Narmada pollution threatens Hilsa habitat

As effluent treatment plant at Ankleshwar GIDC is out of order, highly toxic waste is being discharged into Amlakhadi

By Dilip Patel
Posted On Tuesday, September 06, 2011   ⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

Hilsa fish is not available in Bharuch now because of water pollution

The Hilsa is facing danger of extinction because of pollution in the 20-km long Amlakhadi river, Narmada's tributary. The fish is not available in Bharuch now because of water pollution by factories in Ankleshwar and Panoli GIDC, sources told Mirror.

They said the common effluent treatment plant (ETP) has been out of order for the past two days. As a result the effluent containing toxic chemicals – 5-10 times more than the permissible limits as per Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) – is directly discharged into Amlakhadi river.

According to an annual research conducted by Blacksmith Institute in 2008, four sites from Gujarat figure in South Asia's 66 most-polluted sites. These were Amlakhadi river, Ankleshwar Industrial estate, Bajwa and Damangaga river in Vapi.

In 2008, Central Pollution Control Board had collected a water samples over a period of 10 days to monitor pollution. On all the days, the pollution level was much higher than what was detected by GPCB, sources said.

As per GPCB norms, the BOD (biological oxygen demand) should not exceed 100 ppm (part per million). A sample collected by CPCB in 2008 showed BOD levels between 175 ppm and 708 ppm. If the industrial outflow is left untreated, the BOD level will be in the range of 500 ppm to 1,261 ppm, sources told Mirror.

The highly polluted effluent flows into the Narmada, endangering the lives of the economically important Hilsa fish.

Though a sea fish, it lays eggs in Amlakhadi. After the eggs are hatched, the young Hilsa swims back to the sea. It is during this time that the fishermen catch Hilsa, priced at Rs 1,000 per kg. The Hilsa is also caught from the sea. However, the sea fish is not considered as tasty as those caught from the river.