



# Maharashtra Leads in River Pollution

## Why in News?

The [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#) has identified a significant issue with polluted river stretches in India, particularly in Maharashtra, which continues to have the **highest number of affected rivers**.

- Despite a marginal reduction in polluted river stretches nationwide, Mumbai's rivers remain some of the most severely polluted, primarily due to **untreated sewage**, industrial effluents, and solid waste dumping.

## Key Findings

- **Maharashtra's Status:** The state has **54 polluted river stretches**, the highest in the country. The most polluted stretches are concentrated in the **Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR)**, including rivers like the **Mithi, Dahisar, Poisar, Oshiwara, and Ulhas**.
- **Mithi River's Plight:** Despite multiple rejuvenation efforts, [Mithi](#) continues to be one of Mumbai's most polluted rivers. It carries excessive pollution from untreated sewage and industrial waste, leading to a [Biochemical Oxygen Demand \(BOD\)](#) above safe limits.
- **Pollution Levels:** The CPCB classifies rivers based on BOD levels. In Mumbai, many rivers **exceed 20 mg/L**, far surpassing the safe limit of 3 mg/L. The CPCB's priority categories, from Priority I (most polluted) to Priority V (least polluted), highlight the **critical need for intervention**, with several stretches in Maharashtra falling under higher priority levels.
- **National Trends:** Across India, the number of polluted river stretches **decreased from 311 to 296**. However, Maharashtra's contribution remains significant, with 54 out of 296 stretches. Other states, including Delhi, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh, also have severely polluted stretches, particularly in the [Yamuna](#), Sabarmati, and Chambal rivers.
- **Action Plans and Measures:**
  - **NGT's Intervention:** The [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) had intervened in 2018, taking suo motu cognizance of the CPCB's findings. The NGT ordered states to **prepare action plans** for river rejuvenation, resulting in the formation of committees in Maharashtra and other affected states.
  - **CPCB Directives:** The CPCB has urged states to enhance sewage treatment, floodplain protection, and **river catchment management**, emphasizing the urgent need for **expanding** sewage plants and tightening **industrial effluent monitoring**.
  - **National Water Quality Monitoring Programme:** The CPCB monitors 2,155 locations across 645 rivers, with the program aiming to improve water quality and track the effectiveness of pollution control measures.

## Central Pollution Control Board

- The CPCB is a **statutory organisation** that was established in September 1974 under the [Water \(Prevention and Control of Pollution\) Act, 1974](#).
- Further, CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981**.
- It is the **apex body** for environmental protection and pollution control in India. It functions under

the **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** and coordinates with the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and other agencies.

- The CPCB has various divisions that deal with different aspects of pollution control, such as **air quality management**, water quality management, hazardous waste management, environmental assessment, laboratory services, information technology, public participation, etc.

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/maharashtra-leads-in-river-pollution>

