

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:745
ANSWERED ON:25.02.2009
RISK TO RIVER GANGES
Khaire Shri Chandrakant Bhaurao

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the river Ganges has been termed as one of the world's top ten rivers facing the greatest risk due to diversion of water affecting natural flow;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the suggestions made in this regard;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government with a view to keeping the natural sources clean and safe and the outcome of such steps taken so far?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) & (b) In a report entitled "World's top 10 rivers at risk", the World Wildlife Fund, an International Non-Government Organization (NGO), has listed the river Ganga as one of the World's ten rivers facing risk. The Central Government is not aware of the data-base and the methodology adopted by the said NGO for making this Report. The report profiles the biodiversity of river Ganga, and perceives over extraction of water for agriculture and excessive water diversions affecting natural flows as major threats to the river. The report suggests, among others, improving efficiency in water use and irrigation of crops, end to perverse subsidies, capping of water extraction levels, further community education & awareness, and an integrated river basin management.

(c) & (d) The flows of river Ganga are being monitored by Central Water Commission (CWC) under the Ministry of Water Resources at various places on regular basis. There is no apparent reduction in the available water in river Ganga at its terminal point at Farakka Barrage even during the critical season. The CWC has formulated a plan for water resources development in the country that envisages inter-linking of rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water-deficient basins for optimum utilization of water in the country. The Ministry of Environment & Forests launched Ganga Action Plan (GAP) Phase-I in 1985 as a centrally funded scheme with the objective of improving the water quality of the Ganga to acceptable standards by intercepting, diverting and treating the sewage, which was extended to GAP Phase II during 1993-96. GAP Phase II was merged in late 1996 with the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for pollution abatement in major rivers of the country. A sewage treatment capacity of 999 million litres per day (mld) has been created under the Ganga Action Plan so far, besides other pollution abatement works like low cost sanitation works, crematoria etc.

The Government has further decided to set up a "National Ganga River Basin Authority" as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority for the Ganga river to address the problem of pollution in the Ganga in a holistic and comprehensive manner.