GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1913

ANSWERED ON 31.07.2025

WATER QUALITY OF GANGA RIVER DURING MAHAKUMBH, 2025

†1913. SHRI BALWANT BASWANT WANKHADE

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) had conducted regular monitoring of water quality of Ganga river during Mahakumbh, 2025;

(b) if so, the details of the frequency of monitoring, specific locations, important norms for testing and the outcome thereof;

(c) whether any post-event assessment has been conducted to review the sanitation infrastructure, solid waste disposal and sewage management;

(d) if so, the details of the outcome and the corrective measures implemented;

(e) the details of the total number of Namami Gange projects sanctioned, completed, under implementation and lying pending for approval; and

(f) whether the Government has made any assessment of the effectiveness of completed Namami Gange projects, their important outcome, challenges identified and measurable results, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY**)**

(a) to (d) Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has informed that it carried out water quality monitoring at 5 stations (twice a week) from 12th January 2025 to 20th February 2025 during Maha Kumbh 2025 at Shringverpur Ghat, Lord Kurzon Bridge, Nagvasuki Mandir, Sangam and Deeha Ghat, covering auspicious bathing (Amrit Snan) days including pre- and post- days of such auspicious bathing days. Further, three more water quality monitoring locations at Shastri Bridge, Someshwar Ghat and downstream of Delhi Public School with effect from 21.02.2025, thus taking the monitoring locations for river Ganga water quality from 5 to 8.

As per the comprehensive report prepared based on the above monitoring, the median value of pH, Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Feacal Coliform (FC) for all the monitored locations was found within the respective criteria/permissible limits for Primary Bathing Water Quality Criteria.

The Prayagraj Mela Authority had prepared a comprehensive Sanitation Plan for Maha Kumbh 2025 after conducting industry consultations to explore and adopt the latest technologies with following main features:

i. To ensure accountability and performance, Service Level Benchmarks (SLBs) were included in the contracts with toilet vendors, covering manpower deployment, cesspool operations, and jet spray cleaning.
ii. Post-Mela Sanitation Measures included the systematic dismantling and removal of all toilets. Hygienic uninstallation was ensured by the sanitation team, using Malathion (5%) and Slaked Lime for effective disinfection and neutralisation of waste.
iii. Approximately 250 km of temporary drainage lines for collecting wastewater (excluding septage) within the Mela area. The collected water was treated through bioremediation techniques in dedicated ponds. These temporary lines were dismantled post-event and stored for reuse in future events such as the upcoming Magh Mela, and the ponds were subsequently backfilled.
iv. For septage treatment, three temporary Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) of 500 KLD capacity each were installed at various locations within the Mela premises. Additionally, two Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPs) of 50 KLD capacity each and one FSTP of 100 KLD were also utilised. These facilities were uninstalled after the event concluded.
v. The post-event reviews confirmed that sanitation and wastewater management systems functioned effectively. Based on these learnings, corrective actions and planning improvements are being implemented for Maha Kumbh 2025, including enhanced reuse strategies, improved disinfection protocols, and structured redeployment of sanitation infrastructure.

(e) A total of 502 projects have been sanctioned under the Namami Gange Programme for the rejuvenation of the River Ganga and its tributaries. Out of these, 323 projects have been completed, 150 are currently under implementation, and 29 are at the tendering stage.

(f) The Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) was engaged as a Third Party Agency (TPA) for the appraisal of the Namami Gange Mission (NGM). ASCI has observed the following in its report:

i. NGM has led to considerable additions to wastewater treatment infrastructure in the Ganga river basin, balanced with investments in riverfront and ghat development, river surface cleaning processes, afforestation, biodiversity conservation, organic agriculture, etc.
ii. Capacity building of implementing agencies and other stakeholders, along with community engagement to support the initiatives, are among the other key contributions of the projects.
iii. The decentralisation and mainstreaming of program tasks within the basin states and local body establishments have been the hallmark of the programme.
iv. ASCI, in its appraisal, stated that NGM has shown good progress in achieving its mandate of continuous flow (Aviral Dhara) and unpolluted flow (Nirmal Dhara).
v. It has demonstrated successful and replicable models for implementing a large-scale river rejuvenation programme in a mission mode and has gained global recognition.

The main challenges in implementation of Namami Gange Mission are following:

i. Identification of suitable land for the establishment of new Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)
ii. The issuance of statutory clearances such as right of way for sewage-related networks, obtaining permissions for road cutting, No Objection Certificates (NoCs) from competent authorities like forest and revenue departments;

In order to address and overcome these challenges, the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has been actively involved in closely monitoring the status of the projects. NMCG regularly conducts comprehensive review meetings under the chairmanship of the competent authority and through the Central Monitoring Committee (CMC) to evaluate progress, identify potential roadblocks, and ensure timely resolutions.

Measurable outcomes of the implementation of the NGM is provided through the reports of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on pollution assessment of rivers of India. As per the report, the Priority River Stretches (PRSs) on the river Ganga, based on the assessment carried out in 2022 (using 2019 and 2021 data), are as under:

a. Uttarakhand does not fall under polluted stretches (BOD < 3 mg/l);
b. In Uttar Pradesh, stretches from Farrukhabad to Allahabad and Mirzapur to Ghazipur fall under Priority Class V (BOD 3–6 mg/l);
c. In Bihar, stretches along Buxar, Patna, Fatwah, and Bhagalpur fall under Priority Class IV (BOD 6–10 mg/l);
d. Jharkhand does not fall under polluted stretches (BOD < 3 mg/l);
e. In West Bengal, the stretch from Behrampur to Haldia falls under Priority Class IV (BOD 6–10 mg/l).

Further, the value of Dissolved Oxygen (DO), which is an indicator of river health, has been found to be within the acceptable limits of the notified primary bathing water quality criteria and is satisfactory to support the ecosystem of the river along almost the entire stretch of the river Ganga.

As per the biomonitoring conducted during 2024–25 at 50 locations along River Ganga and its tributaries, and 26 locations along River Yamuna and its tributaries, the Biological Water Quality (BWQ) predominantly ranged from ‘Good’ to ‘Moderate’. The presence of diverse benthic macro-invertebrate species indicates the ecological potential of the rivers to sustain aquatic life.

Further, the population of Dolphins in the river Ganga has shown a marked increase over the past decade. From an estimated baseline of 2,500–3,000 individuals in 2009, the population rose to approximately 3,500 in 2015 and further to around 6,327 individuals as per the nationwide survey conducted during 2021–2023. This represents more than a twofold increase since 2009. In the Ganga basin, the 2021–2023 assessment across 17 tributaries confirmed dolphin presence in multiple rivers where they were previously unrecorded, such as the Rupnarayan, Girwa, Kauriyala, Babai, Rapti, Bagmati, Mahananda, Ken, Betwa, and Sind.

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