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## Supreme Court's View on Pollution in Yamuna

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### Why in News

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Recently, the **Supreme Court (SC)** has taken suo motu cognizance of pollution of water bodies by untreated sewage.

The SC was hearing an urgent petition filed by the **Delhi Jal Board (DJB)**, to immediately stop Haryana from discharging **pollutants into the Yamuna river**.

### Key Points

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- **Background:**
  - In the 2017 *Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti v. Union of India case*, the SC directed that **norms for generating funds, for setting up and/or operating the Common Effluent Treatment Plant and Sewage Treatment Plants**, shall be finalised by the State Pollution Control Board's on or before 31<sup>st</sup> march 2017.
  - It was **directed that for the purpose of setting up these plants, the state government will prioritise such cities, towns and villages**, which discharge industrial pollutants and sewer directly in rivers and water bodies.

- **SC's Ruling:**
  - **Constitutional Provisions Highlighted:**
    - **Article 243W** of the Constitution **vests municipalities and local authorities with the performance of functions and implementation of schemes as may be entrusted to them**, including those in relation to the matters listed in **item 6 of the 12<sup>th</sup> schedule**.
 

Item 6 of the Schedule includes “**public health, sanitation conservancy and solid waste management**”.
    - **Article 21:** The right to clean the environment, and further, pollution-free water, has been protected under the broad rubric of the **right to life**.
  - **Directions to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):**
    - The court directed the **CPCB** to **submit a report identifying municipalities along the river Yamuna, which have not installed total treatment plants for sewage** as per the requirement or have gaps in ensuring that the sewage is not discharged untreated into the river.
    - It asked CPCB to **highlight any other source of prominent contamination within the limits of Municipalities** and to **submit priority-wise list of Municipalities**, river stretches adjacent to which have been found to be most polluted.

## Pollution in Yamuna

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- **Causes of Pollution in Yamuna:**
  - **Industrial Pollution:**

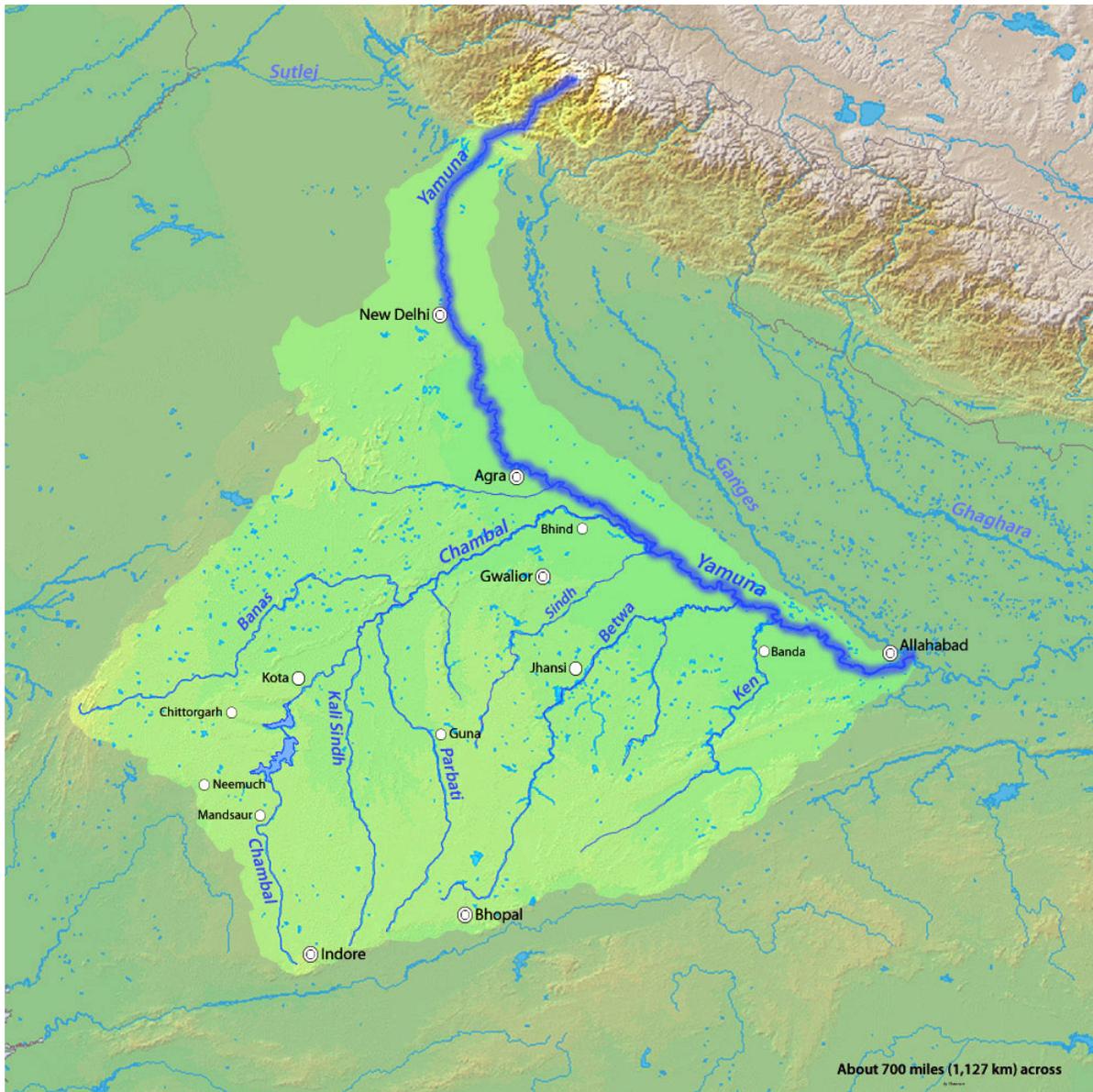
The Yamuna flows into Delhi from Haryana and the state has industrial units in Sonipat (on the banks of Yamuna). **Ammonia is used as an industrial chemical** in the production of fertilisers, plastics and dyes.
  - **Mixing of Drains:**

Mixing of **two drains carrying drinking water and sewage or industrial waste, or both**, in Sonipat. The two drains often mix due to overflow or damage to the wall that separates them.
- **Effects of Rising Ammonia:**
  - Ammonia reduces the amount of oxygen in water as it is transformed to oxidised forms of nitrogen. Hence, it also **increases Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)**.
 

Water pollution by organic wastes is measured in terms of BOD.
  - If the **concentration** of ammonia in water is **above 1 ppm**, it is **toxic to fishes**.
  - In humans, **long term ingestion** of water having ammonia levels of 1 ppm or above may cause **damage to internal organs**.

## Yamuna

- **Source:** The river Yamuna, a **major tributary of river Ganges**, originates from the Yamunotri glacier near Bandarpooch peaks in the Mussoorie range of the lower Himalayas in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.
- **Basin:** It **meets the Ganges at the Sangam in Prayagraj**, Uttar Pradesh after flowing through Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi.
- **Length:** 1376 km.
- **Important Dam:** Lakhwar-Vyasi Dam (Uttarakhand), Tajewala Barrage Dam (Haryana) etc.
- **Important Tributaries:** Chambal, Sindh, Betwa, Ken, Tons, Hindon.



**Source:IE**