



## AHMEDABAD CITY GARBAGE CHARGE FROM OCTOBER

Starting October, the BJP-ruled Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) will start levying 'user charge' ranging from 50 paise to Rs 2 from households and commercial establishments for the door-to-door collection of garbage.

# 3 river stretches of Gujarat among most polluted: NGT chief

### 'Water of Amla Khadi is 100% poison'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
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EXPRESSING THE need for urgent action, National Green Tribunal (NGT) chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel on Saturday said that three of 15 critically polluted river stretches in the country were flowing through Gujarat, and the water in one of three was "pure poison".

"More than 351 river stretches in the country have BOD (biochemical oxygen demand) limits that exceed the prescribed limit of 3 mg/litre. In Gujarat, there is Amla Khadi river which has a BOD limit of minimum 43 mg/litre (in the 20-km stretch between Pungum to Bharuch). This is pure poison," Justice Goel said while delivering a lecture on sustainable development at the Gujarat National Law University.

Amla Khadi is a tributary of Narmada in south Gujarat.

"How bad do you think is the situation of Sabarmati river, where Mahatma Gandhi once lived? From the 80 km-stretch between Kheroj to Vautha, the BOD levels range between 4 and 147 mg/litre. Similarly, in Damanganga river, the BOD level between Kachigaon and Vapi (a stretch of 30 km) is 8 mg/litre.



Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel

These are the three most polluted rivers where immediate action is required," he added.

BOD is a gauge of organic pollution of a water body. It is the amount of dissolved oxygen required by microorganisms to break down organic matter in water. The greater the organic matter in the water body, the greater is the BOD, and therefore the lower amount of dissolved oxygen available for animals such as fishes.

According to the NGT chief, dumping of untreated effluents and sewage into the rivers was the major source of pollution in the rivers.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has also identified these three river stretches among the 15 most-polluted river stretches in the country. As per the CPCB, there are around 20 rivers in Gujarat where BOD levels are above the prescribed standards.

Later speaking to mediapersons on the sidelines of the event, Justice Goel said that the tribunal had conducted an interaction with the state government officials regard river pollution. "They have sought time and said they needed funds," Justice Goel replied when asked about the outcome of the meeting held last week. When asked about the action that needs to be taken, Justice Goel said that polluting industries have to be banned. "They have no right to do it at the cost of the life of people. It is criminal offence under the Water Act. How can broad day crimes happen in the country," he said.

## Soon, NGT will allow petitions through email

Ahmedabad: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) will soon introduce email petitions that will not only provide greater access to people living in remote areas, but will also help them approach the tribunal without personally appearing before it or engaging a lawyer.

"We are going to introduce a formal system of permitting email petitions to be filed from anywhere in the country," said Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, chairperson of NGT, during an interaction with mediapersons at the Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) on Saturday. He said the email system which will abide by a payment system will take another month to be rolled out.

The new system will have a fixed format where an aggrieved person can state his details, nature of violation with evidence (if any), details of violators etc. "Once these columns are filled, the applications will get registered and automatically, all the applications will get converted into draft orders which we will see... They (petitioners) do not have to come personally or engage a lawyer. Any number of petitions can be disposed off on a single day," Justice Goel said, adding that a special software is being built for this purpose. He was at GNLU to deliver a lecture on sustainable development. "This system will provide access to people in remote areas. As on today, we have only one bench, and the other four benches are functioning through video-conferences. But apart from these four benches, there is no way people can get access," the head of NGT said explaining that how absence of an NGT bench in Gujarat forces a petitioner in Ahmedabad to either travel to Pune or New Delhi for getting remedy. **ENS**

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