

Tribunal prohibits dumping of waste near Ganga banks

14th July 2017



An area of 100 metres from the edge of the Ganga between Haridwar and Unnao has been declared a 'No Development Zone,' with the National Green Tribunal (NGT) recently prohibiting dumping of waste within 500 metres of the river. An environment compensation of Rs. 50,000 will be imposed on anyone dumping waste in the river.

Key facts:

The NGT also directed the Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments to formulate guidelines for religious activities on the ghats of the Ganga and its tributaries.

It also directed the authorities concerned to complete projects, including a sewage treatment plant and cleaning of drains, within two years.

The court also appointed a supervisory committee, headed by the Secretary of the Water Resources Ministry and comprising IIT professors and officials of the Uttar Pradesh government, to oversee implementation of the directions passed in its verdict. The committee is to submit reports at regular intervals.

About the National Green Tribunal (NGT):

NGT has been established under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

The tribunal deals with matters relating to the enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property.

The Tribunal is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.

The Tribunal's dedicated jurisdiction in environmental matters shall provide speedy environmental justice and help reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts.

The Tribunal is mandated to make and endeavour for disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing of the same.

Members:

Sanctioned strength: currently, 10 expert members and 10 judicial members (although the act allows for up to 20 of each).

Chairman: is the administrative head of the tribunal, also serves as a judicial member and is required to be a serving or retired Chief Justice of a High Court or a judge of the Supreme Court of India.

Selection: Members are chosen by a selection committee (headed by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court of India) that reviews their applications and conducts interviews.

The **Judicial members** are chosen from applicants who are serving or retired judges of High Courts.

Expert members are chosen from applicants who are either serving or retired bureaucrats not below the rank of an Additional Secretary to the Government of India (not below the rank of Principal Secretary if serving under a state government) with a minimum administrative experience of five years in dealing with environmental matters. Or, the expert members must have a doctorate in a related field.

To be looked in UPSC Paper 3 Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.