawal poses a serious threat to the Ganges.
- (b) As per the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (2017), Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) is listed as Endangered.
- (c) The important steps taken by the Government to protect Gangetic River Dolphins and its habitats include:
  - i. Gangetic Dolphins (*Platanista gangetica*) is listed in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby according it the highest degree of protection against hunting.
  - ii. Gangetic Dolphin is one of the 17 species identified for taking up 'Recovery programme of Critically Endangered Species, under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat'.

- iii. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated Gangetic Dolphins as 'National Aquatic Animal.
- iv. Wildlife Sanctuaries covering important Dolphin habitats have been created in the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve their habitats. These include National Chambal Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh), Saranath Turtle Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh), Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary (Bihar).
- v. A project on Recovery of River Dolphins has been initiated by the Ministry with technical support of Wildlife Institute of India and collaboration of State Governments of Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Assam, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh. The other collaborators in this project include ARANYAK, WWF, Patna University, Bhagalpur University and Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (Delhi).

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