



Supreme Court's View on Pollution in Yamuna

Why in News

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

▪ 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 31st 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 12th 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

▪ Causes of Pollution in Yamuna:

- **Industrial Pollution:**

- The Yamuna flows into Delhi from Haryana and the state has industrial units in Sonapat (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 Sonapat. The two drains often mix due to overflow or damage to the wall that separates them.

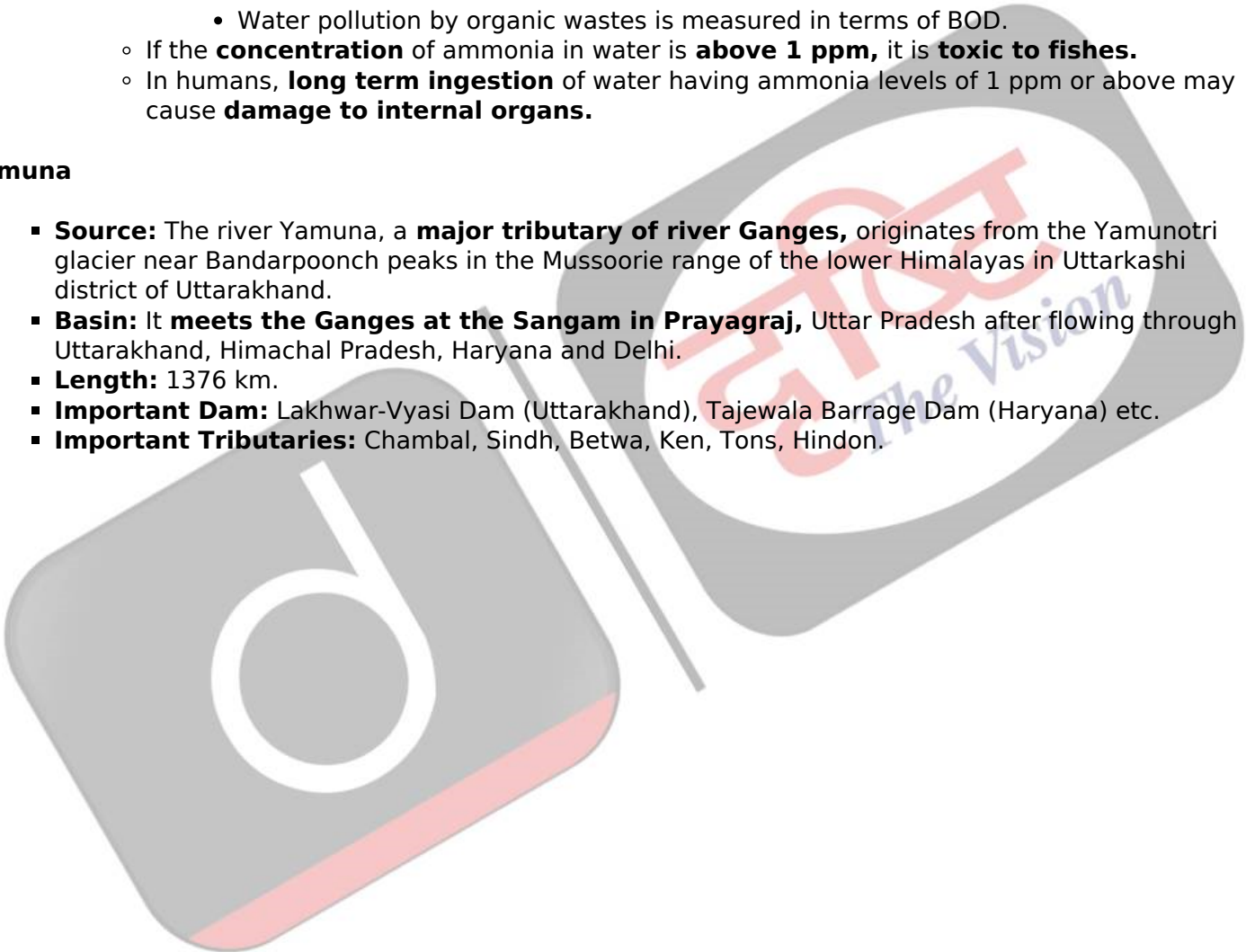
- **Effects of Rising Ammonia:**

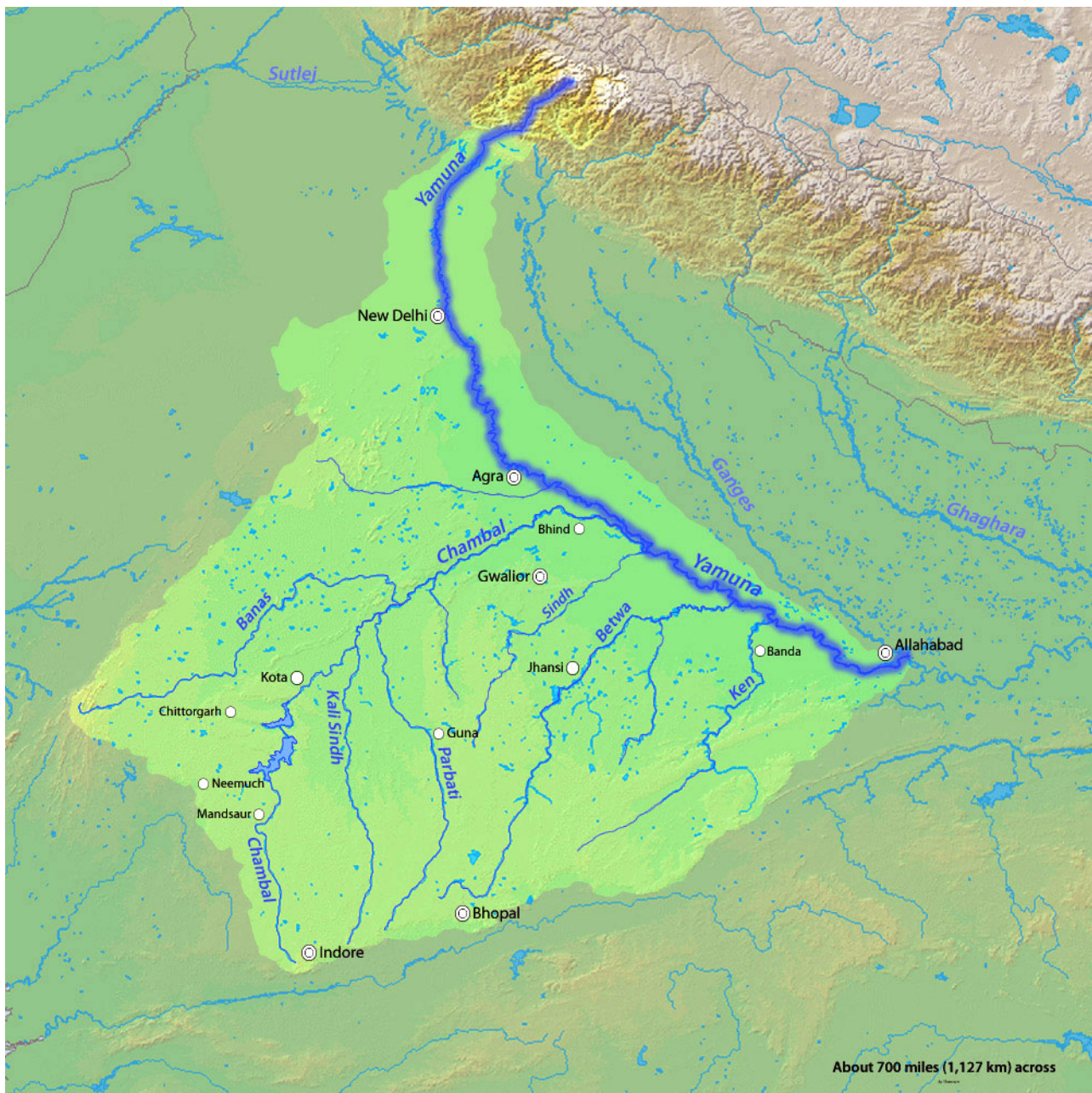
- Ammonia reduces the amount of oxygen in water as it is transformed to oxidised forms of nitrogen. Hence, it also **increases Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)**.
 - Water pollution by organic wastes is measured in terms of BOD.
- If the **concentration** of ammonia in water is **above 1 ppm**, it is **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.

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