

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 103

ANSWERED ON 20.07.2026

HEAVILY POLLUTED RIVERS IN THE COUNTRY

103. Dr. LAXMIKANT BAJPAYEE:

Will the Minister of **Jal Shakti** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that all major rivers in the country are significantly contaminated with toxic heavy metals primarily Arsenic, Cadmium, Chromium, Copper, Lead, Mercury, and Nickel often exceeding permissible limits due to industrial, agricultural and domestic pollutants;
- (b) the details of multi-tier laboratory system being used for the analysis of the parameters and the data of all the parameters of testing at all the levels, for the last five years; and
- (c) the trend of pollutant levels in rivers during the last five years, with success rate of reducing it and budget spent for the purpose during the above period?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) to (c) Rivers in the country are polluted mainly due to discharge of untreated or partially treated sewage from cities/towns and industrial effluents in their respective catchment, lack of dilution, dumping of solid waste on their banks, agriculture runoff, geogenic effect and other non-point sources of pollution. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in association with State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs), monitors water quality of rivers across the country through a network of 2,265 monitoring stations under the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme (NWMP).

It is also submitted that Limits/Standards for heavy metals have not been prescribed for rivers. The prescribed parameters for river water quality include pH, Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and Faecal Coliform (FC). The data is available at <https://cpcb.gov.in/nwmp-data/>

In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 23 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), the Central Government delegated the powers to CPCB by issuing the Gazette Notifications with respect to grant of recognition to environmental laboratories. Accordingly CPCB has one Central Water Laboratory at Delhi and 8 regional laboratories performing analysis of parameters. Besides that, the SPCBs have their own laboratories which are recognized either by NABL or by EPA for analysis of parameters.

As per the latest report of CPCB, number of polluted river stretches has decreased from 351 in 2018 to 311 in 2022 and 296 in 2025, based on monitoring results in terms of Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), an indicator of organic pollution. Under Namami Gange Programme and National River Conservation Plan, an amount of Rs. 11,332 crore and Rs. 1,888 crore respectively have been incurred in pollution abatement of rivers in addition to schemes of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
