



High Level of Ammonia in Yamuna

Why in News

Recently, **high levels (around 3 parts per million) of ammonia in the Yamuna river** has been detected in Delhi which led to the disruption of water supply in Delhi.

- As per the [Bureau of Indian Standards \(BIS\)](#), the acceptable **maximum limit of ammonia in drinking water is 0.5 parts per million (ppm)**

Key Points

▪ Ammonia:

- Its **chemical formula is NH_3** .
- It is a **colourless gas** and is **used as an industrial chemical** in the production of fertilisers, plastics, synthetic fibres, dyes and other products.
- It **occurs naturally in the environment** from the breakdown of organic waste matter, and may also find its way to ground and surface water sources **through industrial effluents, contamination by sewage** or through **agricultural runoff**.

▪ Effect of High Level of 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 \(BOD\)](#).
- 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**.

▪ Treatment:

- Mixing of freshwater with ammonia polluted water.
- Chlorination.
 - Chlorination is the process of adding chlorine or chlorine compounds such as sodium hypochlorite to water.
 - This method is used to kill certain bacteria and other microbes in tap water. However, chlorine is highly toxic.

▪ Long Term Solution:

- Stringent implementation of guidelines against dumping harmful waste into the river.
- Making sure untreated sewage does not enter the water.
- Maintain a sustainable minimum flow, called the **ecological flow**.
 - **Ecological flow** is the minimum amount of water that should flow throughout the river at all times to sustain underwater and estuarine ecosystems and human livelihoods, and for self regulation.

Yamuna

- The river Yamuna, a **major tributary of river Ganges**, originates from the **Yamunotri glacier** near **Bandarpoonch peaks** in the **Mussoorie range of the lower Himalayas** in **Uttarkashi** district of **Uttarakhand**.
- 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 and Ken.**



Source: IE

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