

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †405**  
ANSWERED ON 03.02.2022

**BURIAL OF DEAD BODIES ON RIVER BANK**

†405. KUNWAR DANISH ALI:

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether dead bodies were buried under sands on the banks of river Ganga in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar during Covid-19 period and many dead bodies were found flowing in the river;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Ganga river would not be polluted if dead bodies buried under sands come up when water level would rise and these dead bodies would flow in the rivers as 40 per cent of population of the country drinks water from river Ganga, 11 districts of Uttar Pradesh are adjacent to the river and large portion of population resides along the river in these districts; and
- (d) if so, the steps being taken by the Government to keep water of river Ganga clean?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU)

(a) & (b): The incidence of “unclaimed/ unidentified, burnt or partially burnt dead bodies, found floating in river or in grounds, in the shallow depth, on the banks in river Ganga”, was reported in certain districts (Unnao, Kanpur, Fatehpur, Kannauj, Ballia, Ghazipur etc.) in State of Uttar Pradesh and districts (Buxar, Saran, Patna etc.) in the State of Bihar, in the media.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS), initiated action, with the State Governments concerned for ensuring proper handling, management and disposal of dead bodies by the State authorities also ensuring the protection of the river Ganga.

Accordingly, advisories were issued by Director General, NMCG addressed to Chief Secretaries of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal and all District Ganga Committees followed by advisories from Secretary, DoWR, RD & GR, Ministry of Jal Shakti to Chief Secretaries of all States and the Administrators of all UTs and ensured with the assistance of district administration that Covid-19 protocol is being followed in cremation and disposal of these bodies.

This has led to coordinated action at State’s level towards cremation of dead bodies as per Government of India protocols, providing necessary financial assistance to deserving families for cremation of dead, regular patrolling of river channel and river banks as well as necessary community awareness drives to raise awareness among the river-side communities on do’s/ don’t for the use of river water to prevent the spread of infection in current scenario of Covid-19 surge.

(c): As per designated best use water quality criteria for drinking water specified by CPCB, river water can

be used for drinking purpose only after appropriate treatment. NMCG along with CPCB and State PCBs got a study completed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research–Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR–IITR) for “Detection of SARS-CoV-2 virus contamination and analysis of water quality due to disposal of dead bodies in selected sites in river Ganga”. The water samples were collected from identified sites of river Ganga banks namely Kannauj, Unnao, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Buxar, Hamirpur, Ghazipur, Ballia, Patna, Saran and Bhojpur. Based on the results of the study, none of the collected Ganga water Samples was found positive for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 indicating no contamination of the river water with the virus.

(d): Cleaning of river is a continuous process and Government of India is supplementing the efforts of the State Government in addressing the challenges of pollution in river Ganga and its tributaries by providing financial and technical assistance under Namami Gange Programme. Under this Programme, a diverse set of interventions for cleaning and rejuvenation of river Ganga have been taken up including waste water treatment, solid waste management, river front management (ghats and crematoria), maintaining continuous flow, rural sanitation, afforestation, biodiversity conservation and Public Participation etc.

Regulation of industrial Pollution is implemented through various provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 under consent mechanism by the respective State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Pollution Control Committees (PCCs).

Industries are facilitated through Charter based participatory approach for reduction in water consumption, effluent generation and pollution load by adoption of cleaner technologies & waste minimization practices. Sector specific Charters have been implemented in Pulp & Paper, Sugar, Textile and Distillery sectors.

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