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Title : Shri Yogi Adityanath called the attention of the Minister of Environment and Forests to the need to check pollution in rivers and lakes in the country.

योगी आदित्यनाथ (गोरखपुर): अध्यक्ष महोदया, देश की पवित्र नदियों और प्राकृतिक झीलों को प्रदूषण से मुक्त करने से संबंधित एक ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव मैं आपके संज्ञान में लाया था। मैं आपसे अनुरोध करना चाहता हूँ कि मुझे माननीय मंत्री जी का जो जवाब प्राप्त हुआ है, मैं उस पर दो शब्द कहना चाहता हूँ। ...(व्यवधान)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (GHATAL): Sir, I am on a point of order. My point of order is that the Minister has to make a statement first.

MADAM SPEAKER: Yes.

योगी आदित्यनाथ जी, आप पहले ध्यानाकर्षण प्रस्ताव मूव कीजिए।

â€(लवधलन)

योगी आदित्यनाथ : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री का ध्यान अविलम्बनीय लोक महत्व के निम्न विषय की ओर दिलाता हूँ और प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वह इस संबंध में वक्तव्य दें :

"देश में नदियों और झीलों में प्रदूषण नियंत्रित किए जाने की आवश्यकता तथा इस संबंध में सरकार द्वारा उठाए गए कदम।"

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): Madam Speaker, I am glad that the hon. Member has given this Calling Attention Motion on a subject of vital national importance. I have prepared a detailed Statement which has been placed on the Table of the House and which is going to be made available to those Members who are interested in the Statement. I have already requested the Secretariat to circulate the Statement, but I was told that those hon. Members who were interested in the Statement could ask for the Statement. I have already prepared a detailed Statement on this Calling Attention Motion.

However, I will just make a couple of brief points in response to the hon. Members Calling Attention Motion. Madam, in 1985, the first systematic attempt at cleaning our rivers was started with the Ganga Action Plan.

We have had about 20 years of the Ganga Action Plan. We have spent about Rs.817 crore on cleaning of the River Ganga both under Ganga Action Plan, Phase-I and Phase-II. The plan has consisted largely in setting up a sewage treatment plants in cities and towns along the River Ganga in five different States of the country. I have no hesitation in saying that even after spending Rs.816 crore, there does not seem to be any visible improvement in the quality of the River Ganga. That is because of the fact that the pollution load of the River Ganga has increased much beyond our expectations. That is also because the sewage treatment plants that have been set up have not been run to full capacity because of the inability of the urban local bodies to provide for full operation and maintenance cost.

The second major intervention of the Government of India has been the Yamuna Action Plan which started in 1993 at a total cost of Rs.680 crore and in December 2004, we extended this by another Rs.624 crore. The story in the Yamuna Action Plan also is broadly similar to the Ganga Action Plan. A large number of sewage treatment plants that are being set up, unfortunately, are not being utilised to full capacity and, therefore, the pollution load is not being visibly reduced.

The third major intervention of the Government of India came in 1995 with the National River Conservation Plan under which roughly about 37 rivers in the country in 21 different States of the country have been taken up for river conservation and river cleaning. This year roughly Rs.256 crore has been provided for this. These are the broad facts that I wanted to bring to the attention of the hon. Member and the House.

I think, the single biggest problem that we are facing is because of municipal sewage being emptied into our rivers. Roughly 75 per cent of pollution in our rivers comes from the municipal sewage and about 25 per cent comes from industrial sewage. Now the inability of the Central Government, the State Government and the urban local bodies to provide adequate municipal sewage treatment facilities has caused a disaster for our rivers. Out of the 35 metropolitan cities in our country, only about 50 per cent of the sewage is treated. Out of 497 class-I cities in our country, only about 32 per cent of our sewage is

treated. And in 415 class-II towns of our country, only eight per cent of our sewage is treated. Even where we have sewage treatment plants, they do not operate to full capacity because of the failure of the urban local bodies to provide full operation and maintenance costs. This is the biggest problem facing the river cleaning programme. Under the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission -- the hon. Minister for Urban Development is sitting here -- a large number of cities have come forward for establishing and expanding sewage treatment facilities. But the true challenge is going to be to provide money for the operation and maintenance. The Central Government is giving the money for setting up sewage treatment, but operation and maintenance is the responsibility of the urban local bodies.

The hon. Member will be pleased to know that just a couple of days ago, our Ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has submitted a proposal to the 13th Finance Commission that for the next five years, the full cost of operation and maintenance should also be borne by the Central Government. This is in recognition of the fact that urban local bodies are not in a position to provide operation and maintenance. We have estimated that under the National River Conservation Programme, a sum of Rs.1300 crore will be required in the next five years for operation and maintenance. I have met the Chairman of the 13th Finance Commission. He was receptive to this proposal. The Report of the Finance Commission will come in November this year. We hope that the full cost of operation and maintenance will be borne by the Central Government for the next five years.

This will have a major impact on the operation of our sewage treatment plants, and thereby on the cleanliness of our rivers. I want to assure the hon. Member and the august House through you, Madam Speaker, that the funds that are going to be required for cleaning of the rivers is not going to be a major constraint.

The Finance Minister, in the Budget that he presented a few days ago, has made an initial allocation of Rs.250 crore for the National Ganga River Basin Authority that was established last year under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister comprising of the Chief Ministers of the five Ganga States. The initial allocation is Rs.250 crore. We have called for global bids for preparing a Basin Management Plan for the river Ganga. We have received thirty offers. In the next two months we will decide on the Consultant who will prepare the Basin Management Plan.

I want to state here that we are going to completely transform our approach to the cleaning of rivers. We are going to go from a town-based approach to a basin-based approach. We are going to go from purely sewage treatment to sewage reuse, sewage recycling, afforestation and improvement along the river beds.

Thirdly, the National Ganga River Basin Authority is an empowered authority, empowered by a notification to carry out works along the river Ganga. Similar authorities could be conceived of in due course of time for other important rivers. As I said, Rs.250 crore has been allocated this year. I am sure that as we proceed, allocation of funds is not going to be a problem.

In conclusion, Madam, I want to say that we are fully conscious of the cultural, economic and ecological significance of the rivers of our country. We are trying to control the emptying of both municipal and industrial sewage. But we also have a problem in States like Uttarakhand. We also have a problem that the lean season flows in some of the rivers has come down considerably because of the fact that we are building a large number of hydroelectric dams.

In my previous Ministerial capacity I was advocating the construction of more dams. In my new capacity I will advocate for greater caution on the construction of these dams because they do interfere with the lean season flow of many of these rivers. I hope that my colleague the Minister of Power, who is not here, will pay adequate attention to this problem as well. I say this because unless we are able to assure adequate lean season water in our rivers we will not be able to solve the problem that the hon. Member has drawn our attention to.

*The pollution load on the major rivers of the country has increased over the years due to urbanisation and industrialization. The following schemes are being implemented by the Central Government, jointly with the State Governments, on a cost sharing basis to address the problem of pollution in rivers and lakes.

Ganga Action Plan Phase-I & II

Ganga Action Plan (GAP) Phase I was launched as a centrally funded scheme in 1985. The Plan was launched with the objective of improving the water quality of the Ganga to acceptable standards. Various pollution abatement works like Interception & Diversion of sewage, setting up of sewage treatment plants, low cost sanitation works, crematoria works, etc. were taken up. This Phase was declared complete in March, 2000.

Since GAP Phase - I did not cover the pollution load of Ganga fully, GAP Phase - II which includes the tributaries of Ganga

namely, Yamuna, Gomti, Damodar and Mahananda, besides Ganga, was approved in stages from 1993-1996. In December, 1996 GAP Phase II was merged with the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP). The total expenditure incurred on river Ganga under the GAP Phase - I & II so far, is Rs.816.47 crore and sewage treatment capacity of 1007 million liters per day (mld) has been created.

Water quality monitoring carried out by reputed institutions such as IIT Kanpur, BHEL, Patna University, etc. indicates that, water quality of the river Ganga conforms to the prescribed standards in terms of key indicators, namely, Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Dissolved Oxygen (DO) at most of the locations, except in the stretch between Kannauj and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. However, the levels of fecal coliforms are reported to exceed the maximum permissible limit at a number of monitoring stations along the river Ganga.

Yamuna Action Plan Phase-I & II

The first phase of the Yamuna Action Plan (YAP) for the abatement of pollution of river Yamuna was started in April, 1993 in 21 towns of three States of UP, Delhi & Haryana. YAP-I was completed in February, 2003 at a total expenditure of Rs. 682 crore. The second Phase of YAP, an ongoing programme, commenced in December, 2004 at an approved cost of Rs. 624 crore. Till March, 2009, an expenditure of Rs 190.15 crore has been incurred. Sewage treatment capacity of 753.25 mld has been created under the Plan.

As per the water quality monitoring undertaken through independent institutions, the water quality in the stretch of the river Yamuna from Tajewala to Palla in Haryana is found to be within the prescribed limits. However, the stretch of the river in the vicinity of Delhi (downstream of Wazirabad barrage to upstream of Okhla barrage) and parts of Uttar Pradesh exceeds the standards in terms of Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand of 3.0 milligram per litre (mg/l) mainly due to significant increase in pollution load and lack of fresh water in the river during lean period.

National River Conservation Plan (NRCP)

The Centrally sponsored scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) was initiated in 1995 for taking up conservation works in the identified polluted stretches of major rivers. The objective of NRCP is to check pollution in rivers and to improve their water quality through implementation of various pollution abatement works. The Plan covers 166 towns along polluted stretches of 37 rivers spread over 20 States. The major rivers covered include Ganga, Yamuna, Gomti, Damodar, Satluj, Krishna, Musi, Cauvery and Godavari, among others. Thus, of the seven rivers mentioned in the Notice to the Motion, five are covered under NRCP.

Pollution abatement works in the river Cauvery cover 13 towns in Karnataka & Tamil Nadu at a sanctioned cost of Rs.269.09 crore. Sewage treatment capacity of 151 mld has been created so far.

Pollution abatement works in the river Godavari cover 7 towns of Andhra Pradesh & Maharashtra at a sanctioned cost of Rs. 118.98 crore. Sewage treatment capacity of 186 mld has been created so far.

Pollution abatement works in the river Narmada cover 2 towns in Madhya Pradesh at a sanctioned cost of Rs.14.33 crore. Schemes for creation of sewage treatment capacity of 16 mld have been sanctioned recently.

So far under NRCP (including GAP-I), an expenditure of Rs.4302 crore has been incurred and sewage treatment capacity of 3926 mld has been created under the River Action Plans, besides schemes for interception & diversion works and other non-core works such as crematoria, low cost sanitation works etc.

National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP)

National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India for conservation/restoration of polluted and degraded lakes. The Scheme presently covers 57 Lakes in 13 states. The objective of the Scheme is to restore and conserve the polluted lakes in urban and semi-urban areas of the country. The activities covered under NLCP include (i) Prevention of pollution from point sources by intercepting, diverting and treating the pollution load entering the lakes from the entire lake catchment area, (ii) In-situ measures of lake cleaning such as de-silting, de-weeding, bio-remediation etc., depending upon the site conditions, (iii) Catchment area treatment which may include bunding, afforestation, fencing and shore line development etc.

So far, an amount of Rs. 285.06 crore has been released under the Plan to the States and restoration works in 18 lakes have been completed.

New initiatives- National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)

Review of river conservation strategy is a continuous process. Several measures such as concurrent evaluation of schemes have been initiated to improve the performance of the National River Conservation Plan. The Central Government has also set up the 'National Ganga River Basin Authority' on 20.2.2009 as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority to ensure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga by adopting a holistic approach, with the river basin as the unit of planning. The Authority is chaired by the Prime Minister and has as its members, the Union Ministers concerned, the Chief Ministers of the States through which Ganga flows viz., Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, among others.

River conservation activities such as sewage treatment infrastructure are also being implemented under other Central schemes, such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, as well as State schemes.*

योगी आदित्यनाथ : महोदय, सन् 1985 में गंगा एक्शन प्लान की घोषणा हुई थी। जैसा कि मंत्री जी ने कहा कि उस पर 816 करोड़ रुपए से अधिक व्यय हो चुके हैं, लेकिन गंगा मैली की मैली रही। उत्तर प्रदेश प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड और बीएचयू की गंगा अनुसंधान प्रयोगशाला के आंकड़े बताते हैं कि गंगा में पानी बहुत खतरनाक स्थिति में है। पीने के लिए जो योग्य पानी होना चाहिए, उसमें फीकल कॉलीफॉर्म की स्थिति कतई नहीं होनी चाहिए। नहाने के पानी में उसकी संख्या 50,000 से ज्यादा नहीं होनी चाहिए और खेती योग्य पानी में उसकी संख्या पांच लाख से कम नहीं होनी चाहिए। लेकिन हिन्दुओं की धार्मिक, सांस्कृतिक और पवित्र नगरी वाराणसी के आंकड़े बताते हैं कि गंगा नदी के बेसिन में जल प्रदूषण के कारण फीकल कॉलीफॉर्म की संख्या पांच लाख से 21 लाख तक है। गंगोत्री से लेकर गंगा सागर तक जितने भी नगर और कस्बे पवित्र गंगा के किनारे पड़ते हैं, उनका सीवरेज लोड और साथ-साथ औद्योगिक इकाइयों का जितना भी कचरा है, बिना ट्रीटमेंट के ही इस पवित्र नदी में पहुंच जाता है। जहां वह इस नदी के पॉल्यूशन का कारण है। माननीय मंत्री महोदय ने इस बारे में बताया कि गंगा जैसी पवित्र नदियों के प्रदूषण के पीछे एक अन्य कारण भी है। गंगा और उसकी सहायक नदियों पर बनी या प्रस्तावित पन-विद्युत परियोजनाएं भी एक कारण है। ग्लोबल वार्मिंग और जलवायु परिवर्तन के कारण ही गंगा का मूल स्रोत गंगोत्री-ग्लेशियर बहुत तेजी से सिकुड़ रहा है और इस पर देश के पर्यावरणविदों ने इस पर काफी चिंता व्यक्त की है। पूरी दुनिया उससे चिंतित है। छोटी-बड़ी पन-विद्युत परियोजनाओं के कारण, पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में जो विस्फोट हुए हैं, उन विस्फोटों ने भी भागीरथी के प्राकृतिक प्रवाह के साथ जुड़ने वाले छोटे-बड़े स्रोतों को पूरी तरह नष्ट किया है। माननीय मंत्री जी इस बात को जानते होंगे कि आज भी गंगा और उसकी सहायक नदियों पर, अकेले उत्तराखंड में, भारत सरकार की मदद से, प्रदेश सरकार की मदद से, लगभग 250 से ऊपर पन-विद्युत परियोजनाएं बन रही हैं या प्रस्तावित हैं।

इस बार गंगा-दशहरे के अवसर पर, हरिद्वार में, बहुत बड़ी संख्या में लोग गये थे। पिछले दशहरे के अवसर पर, हरिद्वार में गंगाजल का जो स्तर था वह 43000 क्यूबिक था लेकिन एक साल के बाद, इस बार देखा गया कि गंगा-दशहरे के दिन वहां का जल स्तर 8000 क्यूबिक था। टिहरी जैसे डैम बनाते समय हम सब को आश्वासन दिया गया था कि ये डैम बनेंगे, लेकिन भागीरथी का जो प्राकृतिक प्रवाह है उसे अवरुद्ध नहीं किया जाएगा, उस प्राकृतिक प्रवाह को अनवरत बनाये रखने का प्रयास होगा। लेकिन यह नहीं हो पाया। उसका मूल प्रवाह, पहले टिहरी डैम के कारण अवरुद्ध हुआ और अब उसी टिहरी में मलेरीभाली बांध के कारण पूरी तरह से अवरुद्ध हो रहा है। मैं स्वयं गंगोत्री गया था, मैंने देखा कि एनटीपीसी की बहुत सारी परियोजनाएं टिहरी से लेकर गंगोत्री तक बन रही हैं और बहुत सारी जगह भागीरथी का प्रवाह पूरी तरह से सूखा हुआ है, वहां कोई नदी नहीं है, कोई प्रवाह नहीं है। यह स्थिति वहां पर है।

स्वतंत्र भारत में जब हम पवित्र गंगा की बात करते हैं, अवरिल गंगा की बात करते हैं तो हम सभी के लिए चुनौती है कि जितनी भी पवित्र नगरी गंगोत्री से लेकर गंगा-सागर तक हैं, ऋषिकेश है, हरिद्वार है, गढ़मुक्तेश्वर है, प्रयाग है, काशी है, वहां की जनता और पूरा समाज तो इससे उद्वेलित है ही, लेकिन पर्यावरण और पारिस्थितिकी पर जो इसका बुरा असर पड़ रहा है, उससे भी माननीय मंत्री जी अच्छी तरह से अवगत होंगे।

इसके साथ-साथ दो अन्य चीजें जो आई हैं उन चीजों के कारण गंगा जैसी पवित्र नदी अपने अस्तित्व के लिए जूझ रही है और अब उत्तर प्रदेश में गंगा-एक्सप्रेस-वे के नाम पर एक नयी परियोजना प्रारम्भ हुई है, पर्यावरण के मानकों की धज्जियां उड़ाकर इस योजना को प्रारम्भ किया जा रहा है। अगर यह परियोजना प्रारम्भ होती है तो गंगा जैसी पवित्र नदी का अस्तित्व पूरी तरह से समाप्त हो जाएगा, दिल्ली के गंदे नाले की तरह गंगा की शक्ल होगी, जो हम सब की चिंता का विषय है।

माननीय मंत्री जी ने यहां पर तथ्य रखे कि गंगा एक्शन प्लान अब तक पूरी तरह से फ्लॉप रहा है, उसी तरह से यमुना एक्शन प्लान में भी लगभग 682 करोड़ रुपये खर्च होने के बाद भी यमुना मैली की मैली है। यह बात केवल गंगा और यमुना की नहीं है, हम लोगों को बचपन में एक श्लोक याद कराया जाता था कि "गंगे च यमुनेचैव गोदावरी सरस्वती, नर्मदे सिंधु कावेरी जलस्मिन् सनिधम् कुरु"। यानी इनको स्मरण करके ही हम अपनी दिनचर्या प्रारम्भ करते थे। देश की पवित्र नदियों का स्मरण करके ही हम अपनी दिनचर्या प्रारम्भ करते थे। हम न केवल इन नदियों की पवित्रता और इनकी अवरिलता को अक्षुण्ण बनाएंगे, अपितु हम लोग इन नदियों के माध्यम से राष्ट्र की एकता और अखंडता को भी सनिश्चित रखेंगे। अपितु हम लोग राष्ट्रीय नदियों के माध्यम से राष्ट्र

की एकता और उसकी अखंडता को सुनिश्चित रखेंगे। लेकिन आज देश की सभी पवित्र नदियां अपवित्र हो चुकी हैं। मैं गोरखपुर से आता हूँ। गोरखपुर में एक नदी है जो गोरखपुर जिले को दो भागों में बांटती है, उसे आमी नदी कहते हैं। यह सच है कि अधिकतर बड़ी नदियां सीवेज लोड के कारण प्रदूषित हुई हैं।...**(व्यवधान)**

अध्यक्ष महोदया : अब आप समाप्त करिए।

योगी आदित्यनाथ : मैडम, मुझे केवल 2-3 क्लेरिफिकेशन पूछने हैं। उसके बाद मैं समाप्त ही करूंगा। आमी नदी में जहां से शुरुआत होती है, सिद्धार्थ नगर जनपद से, संत कबीर नगर जनपद और फिर गोरखपुर जनपद में वहां राप्ती नदी में मिल जाती है। शुरुआत से ही वहां पर औद्योगिक इकाइयों का सारा कचरा डाल दिया गया है और आज वह नदी लगती ही नहीं है कि वह नदी है। ऐसा लगता है कि सीवेज का कोई नाला बह रहा हो और उसके चारों तरफ कई किलोमीटर तक भयंकर बदबू आती रहती है।...**(व्यवधान)**

अध्यक्ष महोदया : अब आप समाप्त करिए। आपके सारे बिन्दु आ गये।

योगी आदित्यनाथ : महोदया, साथ-साथ प्राकृतिक झीलों के संरक्षण के बारे में भी एक प्रस्ताव गोरखपुर का था। गोरखपुर में 1700 एकड़ क्षेत्र में एक रामगढ़ ताल है। उस रामगढ़ ताल जैसी प्राकृतिक झीलों को बचाये रखने के संबंध में भी मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में यद्यपि विस्तार से कहा है लेकिन मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से इस प्रस्ताव के माध्यम से जानना चाहता हूँ कि गंगा नदी के महत्व और भारतीय आस्था को देखते हुए माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी ने गंगा नदी को राष्ट्रीय नदी घोषित किया है और उन्होंने एक गंगा बेसिन ऑथोरिटी बनाने की घोषणा भी की थी। मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या इस संबंध में कोई विधेयक इस सदन में आएगा और उसका क्रियान्वयन कब तक प्रारम्भ हो जाएगा?

दूसरे, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहता हूँ कि वर्ष 1985 में जब गंगा एक्शन प्लान प्रारम्भ हुआ था, उस समय गंगा जी में जल की स्थिति क्या थी और प्रदूषण की स्थिति क्या थी और आज जल और प्रदूषण की स्थिति क्या है? इसी का दूसरा भाग है कि यमुना एक्शन प्लान प्रारम्भ होते समय इतना पैसा खर्च होने के बाद भी यमुना जी में जल की स्थिति उस समय क्या थी और प्रदूषण की स्थिति क्या थी और आज की तारीख तक इस योजना के अन्तर्गत करोड़ों रुपया खर्च होने के बाद भी, इतना पैसा बर्बाद होने के बाद भी यमुना जी में जल का स्तर क्या है और उसमें प्रदूषण का स्तर क्या है?

तीसरे, गंगा और अन्य नदियों के प्राकृतिक प्रवाह को रोककर जो बांध बनाये जा रहे हैं, उनके कारण बहुत सारी जगहों पर तमाम समस्याएं पैदा हुई हैं जो पर्यावरण के लिए बहुत खतरनाक है। इसलिए मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि उस संबंध में पर्यावरण मंत्रालय क्या करने जा रहा है? मैंने जो बताया कि विभिन्न जनपदों में बहुत सारी नदियां हैं जो उन जनपदों के लाखों लोगों के जीवन से जुड़ी हुई हैं। मैंने गोरखपुर की आमी नदी की बात कही। उस आमी नदी के प्रदूषित होने से ढाई लाख मछुआरे बेरोजगार हुए हैं। गोरखपुर का उन्नत पशु धन और उन्नत खेती उस नदी के दोनों तटों पर होती थी लेकिन आज वह पूरी तरह से नष्ट हो गई है, लोग आज भुखमरी के कगार पर पहुंच गए हैं, लोग बेरोजगार हो चुके हैं और उनके भूखों मरने की स्थिति आ चुकी है। इसलिए मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से अनुरोध करना चाहूंगा कि आमी नदी जैसी नदियों के प्रदूषण को दूर करने के लिए और रामगढ़ जैसी प्राकृतिक झीलों का संरक्षण करने के लिए माननीय मंत्री जी द्वारा क्या कदम उठाये जा रहे हैं?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH : Madam, as far as the National Ganga River Basin Authority is concerned, this was constituted under the Environment Protection Act of 1986. A notification was issued last year. No separate Act of Parliament is required. The NGRBA has been notified under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and five Chief Ministers. We are shortly going to call the first meeting of the NGRBA. An allocation of Rs.250 crore has been made. Madam, we have received 30 offers for preparing the Master Basin Management Plan. In the next two months' time we will select the consultant who will prepare the Basin Management Plan. This is my answer to the question on the NGRBA.

The hon. Member has raised questions on whether the Ganga quality has improved and whether the Yamuna quality has improved. I would like to say that I can always give you figures to show that it has improved. But the true test is, does the Ganga look cleaner today than 20 years ago. The answer is, 'No'. The true test is, does the Yamuna look cleaner today than 20 years ago. The answer is, 'No'.

Of course, Yamuna does not exist today and that is a separate issue altogether. So I can give you any number of indicators. I can give you bio-chemical oxygen demand and I can give you dissolved oxygen. The hon. Member with Physics background is here and he will know all these indicators and what they mean. But really to the layman what counts is: Is the river looking cleaner today or not? The answer is a depressing no. So, I think we need to understand this. I would be glad to give the numbers to the hon. Member but I myself do not believe these numbers. These numbers can always be given; they can always be measured and they can always be monitored. We can always find a stretch where we can say that it is cleaner today than it was 20 years ago. But I admit with full responsibility that the Ganga and the Yamuna today are no cleaner today than what they were 20 years ago. We have to make a determined and a renewed effort if we were to save these rivers.

The third question he has raised is on Uttarakhand and I want to say that there were series of meetings which our Prime

Minister took. There was a high level committee that went into this issue of the Loharinag Pala Project of NTPC. The high level committee recommended the release of four cumecs of water. But the Prime Minister and the hon. Union Power Minister decided that instead of four cumecs of water going into the river, 16 cumecs will be released back into the river. So, it is not just *aviral dhara*, it is *aviral dhara* four times multiplied. What this means is that this power project of NTPC will function only for five months in a year. This is a big compromise that we have struck and it shows that the Government when faced with the choice between environment, protecting the rivers and generating the power, sometimes can take a decision for protecting rivers and saving the environment like what happened 25 years ago in the case of Silent Valley in Kerala when the then Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi decided that she will not have the hydel project but she will preserve the rain forest in Kerala. Similarly, such choices have to be made and we have made this choice in Loharinag Pala Project and I am sure that in other projects also we will look at the compromise between generating power and saving the environment.

Now, Madam, there are many other issues that the hon. Member has raised that relates to Gorakhpur. I had answered this question in the Question Hour last week. We have a Lake Conservation Programme and 57 lakes have been taken up across the country. My young colleague, the Minister for Surface Transport has also met me who is a Member from Kushinagar. Hon. Member from Gorakhpur has also met me. We have a proposal for cleaning up the Ramgarh Taal. We are examining it and it is a Rs.146 crore proposal that has come from the State Government. I have assured both the Minister of State and the hon. MP that we will very soon give our approval to this Project. Its 70 per cent will be funded by the Central Government and 30 per cent will be funded by the State Government and I hope we will be able to accord final approval.

Finally, the hon. Member has raised the issue of Ganga Expressway. I think that is a slightly different subject and I would rather not comment on it as part of my reply today.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT 347/15/09)
