

# Centre orders closure of 150 polluting industries along Ganga

## Still Flooded With Municipal Sewage

Even as the Centre launched a crackdown against grossly polluting industries on Wednesday, by ordering closure of 150 units including sugar mills and tanneries along the Ganga, addressing the bigger issue of municipal sewage does not appear to be heading anywhere. Over 3,762 million litre per day (MLD) of sewage continues to be discharged into the country's national river in absence of any treatment capacity.

Though the government has taken a decision to operationalise new sewage treatment plants (STPs) in all 118 towns along the river by 2018, the task appears to be too massive to show concrete results on the ground.

While West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have huge gaps in their sewage generation and treatment capacity, the situation in remaining three river basin states -Bihar, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand -is equally bad. If one looks at the figures, Jharkhand has, so far, failed to create any treatment capacity at all.

The details were shared by the Union water resources ministry with the Union Cabinet earlier this month, which prompted the government to create a special purpose vehicle to create capacities by involving private companies under the PPP model. It was also brought to the notice of the Cabinet how dams and barrages on the river have become major obstructions for uninterrupted flow of the river -an issue consistently raised by the water resources ministry with the environment ministry.

Meanwhile, the environment ministry has ordered the closure of 150 industrial units that failed to install 24x7 effluent monitoring systems. "There has been

substantial progress in installation of 24x7 Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Systems (OCEMS). Out of 764 gross polluting industries, 514 units have already installed OCEMS while 94 are in the process. Closure orders have been issued to 150 remaining units and responses of other six units are under examination," environment minister Prakash Javadekar said while announcing the crackdown against the defaulters.

"This is the biggest action taken till date on the issue of abatement of pollution in Ganga or any river in the country . When they give action plan, order the machines, then we can think about giving them permission. Till then they will be closed," Javadekar said. He said that the inspections were specifically mandated to confirm the facts relating to conservation of water, reduction in waste water generation and pollution load.