

# Most of Ganga clean, claims Jal Shakti Ministry

'Water clean enough for bathing, capable of supporting river ecosystem'

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NEW DELHI

The water quality of the Ganga was clean enough for bathing and capable of supporting the river ecosystem for almost the entire stretch of the river, Bishweswar Tudu, Minister of State for Water Resources, said in the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Dissolved oxygen (DO), which is an indicator of river health was within "acceptable limits" of "bathing water quality criteria".

A report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in 2018, pointed out

four polluted stretches on the main stem of river Ganga. There are five categories ranked 1 to 5, with 1 the most polluted and 5 the least.

An updated 2021 report noted that none of the stretches of the Ganga were now in Priority Category I to IV and only two stretches are in Priority Category V with bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD), a parameter different from DO, ranging between 3-6 microgram/litre as per CPCB categorisation of polluted stretch.

A comparison of median data of water quality param-



Former Armed Forces officers cleaning the banks of the Ganga in Varanasi recently as part of an awareness drive. ■PTI

eters such as DO, bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD) and faecal coliform (FC) from 2014 and 2021; DO (Median) has improved at 31 locations; BOD at 46 and FC at 23 locations, respectively,

the Ministry data noted.

The 2018 report of the CPCB had identified 351 polluted stretches on 323 rivers based on monitoring results of 521 rivers in terms of BOD. "Based on the assessment of

water quality, various measures are being taken both by the Centre and the States to prevent pollution of rivers and drains out-falling into them. River cleaning is a continuous process and the Central government assists the State governments and urban local bodies through schemes like 'Namami Gange' and National River Conservation Plan (NRCP)," the Ministry said.

The NRCP has so far covered polluted stretches on 34 rivers in 77 towns spread over 16 States with a sanctioned cost of ₹5,961.75 crore. The Namami Gange programme has funded 364 projects, including 160 for sewage treatment, it said.