

Dumping Of Waste In Rivers: Panel Wants Penal Provisions

Asks All Stakeholders To Ensure Safe Operation Of ITO Barrage

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New Delhi: A parliamentary panel has recommended penal provisions against dumping of waste in rivers, including Yamuna, and asked govt to proactively engage all stakeholders for ensuring the safe operation of the ITO barrage so that Delhi does not again become victim of floodings as witnessed in July last year.

The panel — standing committee on water resources — that reviewed cleaning projects of Upper Yamuna river and riverbed management in Delhi submitted its report in Parliament on Tuesday. River Yamuna enters the capital at Palla from Haryana and exits the city to enter Uttar Pradesh at Asgarpur, which is approximately a 40-km stretch.

Noting that dumping of waste into Yamuna has not only impacted its ecological flow but also disfigured the beautiful landscapes around the river sites, the panel asked the department of water resources to prepare guidelines/



File photo

HOPING TO AVOID A REPEAT AT ITO BARRAGE

rules to prevent such acts.

“Violation of these rules should attract penal provisions in order to avoid waste dumping in the rivers including Yamuna,” said the panel, chaired by BJP Lok Sabha member Parbatbhai Savabhai Patel.

It noted that though the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has taken a number of steps such as deployment of security guards, installation of surveillance and issuing challans to prevent dumping, those actions did not prove to be effective deterrents. It said the number of challans has increased from one in the year

2018 to 610 in the year 2021, indicating the rise in instances of dumping of debris into the river Yamuna.

“...dumping of waste, construction material, and bio-medical waste have the potential to obstruct the natural flow of water during intense precipitation and water may accumulate where it is not required and thus may result in flash flood,” said the report.

During review of the river Yamuna cleaning project, the panel took into account the excessive presence of heavy metals like lead, copper, zinc, nickel, cadmium and chromium in the riverbed, and also as-

ked to explore ways including providing financial assistance to the states to establish electric and CNG furnaces in crematoriums along the river to reduce pollution in Yamuna.

“Besides, the department with the concerned Yamuna basin states need to find ways to discourage rituals on the pyres built on the banks of Yamuna and if possible shift the cremation sites away from the immediate periphery of the banks of Yamuna in order to prevent contamination of river water,” it said.

In view of huge flooding in Delhi in July last year, the committee undertook a field visit to the ITO barrage and noted that the main cause of non-functioning of these gates is “heavy silting in and around the gates and poor maintenance of hydro-mechanical equipment”.

Flagging its concerns, the panel urged the department to mediate in the matter (between Delhi and Haryana) and play the role of an “honest broker” in resolving this contentious issue by pro-actively engaging all stakeholders.