



## Activists demand separate authority for river Yamuna

Pankaj Shah, TNN Nov 13, 2008, 02.04am IST

LUCKNOW: The Centre's move to constitute an authority for making the Ganga a pollution free river has sparked off a similar demand for the river Yamuna.

An Agra based heritage conservation society has demanded that the proposed authority being set up for the river Ganga should also include the river Yamuna and that its name be changed to 'Ganga-Yamuna Authority'.

The decision to constitute a separate body - Ganga authority - comes amid Centre's consideration to declare Ganga a national river. The society, Braj Mandal Heritage Conservation Society, in a letter sent to the Prime Minister Office (PMO) on November 8, stated that the need for saving and rejuvenating Yamuna is "more urgent and pressing than Ganga because Yamuna is the lifeline of important cities like Delhi and Agra and more importantly for the survival of some of the architectural marvels along its banks like the Taj Mahal which is threatened by the river's pollution and lack of water."

President of the society, Surendra Sharma, in the letter said that the two rivers need to be de-polluted simultaneously in a joint operation. "They are joint entities. One compliments the other," he said.

Experts, however, believe that the authority would not restrict itself to the Ganga river bed alone. In fact, it would take into account the entire Ganga basin which would include Yamuna, Gomti besides other rivers flowing through the basin. A senior official in the UP Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) said they were yet to receive a notification in this regard from the Centre.

"But we are sure that checking pollution in the Ganga would take into account all its critical tributaries which are responsible for pollution in the river," said member secretary, UPPCB, CS Bhatt while talking to TOI.

Geographically, Yamuna merges with Ganga in Allahabad before it moves towards Varanasi and beyond. This means that until Yamuna is made pollution free, any effort to clean Ganga would go in vain. Yamuna, as for that matter, gets heavily polluted while traversing through Delhi and Agra, mainly due to large number of industrial units pumping their waste directly into the river — many a time without treating them. The same holds true for Gomti, which merges with Ganga in Varanasi.

Magsaysay award winner Rajendra Singh said that it is the Ganga basin as a whole which needs to be taken up. "Every river is Ganga...," said Singh who has been fighting a pitched battle with the government for making Ganga a pollution and hindrance free river. Popularly known as the 'Waterman of India', Singh said that not only Ganga but other rivers as well need to be given appropriate attention.