

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 910**

ANSWERED ON 24.07.2025

**PROVISIONING OF UNDERGROUND DRAINAGE SYSTEM IN RELIGIOUS AND  
PILGRIMAGE SITES**

910. SHRI B Y RAGHAVENDRA

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that many religious and pilgrimage sites in the country have lack of proper Underground Drainage (UDG) systems leading to mixing of wastewater with nearby rivers, lakes and other water sources and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the steps being taken by the Government to establish proper underground drainage and water treatment facilities at such sites to prevent pollution of sacred water bodies that hold cultural and religious significance;
- (c) whether there is any plan to prioritise pilgrimage sites under existing schemes like Namami Gange or other sanitation programmes to ensure clean water sources for devotees and local communities and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has conducted any surveys to identify major pilgrimage sites facing sewage and drainage issues and if so, the details of measures planned to address them; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to allocate special funds and collaborate with the States for time-bound implementation of UDG and sewage treatment projects at religious sites and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI**

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

**(a) to (e)** Rivers and other water bodies in the country are polluted mainly due to discharge of untreated or partially treated sewage from cities/towns and industrial effluents in their respective catchments, dumping of solid wastes, agricultural run-off, problems in operation and maintenance of sewage/effluent treatment plants, lack of dilution and other non-point sources of pollution.

It is the primary responsibility of States/Union Territories (UTs) and local bodies to ensure required treatment of sewage and industrial effluents, before discharging into recipient water bodies or land for prevention and control of pollution therein.

This Ministry is implementing Namami Gange Program for rejuvenation, protection and management of river Ganga and its tributaries, and National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) for conservation of other

rivers in the country. Under these schemes, pollution abatement and sewerage infrastructure works are taken up including underground wastewater conveyance system. Under Namami Gange Program, several sanitation initiatives have been implemented at key pilgrimage sites and river towns namely Haridwar, Varanasi, Rishikesh, Gangotri, Badrinath, Prayagraj and Sultanganj to ensure clean river water, both for devotees and the local population. Similarly, religious/pilgrimage sites covered under NRCP include towns of Rajamundry, Pamba, Srirangapatna, Nashik, Triambakeshwar, Puri, Erode, Madurai and Thanjavur.

The schemes of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart Cities Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban under the aegis of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs are implemented in identified towns including religious and pilgrimage sites. These schemes involving underground drainage system also, are aimed at improving water quality of rivers and other water bodies, sanitation systems and water management in different towns including religious sites.

The Central sector scheme of Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) launched by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in 2014-2015 provides for developing and enhancing pilgrimage and heritage destinations across India, focusing on religious tourism. The scheme aims to integrate these sites in a planned, sustainable, and holistic manner, improving infrastructure, promoting cleanliness, ensuring accessibility, and enhancing overall visitor experience.

\*\*\*\*\*