Delhi vs Haryana on Yamuna's Ammonia Levels

What is the issue?

- On at least five instances in 2020, high levels of ammonia in Yamuna have prompted the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to reduce or stop water production at its plants.
- Increasing pollution in the Yamuna causes frequent disruption to Delhi's water supply. Delhi blames Haryana for this, and here is why.

What happens when ammonia levels increase?

- Ammonia is used as an industrial chemical in the production of fertilisers, plastics, dyes and other products.
- It also occurs naturally in the environment from the breakdown of organic waste matter, including sewage.
- The recommended concentration in Yamuna is 0.9 ppm keeping in line with Delhi Jal Board's (DJB) treatment capacity.
- When it rises beyond this, water production at 3 out of 9 water treatment plants (Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla) have to be stopped or reduced.
- This impacts water supply to parts of Delhi city.

Why is Haryana blamed?

- The Yamuna flows into Delhi from Haryana.
- Haryana has industrial units in Sonipat, which is close to Delhi's northern border.
- A specific area where both Haryana and Delhi agree on is the mixing of two drains carrying drinking water and sewage/ industrial waste/both in Sonipat district.
- Drain number 8 brings potable water to the capital and drain number 6 carries wastewater.
- The two drains often mix due to overflow or damage to the wall that separates them.
- Haryana's irrigation department is expected to start a tendering process to build a conduit pipeline and prevent the mixing of two drains.

- **Delhi's concern** - Delhi blames Haryana for releasing industrial effluents in the river "despite repeated reminders."
- The issue is brought into focus every time the concentration of ammonia

increases in the river.

- DJB officials state that the spike in pollution level has been more frequent in 2020.
- Also, Delhi at present receives much less than the share of water they deserve.
- DJB asks the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) to look into the issue.

What is the solution?

- The laying of a conduit pipeline to separate drain number 8 and 6 would reduce pollution of potable water.
- However, it is not clear when this would be completed.
- The National Green Tribunal-appointed Yamuna Monitoring Committee has also said that fast-track approvals should be given to build a conduit.
- Moreover, the Committee had also recommended to the Ministry of Jal Shakti to rework the 1994 water sharing pact.
    - It is a pact among Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.
- The recommendation is based on the need to revive the Yamuna by releasing more fresh water into it.
- This would help maintain a certain environmental flow for the river to sustain its functions throughout the year.
- Meanwhile, Delhi Jal Board should increase its capacity to treat ammonia levels in the water.
- Ozone-based units to treat ammonia levels up to 4ppm should be installed at Chandrawal and Wazirabad water treatment plants.

Source: The Indian Express

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