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Title: Need to take up river cleaning works under Central Projects including Mahanadi and Bramani flowing in Orissa.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to raise an important matter of urgent public importance. It relates to the need to take up river cleansing as a Central project.

While India's most ambitious river cleaning project the Ganga Action Plan-I and Ganga Action Plan II have proved to be huge failures with the projects running nearly 13 years behind schedule, it is high time to declare some of the most polluted rivers as national rivers and intervene directly to clean up such rivers.

The national river concept is nothing new and the Central Water Commission should formulate the criteria for rivers and finalise it soon. Then only the Union Government can take up river cleansing as a Central project. One is aware that water was transferred from the Union and listed as a State Subject by a special ordinance in 1997.

The 2006 official audit of the Ganga Action Plan says that the Plan has met only 39 per cent of its sewage treatment target. The Central Pollution Control Board says that even after spending Rs. 30 crore on cleaning it, the Ganga remains as dirty as ever. [\[R72\]](#)

This is the case with all major rivers of the country. Be it in Cuttack or Sambalpur, the Mahanadi is gradually meeting the fate of the Ganga. Mahanadi is facing high levels of pollution and gradual deterioration of water quality. Nearly 86 per cent of the catchment and major industries of Mahanadi are located upstream in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Big towns like Rajnandgaon, Bhillai, Durg, Bilaspur and Korba are on the banks of these tributaries. The industries located there release effluents into the river and thus begins the story of the river pollution.

What is disturbing is that river with its pollutants further degrade the water level and as it passes through Sambalpur and reaches Cuttack, it becomes unfit for human consumption.

I urge upon the Government to take up river cleaning as Central projects at the earliest and include Mahanadi and Brahmini in it.