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311 polluted stretches along 279 rivers, watchdog finds

At 55, Maha Accounts For Most Of Them, Says CPCB's 2022 Report

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Pune: Maharashtra accounted for the highest number of polluted river stretches in the country at 55 in 2022, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) said in its recent report identifying nearly 311 polluted stretches in a network of 279 rivers across India.

As per CPCB, Maharashtra is also one of the 13 states in the country where the number of polluted river stretches has increased, including Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, among others. In 2018, it had 53 polluted river stretches, the organisation said.

A CPCB official told **TOI**, "The state pollution control boards have been directed to ensure mandatory ecological flow in all polluted stretches. Ecological flow pertains to the minimum flow needed to be maintained in a river to ensure optimum conditions for the existing ecosystems."

He said the study was a periodic assessment of water quality of rivers in the country and measured exceeding levels of Bio-Chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) in these stretches. "We identified polluted river stretches where water quality did not meet the primary BOD criteria for outdoor bathing. BOD in such stretches was more than 3mg/L."

Higher BOD indicates requirement of more oxygen and signifies lower water quality. The official said all such river stretches were found polluted because of the discharge of sewage and industrial pollutants. "Of the sewage discharged in rivers, we found that quantum of untreated sewage way more than that of treated sewage. While factories have to mandatorily treat industrial effluents in effluent treatment plants (ETPs) before discharging them into the water bodies, most cities do not have the infrastructure for treatment of domestic sewage. This is one of the major causes for pollution in the rivers." He said an action plan has been made and approved by CPCB to address this issue.

Getty Images

A CPCB official said all such river stretches were found polluted because of the discharge of sewage and industrial pollutants

Water expert Himanshu Thakkar, who is also the coordinator of South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, said, "Maharashtra is the most industrialised state and has numerous industries, which may be contributing to river pollution. Its considerable urban population has also put a lot of stress on the rivers, in terms of discharge of untreated domestic sewage into water bodies."

Thakkar said polluted rivers can have a major impact on the aquatic life, flora and fauna in the rivers.

As a part of the monitoring exercise, the water quality of 56 rivers in Maharashtra was monitored by CPCB. As many as 147 locations on 55 rivers in the state did not comply with the prescribed water quality criteria in terms of BOD levels. The names of some polluted rivers included Amba, Amravati, Bhatsa, Bhima, Bindusara, Bori, Burai, Chandrabhaga, Koyna, Krishna, Kundalika, Manjeera and Mula-Mutha, among others.

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Caste and access to water: The missing link

Dalitality

ABHIJIT WAGHRE

LAUNCHED IN 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission is halfway towards achieving its goal of piped water supply to 18 crore rural households by 2024. However, this achievement is marred by near-constant and brutal incidents of Dalits trying to access water. These incidents raise questions over some "missing links" of the Jal Jeevan Mission.

On the one hand, the Mission is an ambitious central government scheme that aims to provide an assured 55 liters per capita per day to every rural household by 2024. On the other, Dalits struggle to get adequate water to quench their thirst, especially in rural areas. Recent incidents across rural India of Dalits getting beaten up to death, specifically around access to water, are now a new normal.

In August 2022, Indra Meghwal, a Dalit student from Surana village of Rajasthan's Jalore district, was beaten to death by his teacher reportedly for merely touching a drinking water pot. A similar death of a Dalit man occurred in Rajasthan's Jodhpur in November 2022 — Kishanlal Bheel was thrashed for drawing water from a tubewell.

Such incidents point out that government schemes at large that speak of 'universal' access neither consider nor actively try to counter the effects of the social structure of the caste system in India.

Let us consider this 2015 study, "Untouchability, homicides and water access," published in the *Journal of Comparative Economics*, which states the problem clearly: "the higher the probability that higher castes meet…members of Scheduled Castes or of Scheduled Tribes at a water source that leaves room for ritual pollution, the greater the murder rate of SCs and STs". This fatal link between caste and water is profoundly troubling and makes access to basic needs difficult for those already on the margins.

The empirical evidence is available, and the incidents are frequent even in the media. The question then arises: how are government schemes like the Jal Jeevan Mission addressing the likelihood and the reality of such incidents in their policies? Research has demonstrated that caste segregation remains a significant barrier to public goods, including access to water.

I have worked as a technical assistant at a Jal Jeevan Mission academic centre for the past few months. Despite the intimate linkages between caste and water, the caste question is never explicitly considered. While the Mission strives for "ease of living" for rural communities, it makes no provisions for how caste too shatters access to water, let alone outline redressal for incidents of violence against Dalits.

This is rooted in the governance structure of the Mission itself. According to the Mission guidelines, a Gram Panchayat of a village should have a sub-committee or Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) comprising 25% of elected members of the panchayat from weaker sections of the village (SC/ST) proportional to the SC/ST population of the village. However, there are no clear roles and responsibilities allotted in either the JJM Mission guidelines or the "Margdarshika for Gram Panchayat" for the SC/ST members of the VWSC, which raises the question of effectiveness of the representation of Dalits in the Mission.

My field observations during the last three months in villages of Karnataka reveal that members of VWSC are not aware of their responsibilities or membership, which then raises the question: If upper-caste members are not aware of their roles and responsibilities in the VWSC, how can SC/ST representatives of the VWSC address the problems of access of water faced by a community with no "power" in the VWSC?

Water-related hazards also affect the Dalit community. The New Humanitarian found that during droughts and flood-related relief work, caste discrimination persisted when it came to rehabilitation and support of those affected.

The Mission may have helped several Dalit households in villages across the country get piped water supply, which is commendable. Yet, constant deaths and violent attacks on Dalits, specifically around access to water, means that the Mission must address them directly. Otherwise, even this newly expanded access to water will leave voids and consequences for Dalit households.

The writer is a technical assistant at the Jal Jeevan Mission Chair Programme at IIM, Bangalore
Suraj Yengde, author of Caste Matters, *curates Dalitality, and is currently at Oxford University*

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Project to map Ghats streams inaugurated

IDUKKI

Water Resources Minister Roshy Augustine has said the government aims to make the Western Ghats a safe place to live. » Page 6

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State-level project to map streams of Western Ghats inaugurated

The Hindu Bureau
IDUKKI

Water Resources Minister Roshy Augustine has said the government aims to make the Western Ghats a safe place to live.

Inaugurating a State-level project to map streams in the Western Ghats at the Idukki collectorate on Saturday, Mr. Augustine said initiatives were needed to clear the streams. "Blockage of streams causes landslips and natural disasters. Rivers and streams are the wealth of our State," he said.

Brochure released

He also released a brochure of the project.

Presiding over the meeting, M.M. Mani, MLA, said that the project would help prevent mudslides and other disasters in the hilly district.

T.N. Seema, Nava Kerala Mission coordinator, said the major issues were the diversion and blockages of streams. To restore the streams, mapping of all streams in the Western Ghats region would be taken up initially.

Water drainage

The Haritha Keralam Mission launched a new initiative to clear the streams in the Western Ghats to ensure smooth water drainage from hills and valleys and prevent landslips caused by slope instability during monsoons.

According to officials, the stream rejuvenation project would be implemented in 230 panchayats bordering the Western Ghats in nine districts.

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Panel chalks out Yamuna action plan

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 21

A high-level committee constituted by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for rejuvenation of the Yamuna has chalked out a six-month action plan till June, with monthly targets. It will be monitored every week.

The first report of the committee will be submitted to the NGT on January 31.

On Friday, Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena chaired the first meeting of the panel.

The meeting was attended by senior officers of the stakeholder departments from the Centre and the Delhi Government.

After taking stock of the situation of water quality in the Yamuna and various drains in the city, along with the status of sewage treatment plants (STPs) and common effluent treatment plants (CETPs) in the city and dwelling upon the gaps in the actions taken till now, the meeting deliberated upon a concrete future plan of action.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena launches the '100 Days to Beat Plastic' campaign in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

The committee stressed time-bound actions on "right parameters" that includes enhancement of sewage-treatment capacity in Delhi and the augmentation of STPs, tapping of drains and treatment of sewage in 44 sub-drains, extension of sewage network in all 1,799 unauthorised colonies, upgrade of 13 CETPs for treatment, management of industrial effluents, and ensuring minimum environmental flow (e-flow) in the Yamuna by the means of inter-state coordination.

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Work on Sunni dam begins

SHIMLA, JANUARY 21

The Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) today inaugurated infrastructure-related construction activities for the 382 MW Sunni Dam Hydro Electric Project. SJVN Chairman and MD Nand Lal Sharma said, "The work for the 113 m double-lane steel truss bridge has been started. It is estimated to cost about Rs 14 crore." The widening work on the left bank approach road and the construction work on the right bank approach road were inaugurated. — TNS

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6-month plan of action formulated to clean Yamuna

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena who heads the National Green Tribunal (NGT) appointed a high-level committee to clean the Yamuna, where a six-month plan of action with quantified timelines was charted out on eight parameters including augmenting sewage treatment and laying sewer network in unauthorised colonies. The green tribunal had earlier this month requested the Delhi LG to head the committee.

The eight parameters which includes-Enhancement of Sewage Treatment Capacity in Delhi & augmentation / rehabilitation of STPs that included construction of 40 new De-centralized STPs at different locations, progress in rehabilitation of 03 existing STPs at Kondli, Rithala and Yamuna Vihar, design upgradation of 18 existing STPs; Tapping of Drains and Treatment of Sewage in 44 Sub-drains that fall into the Najafgarh Drain, 30 Sub-drains that fall into the supplementary Drain and 02 sub-drains that fall into the Shahdara Drain.

The parameters are extension of Sewage Network in all the 1799 unauthorized colonies from the existing 747 and connection of drains / drainage system of 639 JJ clusters with sewerage network; upgradation of 13 CETPs for treatment and management of industrial effluent; septage (faecal sludge) management and eventually eliminating the system of septic tanks by connecting 08 lakh users to the sewage network; Regulation and rejuvenation of flood plains of the Yamuna; action plan for utilization of treated waste water and Ensuring minimum environmental flow (e-flow) in the Yamuna by the means of inter-state coordination.

Multiple reports submitted by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) to the Union Jal Shakti Ministry have highlighted that the river cannot become fit for bathing in the absence of a minimum environment flow.

A study conducted by the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, had in 2019 recommended that 23 cubic metre per second (cumec) water (437 million gallons a day) be released in the river from the Hathnikund Barrage in Haryana's Yamuna Nagar district in the lean season for sustaining downstream ecosystems.

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AUTHOR

DIPANKAR DEY

The story of looming DISASTERS

Be it the mountains around Joshimath or the mines in Jharia-Raniganj, the ignorance regarding the sensitive terrains, resulting perhaps from vested interests, has increased the potency for disasters like land subsidence manifold

The ancient pilgrim town of Joshimath is sinking. Residents are forced to flee their homes in the freezing weather of January. Walls have cracked open, foundations are tilting and sinking. Experts point out that this was a disaster waiting to happen because the authorities ignored multiple warnings over decades about the way roads and hydropower projects were being built. The Prime Minister's Office declared Joshimath a "landslide-subsidence zone" and asked experts to prepare short- and long-term plans on what to do, reports *Scroll*. Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami claimed that the land subsidence in the township was because of "unscientific" development work though he described it as a "natural disaster", reports *Hindustan Times*.

Indian Space Research Institute (ISRO) released data showing that Joshimath had sunk 5.4 cm between December 27 and January 8. Meanwhile, as per a report by *Rediff.com*, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has advised — through an office memorandum dated January 13, 2023 — ISRO and other government agencies to refrain from interacting with media on the Joshimath disaster.

Joshimath is located on a ridge cut through by streams that descend from Vishnuprayag where Dhauliganga and Alaknanda rivers converge. Serious apprehensions were expressed in 2013 that the tunnels of the Tapovan-Vishnugad Hydropower Project of the NTPC could cause huge damage, reports *Loksmarg*. The government did not pay any heed to that warning.

In addition to the unviable hydropower projects, the 125-km Rishikesh-Karanprayag railway line, being constructed reportedly at a whopping cost of Rs 20,000-crore, will lead to the construction of 35 bridges and 17 tunnels. Contractors have cut lakhs of trees for the multi-lane expressway for the 'Char Dham Yatra', the pet project of the prime minister. This has made an extremely damaging impact on the fragile Himalayan ecosystem. In December 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for Chardham all-weather road project. Out of 53 packages covering a total length of 825 km of the Chardham Road Project, 21 packages covering a length of 291 km are complete. Ironically, the Prime Minister described this Rs 12,072 crore project as a tribute to those who lost their lives during the 2013 flash floods in Uttarakhand.

Although the recent Joshimath incident has rekindled apprehensions about the future of other fragile hill stations, Gangtok, Darjeeling, Nainital, Shimla et al, the environmentalist and media are conspicuous by their deafening silence on the future of coal cities of Jharia (Jharkhand) and Raniganj (West Bengal) which are facing similar risks, if not more, of subsidence due to burning of the coal seams, for over a century, underneath these cities. Both Joshimath and Jharia are examples of the failure of the state to appreciate the distinct characteristics of the fragile mountains and mines while planning and executing projects for 'development'. In this piece, we shall briefly discuss these two looming disasters which have been in the making for decades.

Joshimath

Joshimath is a prominent religious place for Hindus, as one of the four famous *Peeths*, established by Adi Sankaracharya, is situated here. It is believed that Adi Shankaracharya came here to meditate and eventually established a pilgrimage after he achieved *'Jyoti'*. Originally called Jyotirmath, today, Joshimath is the entrance point to numerous trails and ancient routes among the snow-clad mountains. When Badrinath temple remains closed for winter every year, one idol of Lord Badri is brought to Narsinh temple in Joshimath and worshipped for six months. Considered the 'gateway to heaven', this ancient temple town is also a preferred destination for trekkers and nature lovers. Nanda Devi, the tallest mountain, is reached only through the roads of Joshimath.

Though experts have repeatedly cautioned about the danger of the fragile ecosystem of the region where Joshimath is situated and advised authorities to take appropriate measures to avoid disaster, reports suggest that the government has not paid any heed to those warnings. Professor YP Sundriyal, a noted geologist and environment activist of the region, in his recent article, reminded us that a formal warning of such a possible catastrophe came forty-six years ago. According to him, Joshimath's foundation has always been very weak. It is located in seismic zone five and is bound by two regional thrusts — Vaikrita in the north and Munsiari in the south. The 1991 and 1999 earthquakes proved that the area is susceptible to earthquakes. Furthermore, the town, which at present has over 4,500 buildings, is built on a paleo-landslide-prone slope.

Sundriyal also mentioned the warning made in 1985 by three eminent scientists, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Navin Juyal, and MS Kunwar, in their article *Vishnu Prayag Project: A risky venture in Higher Himalaya*. The essay mentioned how during the ramping up of the infrastructure, including the building of roads and houses, for the development of Joshimath, enormous quantities of earth and boulders were removed using dynamite. They also mentioned that irregular drainage had made the slope vulnerable to erosion. As a result, many parts of the town sank, reports *New Indian Express*.

As early as the 1960s, the Union government had appointed MC Mishra, the then collector of Garhwal, to look into why Joshimath was sinking. The report submitted, in 1976, by the 18-member committee clearly mentioned that Joshimath was situated on an old landslide zone and could sink if development continued unabated, and recommended that construction be prohibited in Joshimath. After the recent incident, the prophetic observations of the Mishra Committee report have surfaced again. Among others, the important observations of the committee were:

Joshimath lies on an ancient landslide, resting on a deposit of sand and stone, not rock. The rivers Alaknanda and Dhauli Ganga play their part in triggering landslides, by eroding the river banks and mountain edges. It's believed that increased construction activity and growing population have contributed to frequent landslides in the area.

"Joshimath is a deposit of sand and stone — it is not the main rock — hence it was not suitable for a township. Vibrations produced by blasting, heavy traffic, etc., will lead to disequilibrium in natural factors…" the report had stated.

Lack of proper drainage facilities also leads to landslides. The existence of soak pits, which allow water to slowly soak into the ground, is responsible for the creation of cavities between the soil and the boulders. This leads to water seepage and soil erosion, the report said.

The report (1976) also made a few important recommendations to prevent any major disaster as observed recently. The most important preventive measure it suggested was the imposition of restrictions on heavy construction. Construction should only be allowed after examining the load-bearing capacity of the soil and the stability of the site, and restrictions should also be imposed on the excavation of slopes.

The Mishra Committee also advised against cutting trees in the landslide zone and said that extensive plantation work should be undertaken in the area, particularly between Marwari and Joshimath, to conserve soil and water resources. Just over a year-and-a-half before the land subsidence in Joshimath, similar cracks in houses and roads were reported in June-July 2021, by residents in Raini village, about 22 kilometers from Joshimath town. But no preventive action was taken by the authorities, reports *Indian Express*.

The Raini village was the birthplace of the famous 'Chipko Movement' of the 1970s. Legendary Gaura Devi, who paved the way for the movement, hailed from this Raini village. She played a key role in the Chipko Movement in March 1974 when contractors engaged by an Allahabad-based sports goods company came to Raini village to cut Ash trees. It was Gaura Devi and the women of the nearby villages who hugged the trees and didn't allow the contractors to cut them, reports *NewsClick*. The movement got attention across the country and the Central government brought the Forest Protection Act, a law to regulate forests in a bid to conserve them across India. The village of Raini is now a place too dangerous for its residents to live on.

> The conspicuous silence on the future of Jharia and Raniganj, which are facing risks of subsidence due to burning of the coal seams, is deeply damaging

Massive flash floods ravaged Raini village on February 7, 2021, following a glacier coming unstuck and an avalanche in the Alaknanda River. The huge mass of snow, water, boulders, and silt slithered down the Rishiganga River, first damaging the 13 MW private Rishi-Ganga hydropower project and then flowing down to Dhauliganga River to swamp the NTPC-owned 520 MW Tapovan-Vishnugad hydropower project. Again, on June 14, 2021, incessant rains in the region brought back memories of the nightmare. The Rishiganga had swollen due to torrential rains for three days straight, causing soil erosion from underneath the village. This led to big cracks in several houses, instilling fear among the villagers. According to reports, a large portion of the Joshimath-Malari Road beneath Raini village caved in, cutting off around 22 border villages of the Chamoli district.

Suresh Nautiyal, a veteran environmentalist based in Uttarakhand, alleges that consecutive governments have systematically blown away the gains of the Chipko Movement and wilfully aligned with corporations, contractors, industrial companies, and the construction mafia to irretrievably damage the inherent balance of nature.

Roads and big dams which displaced thousands, mindless constructions violating all norms, unknown tunnels and aggressive religious tourism have all turned the clock to its current, tragic fate. According to him, the murder of natural streams and rivers, the massacre of trees, the non-stop destruction of the organic eco-system in the relentless race for a capitalist model of unplanned development, blindly copying big cities in the plains, has ravaged the pristine 'Dev Bhoomi'. Several towns like Gangotri, Uttarkashi, and Gopeshwar are also sinking. Landslides, cloudbursts, and flash floods are inevitable and have become part of the tragic lives of the condemned people of Uttarakhand, reports *Loksnarg*.

Hydropower projects in Uttarakhand

Referring to the government data (2016), The *Wire Science* reported that the Uttarakhand government had planned more than 450 hydropower projects, with a total installed capacity of 27,039 MW. At that time, 92 projects with 3,624 MW of installed capacity had been commissioned and 38, with 3,292 MW, were under construction. But the government's plans were stalled after the Supreme Court intervened following the 2013 floods when over four thousand people drowned. The ministry formed an 11-member body – called EB-I, chaired by Ravi Chopra – in October 2013. This committee's report stated that hydropower projects had indeed aggravated the impact of the 2013 floods. A "concerned" Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court on December 5, 2014, stating: "any decision on developmental projects especially hydropower projects should … be on very strong and sound footings with scientific back up".

However, in a drastic change of stance from 2014, the MoEFCC filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court on August 17, 2021, saying a consensus had been reached between the MoEFCC, the power ministry, the Jal Shakti ministry, and the Uttarakhand government to continue work on seven hydropower projects: Tehri II (1,000 MW), Tapovan Vishnugad (520 MW), Vishnugad Pipalkoti (444 MW), Singoli Bhatwari (99 MW), Phata Byung (76 MW), Madmaheshwar (15 MW), and Kalganga II (4.5 MW)

Of the seven projects that the MoEFCC proposed for construction, five have been damaged in previous flood-related disasters. The 2013 floods damaged Phata Byung, Singoli Bhatwari), Madhmaheshwar, and Kaliganga-II – all in Rudraprayag district. Tapovan Vishnugad, in Chamoli district, was damaged in disasters in 2012, 2013, 2016, and 2021.

The main reason behind the changed stance of MoEFCC was an important policy decision by the PMO. On February 25, 2019, the Union government decided that no new or proposed projects would be considered on the Ganga and its tributaries in Uttarakhand. It also determined that only the seven projects assessed to be "more than 50 per cent complete" could proceed.

In 2021, the MoEFCC argued that the seven projects should go ahead because work on them is more than '50 per cent' complete. But environmentalists were not convinced. On February 7, 2021, a flooded Dhauliganga river damaged much of the Tapovan Vishnugad project, which was under construction. At least 139 workers were killed at the project site. The MoEFCC affidavit claimed that the project was '75 per cent complete' before the deluge!

As per a report by *The Hindu*, a group of environmentalists, historians, geologists, and intellectuals have petitioned the Union Environment Ministry to renounce its endorsement of seven hydroelectric power projects (HEP) in Uttarakhand.

Late in October 2022, houses in Joshimath gradually started collapsing due to the cracks, which had been developing for over a year. The Tapovan-Vishnugad Project and the Helang Bypass Project have been blamed for the same. Till last week, the number of houses with cracks stood at 849, out of which 165 are in the 'unsafe zone'. Only 233 households have been relocated to temporary relief facilities. Apparently, no proper resettlement arrangement has been planned as yet. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of India (SC) has refused to designate the Joshimath land sinking crisis as a national disaster and declined a plea that sought the SC's intervention. As per a report by *Down To Earth*, the court asked the petitioner seeking intervention to approach the Uttarakhand High Court!

Jharia–Raniganj underground coal fire

In Jharia and Raniganj, large-scale underground fires were detected in the 1970s. These originated from spontaneous combustion occurring due to unscientific coal mining techniques. Those fires have only grown in scale as the government has not been able to do much about them. Referring to a study made by Coal India Ltd (CIL), the *Hindustan Times* reported (September 20, 2014) that as per CIL's assessment, about 37 million tonnes of coal had already been burnt down in Jharia (Jharkhand) and Raniganj (West Bengal) and, if no remedial action was taken., about 1.45 billion tonnes of coal would be burned up, in next few years. More importantly, the lives of hundreds of thousands of people living in these areas would be in danger as parts of the earth's surface can cave in if the coal-bearing blocks underground burn to ashes. The then Union Coal and Power Minister Piyush Goyal said the government had planned to shift the population from the underground coal fire-affected areas. The minister agreed that thousands of lives were in danger as they had been staying near the underground fire zone.

It is believed that in a few mines, the fire started over a century ago — in 1916 to be precise. Experts believe that if the coal in these mines could be prevented from burning down and, instead, mined, then India's coal shortage could be substantially averted. Then why CIL did not take any major initiative to save these mines? The possible reason could be due to the increasing importance the Indian petroleum sector enjoyed since the late sixties and early seventies of the last century.

After years of deliberations, the government finally approved a master plan, in August 2009, for addressing the issues arising out of these fires. The outlay was: Rs 7,112.11 crore for Jharia and Rs 2,661.73 crore for Raniganj. The timeframe to resolve the issue was ten years. In the absence of any concrete rehabilitation arrangement, thousands of families still live in the areas made vulnerable by unscientific mining. Time magazine reported that in Jharia alone, 68 fires are burning beneath a 58-square-mile region, showering residents with airborne toxins.

Conclusion

Our planners and policymakers are fully aware of the sensitivity of the mines and mountains. But more powerful voices suppress those sane voices. In a country where the top 1 per cent population owned more than 40.5 per cent of total wealth, in 2021, compared to the bottom 50 per cent (700 million) who owned only around 3 per cent of total wealth, it is inevitable that the State would favour the lobby that controls over forty per cent of the nation's wealth. In this sad situation, manmade 'natural disasters' will keep on occurring in India, maybe at a higher rate!

Views expressed are personal

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Water conservation need of hour: Haryana Dy CM

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH: Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala said that today water conservation is the need of the hour. For this, we have to revive our natural resources. The government has also come forward for this work and this year a budget of Rs 1,100 crores has been fixed to take this work forward.

The deputy chief minister said this while addressing a press conference on Saturday at the Gymkhana Club in Sector-15A, Faridabad. Chautala announced the initiation of a campaign by the Awaaz Foundation and Rotary Club to revive 100 stalled borewells.

He said that a significant number of borewells in the city of Faridabad had stopped functioning as a result of the decline in ground water levels.

Due to this, a large number of people are not getting drinking water. He said that when this matter came to notice, it was asked to find an expert agency for recommendations.

After extensive research, it came to light that some people in Maharashtra are working on reviving the stalled borewells.

Thereafter, these people were contacted and the entire work was taken up by Awaaz Foundation and Rotary Club. Initially 100 borewells will be revived under it in Faridabad. In this project, a borewell will cost Rs 50,000/ Rotary Club and Awaaz Foundation will jointly contribute to it, he said.

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यमुना की सफाई पकड़ेगी रफ्तार...एलजी ने संभाली कमान, कहा-कमी स्वीकार नहीं

एनजीटी की ओर से गठित समिति की पहली बैठक में दिए निर्देश, समयसीमा का पालन करें अफसर

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। यमुना की सफाई अब मिशन मोड में होगी। इसकी कमान उपराज्यपाल वीके सक्सेना ने संभाल ली है। शनिवार को नेशनल ग्रीन ट्रिब्यूनल (एनजीटी) की ओर से गठित उच्चस्तरीय समिति की पहली बैठक की अध्यक्षता करते हुए एलजी ने अधिकारियों को स्पष्ट निर्देश दिया कि समयसीमा का पालन करें। उपेक्षा की शिकार योजना को अभी तक लक्ष्य प्राप्त कर लेना चाहिए था। समय सीमा को बढ़ाए बिना निर्णयों पर तेजी से काम करें। अधिकारियों की ओर से किसी भी तरह की कमी को स्वीकार नहीं किया जाएगा।

उपराज्यपाल ने अधिकारियों के साथ बैठक में यमुना और शहर में विभिन्न नालों में पानी की गुणवत्ता की स्थिति का जायजा लेने के साथ सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट्स (एसटीपीएस) और कॉमन एफ्लुएंट ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट्स (सीईटीपीएस) की स्थिति और कमियों पर ध्यान दिया। पिछले काम का जायजा लेने के बाद भविष्य की ठोस कार्ययोजना पर विचार-विमर्श किया गया। बैठक में भारत सरकार और दिल्ली सरकार के वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों ने भाग लिया। इसमें मुख्य सचिव, विशेष सचिव, जल शक्ति मंत्रालय, महानिदेशक (एनएमससीजी), विदेश विभाग के अतिरिक्त सचिव, डीपीसीसी अध्यक्ष, एमसीडी आयुक्त, दिल्ली जलबोर्ड के सीईओ समेत कई अधिकारी शामिल हुए।

अधिकारियों के साथ बैठक करते एलजी वीके सक्सेना।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट और एनजीटी के आदेश के बाद उच्चस्तरीय समिति का गठन

सुप्रीम कोर्ट और एनजीटी के आदेशों के बावजूद यमुना की सफाई नहीं होने के बाद 9 जनवरी को एक उच्चस्तरीय समिति का गठन किया गया था। यमुना की सफाई के संबंध में गठित कमेटी का नेतृत्व दिल्ली के उपराज्यपाल कर रहे हैं।

यमुना की सफाई करते लोग।

पुनर्जीवित किए जा रहे वजीराबाद के तालाबों का सांसद ने किया निरीक्षण

उत्तर पूर्वी दिल्ली के सांसद मनोज तिवारी ने यमुना कायाकल्प योजना के तहत मृतप्राय तालाबों को पुनर्जीवित करने के काम का निरीक्षण किया। दिल्ली जलबोर्ड करीब 35 करोड़ की लागत से इन्हें विकसित कर रहा है। जहांगीरपुरी ड्रेन के गंदे पानी को एसटीपी से शोधित कर यहां बनाए गए 11 तालाबों को भरा जाएगा। इनके किनारे हरियाली विकसित कर पर्यटन स्थल के रूप में विकसित किया जाएगा।

लक्ष्य प्राप्ति की योजना तैयार

06 माह की कार्ययोजना तय की गई मासिक लक्ष्यों के साथ जून 2023 तक

31 जनवरी को सौंपी जाएगी एनजीटी को पहली रिपोर्ट

■ कार्ययोजना की साप्ताहिक आधार पर निगरानी की जाएगी।

भविष्य के लिए आठ मापदंड इंगित

दिल्ली में सीवेज उपचार क्षमता में वृद्धि और एसटीपी का संवर्द्धन होगा। इसमें विभिन्न स्थानों पर 40 नए विकेंद्रीकृत सीवरेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट (एसटीपी) का निर्माण होगा। कोंडली, रिठाला और यमुना विहार में तीन मौजूदा एसटीपी के कार्य में प्रगति के साथ 18 मौजूदा एसटीपी का डिजाइन बेहतर किया जाएगा।

1

नजफगढ़ ड्रेन में गिरने वाले 44 सब-ड्रेन, सप्लीमेंट्री ड्रेन में गिरने वाले 30 सब-ड्रेन और शाहदरा ड्रेन में गिरने वाले दो सब-ड्रेन में ड्रेन टैपिंग और सीवेज का ट्रीटमेंट को बेहतर किया जाएगा।

2

3. मौजूदा 747 से सभी 1799 अनधिकृत कॉलोनियों में सीवरेज नेटवर्क का विस्तार और सीवरेज नेटवर्क के साथ 639 जेजे क्लस्टरों की नालियों/ड्रेनेज सिस्टम के कनेक्शन किए जाएंगे।
4. औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों से निकले गंदे पानी के स्रोत का उपचार और प्रबंधन के लिए 13 सीईटीपी को बेहतर किया जाएगा।
5. मल-कीचड़ प्रबंधन और आठ लाख उपयोगकर्ताओं को सीवेज नेटवर्क से जोड़कर सेप्टिक टैंक की प्रणाली को समाप्त किया जाएगा।
6. यमुना के बाढ़ प्रभावित मैदानों का कायाकल्प होगा।
7. उपचारित अपशिष्ट जल के उपयोग के लिए कार्ययोजना तैयार की जाएगी।
8. अंतरराज्यीय समन्वय के माध्यम से यमुना में न्यूनतम पर्यावरणीय प्रवाह (ई-प्रवाह) सुनिश्चित किया जाएगा।

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जोशीमठ में पानी का रिसाव घटा 136 एलपीएम पर पहुंचा

देहरादून। जोशीमठ में जेपी कॉलोनी में एक बार फिर पानी के रिसाव में कमी आई है। एक दिन पहले 250 एलपीएम बह रहा पानी शनिवार को 136 पर पहुंच गया, जबकि दरार वाले भवनों की संख्या 863 पर पहुंच गई है। सचिव आपदा प्रबंधन डॉ. रंजीत सिन्हा ने बताया, जोशीमठ में अग्रिम राहत के तौर पर अब तक 242 परिवारों को 3.62 करोड़ की धनराशि बांटी जा चुकी है। अस्थायी रूप से बनाए गए राहत शिविरों में कुल 650 कमरे चिह्नित किए गए हैं, जहां 2919 लोग रह सकते हैं। इसके अलावा पीपलकोटी में 491 कमरे आरक्षित किए गए हैं, जहां 2205 लोगों को ठहराया जा सकता है। बताया, गांधीनगर में एक, सिंहधार में दो, मनोहरबाग में पांच, सुनील में सात क्षेत्रों को असुरक्षित घोषित किया गया है। ब्यूरो

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अटल भूजल योजना में राज्यों की नहीं है संतोषजनक प्रगति

जल संरक्षण की अन्य योजनाओं को समाहित करने में राज्य पीछे

जागरण ब्यूरो, नई दिल्ली : भूजल के अंधाधुंध दोहन से प्रभावित देश के सात राज्यों के 229 ब्लाकों की हालत नाजुक दौर में है। इन ब्लाकों के आठ हजार से अधिक गांवों और बस्तियों में पीने के पानी तक की किल्लत है। अटल भूजल योजना की राष्ट्रीय संचालन समिति की समीक्षा बैठक में चिंताजनक स्थिति के बावजूद राज्यों में योजना की अपेक्षित प्रगति संतोषजनक नहीं पाई गई। खासतौर पर जल संरक्षण की विभिन्न योजनाओं को इसमें समाहित करने में ज्यादातर राज्य रुचि नहीं दिखा रहे हैं।

प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी की पहल पर वर्ष 2020 में शुरू की गई अटल भूजल योजना 2025 तक चलेगी, जिस पर कुल 6000 करोड़ रुपये की लागत आने का अनुमान है। इसमें सात राज्यों के 80 जिलों के कुल 229 ब्लाक को चिह्नित किया गया है, जिनके 8220 गांवों में पीने के पानी का गंभीर संकट पैदा हो गया है। ऐसी चुनौतियों से निपटने के लिए सरकार ने अटल भूजल योजना लागू की है, जिसमें वर्षा के पानी को संरक्षित करने के साथ पानी के सदुपयोग को प्रोत्साहित करना शामिल है।

जिन सात राज्यों को इसमें शामिल किया गया है, उनमें गुजरात, हरियाणा, कर्नाटक, मध्य प्रदेश, महाराष्ट्र, राजस्थान और उत्तर प्रदेश शामिल हैं। इसके लिए चालू वित्त वर्ष 2022-23 के लिए लगभग 3000 करोड़ रुपये का प्रविधान किया गया है। योजना में मानसून के दौरान पानी को संरक्षित करने पर ज्यादा जोर देना है। इसके लिए संबंधित राज्यों, जिलों, ब्लाकों और गांवों के स्थानीय लोगों को प्रशिक्षित और जागरूक बनाना है। जल संरक्षण के साथ जल की जरूरत का भी आकलन करना है। इसमें सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता पेयजल की आपूर्ति पर है।

2020
में मोदी की पहल पर शुरू की गई अटल भूजल योजना 2025 तक चलेगी

- राष्ट्रीय संचालन समिति की समीक्षा बैठक में जताई गई चिंता

ग्रामीण विकास, कृषि और सिंचाई समेत अन्य योजनाएं शामिल: अटल भूजल योजना को कारगर तरीके से लागू करने के लिए ग्रामीण विकास, कृषि और सिंचाई समेत अन्य योजनाओं को भी शामिल किया गया है। जल संरक्षण की सभी योजनाएं इसमें समाहित की गई हैं। सबसे ज्यादा जोर सामुदायिक सहयोग पर रहेगा। समीक्षा बैठक में सभी राज्यों की ओर से अपनी प्रगति का ब्योरा प्रस्तुत किया गया, जिससे स्पष्ट है कि इन राज्यों में अटल भूजल योजना के लिए निर्धारित मानकों का पालन नहीं किया जा रहा है। समीक्षा में पाया गया कि उत्तर प्रदेश और मध्य प्रदेश को छोड़कर बाकी राज्यों में प्रशिक्षण का प्राथमिक कार्य भी बहुत पीछे है। सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट और आंकड़ों के अलावा जमीनी स्तर पर योजना लागू नहीं हो पाई है। संचालन समिति ने राज्यों को जल सुरक्षा योजनाओं को इसमें समाहित करने का निर्देश जारी किया है। स्थानीय स्तर पर पानी की खपत और आपूर्ति के अंतर से लोगों को परिचित कराया जाएगा, ताकि लोगों को जल प्रबंधन में व्यावहारिक बदलाव करने में मदद मिले। प्रशासनिक स्तर के बजाय स्थानीय स्तर पर जल प्रबंधन पर जोर दिया जाएगा।

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सराय काले खां स्थित बांसेरा पार्क में शनिवार को '100 डेज टू बीट प्लास्टिक' अभियान के शुभारंभ अवसर पर उपराज्यपाल वीके सक्सेना। ● एजेंसी

यमुना सफाई के लिए छह माह की कार्ययोजना तैयार

नई दिल्ली, प्रमुख संवाददाता। यमुना की सफाई को लेकर उपराज्यपाल वीके सक्सेना द्वारा शुक्रवार को ली गई बैठक में छह माह की कार्ययोजना तैयार की गई। बैठक में दिल्ली और केंद्र सरकार के विभिन्न विभागों के अधिकारी शामिल हुए। इस दौरान यमुना नदी और शहर में विभिन्न नालों में पानी की गुणवत्ता की मौजूदा स्थिति पर चर्चा की गई।

वहीं, सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट्स, कॉमन एफ्लुएंट ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट्स की स्थिति और कमियों पर ध्यान देने के बाद भविष्य की ठोस कार्ययोजना पर विचार-विमर्श किया गया। बैठक में आठ मापदंडों पर समयबद्ध कार्रवाई बिंदु तय किए गए। दिल्ली में सीवेज उपचार क्षमता में वृद्धि और एसटीपी का पुनर्वास, जिसमें विभिन्न स्थानों पर 40 नए विकेंद्रीकृत एसटीपी का निर्माण शामिल है। कोंडली, रिठाला और यमुना विहार में मौजूद तीन एसटीपी के पुनर्वास में प्रगति और 18 मौजूदा एसटीपी का डिजाइन अपग्रेड किया जाएगा।

प्लास्टिक मुक्त बनाने का अभियान शुरू

उपराज्यपाल वीके सक्सेना ने सराय काले खां स्थित बांसेरा पार्क से निगम के '100 डेज टू बीट प्लास्टिक' अभियान का शुभारंभ किया। इस मौके पर उन्होंने लोगों को प्लास्टिक का इस्तेमाल ना करने भी शपथ दिलाई। उन्होंने कहा कि प्लास्टिक के खिलाफ 100 दिवसीय अभियान का समापन 22 अप्रैल को अंतरराष्ट्रीय पृथ्वी दिवस के मौके पर होगा।

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छह माह में करें एक्शन प्लान तैयारः उपराज्यपाल

दिल्लीवालों को जल्द दिखेगी साफ व गंदगी मुक्त यमुना

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): दिल्लीवालों को जल्द ही यमुना का नया रूप देखने को मिलेगा। अक्सर गंदी व प्रदूषण युक्त रहने वाली यमुना अब साफ-स्वच्छ व निर्मल जल से युक्त दिखाई देगी। इस दिशा में आगे बढ़ते हुए एनजीटी के निर्देशों पर उपराज्यपाल विनय कुमार सक्सेना की अध्यक्षता में गठित उच्चस्तरीय कमेटी की पहली बैठक हुई। राजनिवास में आयोजित इस बैठक में यमुना को साफ करने के लिए छह महीने का एक्शन प्लान जून तक तैयार करने का निर्णय लिया गया है। एलजी की अध्यक्षता में हुई बैठक में यमुना को स्वच्छ बनाने को लेकर अब तक हुए सभी कामों पर विस्तार से चर्चा हुई जिसमें संबंधित विभागों व एजेंसियों के सभी आला अधिकारी मौजूद रहे। इस दौरान एलजी ने कहा कि अधिकारियों की तरफ से इस काम में किसी भी प्रकार की लापरवाही को बर्दाश्त नहीं की जाएगी। उन्होंने यमुना को स्वच्छ बनाने के लिए आठ सूत्रीय एक्शन प्लान की भी बात की है, जिसमें दिल्ली के एसटीपी (सीवर ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट) की क्षमता बढ़ाने, नालों को साफ करना और उन्हें यमुना में गिरने से रोकना, अनाधिकृत कॉलोनी जेजे क्लस्टर में सीवर नेटवर्क स्थापित करना, बाढ़ क्षेत्र को पुनर्स्थापित करना आदि शामिल है। यह 6 महीने का एक्शन प्लान तैयार करने के लिए एलजी ने जून 2023 की समय-सीमा तय की है। इसकी साप्ताहिक आधार पर निगरानी की जाएगी और 31 जनवरी को एनजीटी को पहली रिपोर्ट सौंपी जाएगी। सक्सेना ने अधिकारियों को संबोधित करते हुए गोलपोस्ट बदलने के खिलाफ आगाह किया। उन्होंने कहा कि ऐसा इसीलिए हुआ क्योंकि हमने अपनी विरासत की उपेक्षा लेकिन अभी भी इस पूरा किया जा सकता है। सक्सेना ने अधिकारियों को निर्देश दिये कि वे आज तय की गई समय सीमा को बढ़ाए बिना बैठक में लिये गये निर्णयों को मिशन मोड में लागू करना सुनिश्चित करें। यहां यमुना की सफाई के लिए 9 जनवरी को एनजीटी ने एक उच्च स्तरीय समिति का गठन किया था और एलजी को इसका अध्यक्ष बनाया गया था।

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न्यूनतम ई-फ्लो यमुना में बना रहे : उपराज्यपाल

■ विशेष संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली

नैशनल ग्रीन ट्रिब्यूनल (एनजीटी) के आदेश पर बनी उच्चस्तरीय कमिटी के हेड एलजी वी. के. सक्सेना ने अधिकारियों को निर्देश दिए हैं कि संबंधित राज्यों से तालमेल बिठाकर यमुना में न्यूनतम ई-फ्लो (एनवायरनमेंट फ्लो) को बनाए रखें। शुक्रवार को कमिटी की पहली मीटिंग में आठ सूत्रीय एक्शन प्लान पर काम करने पर सहमति बनी है। इन्हीं आठ मुद्दों में ई-फ्लो को बनाए रखना भी शामिल है।

> एनजीटी के आदेश पर बनी उच्चस्तरीय कमिटी के हेड हैं एलजी

ई-फ्लो का मतलब पानी के उस स्तर से है, जिसकी जरूरत नदी के इकोसिस्टम को बचाने और नहाने लायक बनाए रखने के लिए होती है। दिल्ली प्रदूषण कंट्रोल बोर्ड (डीपीसीसी) अब तक केंद्रीय जल शक्ति मंत्रालय में कई रिपोर्ट सब्मिट कर चुका है, जिसमें कहा गया है कि ई-फ्लो की कमी के कारण राजधानी में यमुना इतनी प्रदूषित है। इसे लेकर 2019 में रुड़की स्थित नैशनल इंस्टिट्यूट ऑफ हाइड्रोलॉजी ने भी एक रिपोर्ट तैयार की थी। इसमें सुझाव दिया गया था कि यमुना में ई-फ्लो बनाए रखने के लिए हथिनीकुंड बैराज से 23 क्यूबिक मीटर प्रति सेकंड पानी छोड़ा जाना चाहिए। यह 427 एमजीडी के बराबर है। वहीं मंत्रालय के अनुसार उत्तराखंड, हिमाचल प्रदेश, उत्तर प्रदेश, हरियाणा, राजस्थान और दिल्ली के बीच वॉटर शेयरिंग एग्रीमेंट 1994 में हुआ था। अब 2025 में उसे रिवाइज किया जाना है। वहीं डीपीसीसी के अनुसार, अगर ई-फ्लो 23 क्यूबिक मीटर प्रति सेकंड रहे तो बीओडी का स्तर 25 एमएम प्रति लीटर से कम होकर 12 एमएम प्रति लीटर आ जाएगा। इसे और कम करने के लिए अधिक कदम उठाने होंगे।

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NGT's panel prepares 6-month action plan to rejuvenate Yamuna

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE High-level committee on Yamuna constituted by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to galvanize measures for the rejuvenation of the river has charted out a 6-month action plan, officials said. The panel, headed by L-G VK Saxena, met for the first time on Friday evening and took stock of the prevalent situation of the river's water quality and deliberated on a time-bound action plan, they added.

"After taking stock of the prevalent situation of water quality in the river Yamuna and the various drains in the city, along with the status of

Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) and Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) in the city and dwelling upon the gaps in the actions taken till now, the meeting deliberated upon a concrete future plan of action,' a senior official from the L-G House said.

According to the official, time bound action points on eight parameters were decided upon including enhancement of the city's sewage treatment capacity, extension of the sewage network in all unauthorized colonies and rejuvenation of flood plains among others.

Besides, tapping of 76 subdrains of Najafgarh Drain, upgradation of 13 CETPs for treatment of industrial effluent, septage management through eliminating the system of septic tanks by connecting 8 lakh users to the sewage network to ensure minimum environmental flow in the Yamuna was also decided by the committee, the officials added.

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Withdraw nod given to K'taka-Goa water dispute: Goa to Centre

NAUSHAD BIJAPUR @ Belagavi

AFTER a marathon, special debate on the Mahadayi imbroglio, the Goa Assembly on Saturday unanimously adopted a resolution demanding that the Centre withdraw the approval given to the detailed project report presented by the Karnataka government on the Kalasa-Banduri project.

Expressing concerns over the Centre's support to Karnataka, the Assembly formed a House committee, headed by Goa Water Resources Minister Subhash Shirodkar and comprising legislators from all parties, to decide on the stand that the Goa government should take on the Mahadayi issue.

All the 40 MLAs took part in the discussion and they unitedly opposed the approval given to Karnataka's DPR. The House committee will hear the opinions of environmentalists, scientists, legal experts and people of the state before presenting a report.

Earlier, the Assembly demanded that the Centre should not allow out-of-basin diversion of Mahadayi waters. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the resolution passed by the House will be sent to the Centre soon. Opposition leaders urged Sawant to fix a specific deadline for the Centre to withdraw the DPR.

Sawant admitted that Karnataka has already diverted water at Haltara and Kalasa rivulets, and said his government has strongly objected to any diversion of water from the Mhadei basin into Karnataka. To utilise waters from the Mhadei river, six dams are in the pipeline, he added. The office of the Mhadei Water Management Authority should be in Panaji, said Sawant.

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