

Bacteria Killer in Holy Ganga Water

By RICHA SHARMA

New Delhi: Bacteriophages that kill pathogenic bacteria responsible for diseases, including pneumonia, were found in the entire stretch of the Ganga, from Goumukh to Gangasagar in West Bengal. The percentage drops as it traverses through Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

The study reveal that Ganga water has variety of bacteriophages that have specific bacterial activity against pathogens that cause tuberculosis, leprosy, blood infections, meningitis in newborns, skin infections and urinary tract infections, among others.

The water samples contained metals such as silver and copper that are



natural disinfectants against a broad range of bacteria. Phytochemicals (natural plant compounds) in the water has been linked to reductions in major chronic diseases.

Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti

considers Ganga water nectar and cleaning the river is the mission of her life. She assigned the task of conducting the first-of-its-kind comprehensive study to assess special properties of the river.

The study 'Assessment of

Water Quality and Sediment to Understand the Special Properties of River Ganga' was conducted by Ahmedabad-based National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) under the Department of Science and Technology.

The investigations were carried out to gather in-depth information about special properties—presence and diversity of bacteriophages, higher dissolved oxygen, antimicrobial activity, contribution of metals towards anti-microbial activity and leaching of phytochemicals.

“The river still has therapeutic and special properties despite all the pollution and that makes it urgent to take measures to save it,” said a senior water ministry official.