

The Times of India- 19- January-2023

Bottles filled with dirty water, BJP MLAs protest against Yamuna pollution

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New Delhi: Staging a protest in Delhi Assembly over the issue of pollution in the Yamuna, BJP MLAs on Wednesday carried bottles filled with dirty water from the river and handed them to speaker Ram Niwas Goel.

Leader of the Opposition in Delhi Assembly RS Bidhuri, BJP MLA Jitendra Mahajan and others entered the well demanding discussion on the issue. They said that as the custodian of the house, the Speaker should safeguard their rights.

The Speaker said he will get the water checked chemically, but warned the MLAs that their membership would be ended if it was found they had mixed acid in it. The MLAs were later marshalled out.

Addressing the media outside the Assembly, Bidhuri said supply of dirty water from the Yamuna was harming the health of people.

"We want to ask Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal where the money for Yamuna's cleaning went because the river has become 200% more polluted in the eight years of AAP government," he claimed.

BJP's Mahajan said despite the issue being raised several times, sewage was still being released into the river. "The condition of the Yamuna is worse than a drain in Delhi. People are getting cancer and stomach problems due to the dirty water," he added.

Citing data from Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), the LG office had on Monday said that pollution in the Yamuna has doubled in the eight years of the Kejriwal government.

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has said it is already working to resolve legacy problems and upgradation of almost all major sewage treatment

plants (STPs) is expected to be completed by the end of December.

Waste water from unauthorised colonies and slum clusters and poor quality of treated water from STPs and common effluent treatment plants are the main reasons for the high levels of pollution in the river.

DPCC data showed that since 2014, biological oxygen demand (BOD) levels remained within permissible limits (2 milligram per litre) at Palla, where the river enters Delhi.

BIDHURI SAYS

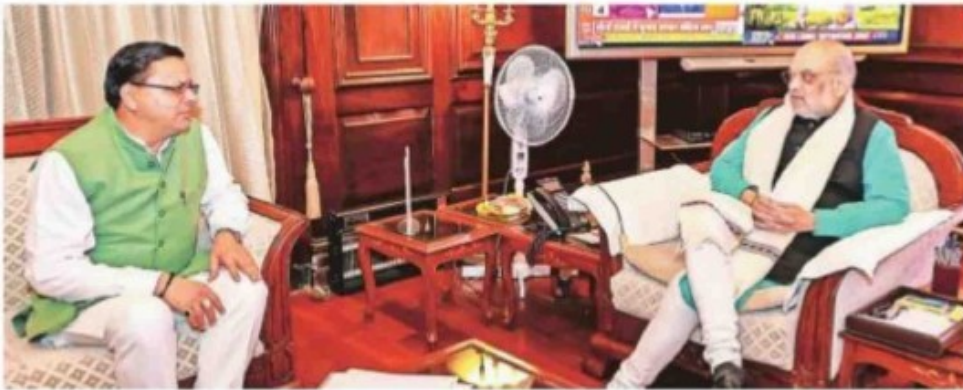
We want to ask Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal where the money for Yamuna's cleaning went because the river has become 200% more polluted in the eight years of AAP government

BOD, an important parameter for assessing water quality, is the amount of oxygen required by aerobic micro-organisms to decompose organic material present in a water body. BOD level less than 3 milligram per litre (mg/l) is considered good.

Meanwhile, Bidhuri also raised the issue of pension, demanding its immediate release to 3.5 lakh elderly people in the Capital who have been waiting for it for several years.

"Elderly people have requested a new pension, but Delhi government is not accepting it. In their old age, they do not have the money for medicines," Bidhuri said.

The Indian Express- 19- January-2023

LAND SUBSIDENCE IN JOSHIMATH

Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in New Delhi on Wednesday. *PTI*

Dhami briefs Shah on Joshimath; says 65-70% leading normal life

**MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL & AVANEESH
MISHRA**

NEW DELHI, DEHRADUN,
JANUARY 18

UTTARAKHAND CHIEF Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday and informed him about the status of rehabilitation work being carried out in Joshimath where cracks are appearing in buildings and other structures due to land subsidence.

After the meeting, Dhami said 65-70 per cent people in Joshimath are leading a normal life and the Char Dham Yatra will start after four months.

The CM told mediapersons that the home minister assured him of all assistance needed to deal with the current situation in Joshimath. "Today, I gave detailed information to him (Shah) about the situation in Joshimath. I also told him about the search for new places and other works being done by the state government. He assured that all assistance will be provided by the Centre," Dhami said. Responding to allegation made by some political parties that the Uttarakhand government is suppressing reports of various agencies on Joshimath, Dhami said: "People sitting at different places in the country are talking about Uttarakhand, which is not right because 65 to 70 per cent of

the people living there are leading their lives normally. In nearby Auli, which is a tourist attraction, everything is going on normally. Tourists are still visiting Auli. Char Dham Yatra will start in the next four months," he said.

Dhami also said there was no talk about money. "I have shared tentative information with him. This matter will be discussed later when we will submit a full report, once it comes," he said.

Share reports: govt to institutes

The Uttarakhand government has urged various technical institutes studying the land subsidence and landslides in Joshimath to share their reports with each other for better understanding of the situation. Disaster Management Secretary Ranjit Kumar Sinha on Wednesday told mediapersons that Uttarakhand Chief Secretary SS Sandhu has urged the directors and scientists of various technical institutes working in Joshimath to study the affected areas on an immediate basis and submit the report at the earliest.

"Landslide study in Joshimath should be done in a time-bound manner. Various technical institutes should also share their study reports with each other. Along with clarity in the study reports, the solution should also be discussed," said Sinha.

Earlier on Tuesday, the central government issued a timeline for

the technical institutions being run by it to submit study reports on the disaster-affected areas in Joshimath.

"A team of 10 scientists from the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) has been given three-week time to submit their report. Similarly, a 10-member team of scientists from National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) and a seven-member team from Wadia Institute have been given two weeks for preliminary report and three weeks for the final report," said Sinha.

The government has given two weeks for the preliminary report and two months for the final report to a team of seven scientists from Geological Survey of India (GSI). One week for the preliminary report and three weeks for the final report have been given to the team of four scientists of Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), he said.

Meanwhile, the water discharge in Joshimath has reduced for the third consecutive day. Sinha said that the water discharge has come down to 100 LPM (litres per minute) from 540 LPM around a week ago. According to data provided by the Chamoli district administration, so far, cracks have been spotted in 849 buildings and 181 structures have been identified as being located in "unsafe zone". Total 865 people from 258 families have been temporarily displaced.

The Indian Express- 19- January-2023

Ken-Betwa Link Project panel holds third meet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 18

THE THIRD meeting of the Steering Committee of Ken-Betwa Link Project (SC-KBLP) was held on Wednesday.

Held under the Chairmanship of Union Jal Shakti Secretary Pankaj Kumar, the meeting was attended by representatives of both Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and senior Central officials.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, during the meeting, it was “stressed” that Ken-Betwa link project is critical for the water security and socio-economic development of Bundelkhand region.

During the meeting, deliberations were held on various agenda items covering follow-up actions on decisions taken during the previous meeting, work plan for 2023-24, engagement of Project Management Consultancy, land acquisition among others, the statement said.

“It was intimated to the committee that orders for transfer about 5480 ha non forest govt. land of Panna and Chhatarpur district of MP have been issued by state govt. for transfer to PTR [Panna Tiger Reserve] for compensatory afforestation,” it said.

The Hindu- 19- January-2023



Project to clear streams in Western Ghats

IDUKKI

The Haritha Keralam Mission will launch 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.

Project to clear Western Ghats streams to prevent landslips during the rains

Sandeep Vellaram

IDUKKI

The Haritha Keralam Mission will launch 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 will be implemented in 230 panchayats in nine districts.

T.N. Seema, Nava Kerala Mission coordinator, says the project aims to ensure smooth water flow in all streams in the Western Ghats panchayats. "The project aims to clear all first-order and second-order streams in hilly areas, especially in Idukki, and ensure smooth water flow," she says.



The stream rejuvenation project will be implemented in 230 panchayats in nine districts. A stream at Wagamon.

"A smooth flow of streams will help prevent landslips in hilly regions. It has been planned to complete the project before the next monsoon season. The project will be implement-

ed in association with the State IT Mission and other departments," says Ms. Seema.

Abraham Koshi, assistant coordinator, Haritha Keralam Mission, says all

streams in the Western Ghats panchayats will be marked with the assistance of satellite maps in the first phase and cleared with the help of the local bodies concerned.

Reason for landslips

Sajinkumar K.S., Assistant Professor of Geology, University of Kerala, says the primary reason for 60% of landslips worldwide is the absence of a proper water drainage system. "If a proper water drainage system is ensured for hills and valleys, it will help prevent absorption of water in the soil. Therefore, the project will be helpful in preventing landslips in the Western Ghats regions," he says.

The inauguration of the stream mapping project will be held at the Idukki collectorate on Saturday.

Rumblings under the Joshimath hills



KOTA SRIRAJ

Commissioning of hydro-electric projects in Uttarakhand is an ecological harakiri. Despite warnings, the NTPC project in Vishnugad was carried on

Joshimath is one of the four 'maths' discovered by Adi Guru Shri Sankaracharya in the 8th century AD. Situated at an altitude of 2100 metres in the Chamoli District, and has for time immemorial been the preferred halt for pilgrims while proceeding to the Char Dham Yatra of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri. This simple town home to 20,000 population, has now made the headlines with the authorities declaring the place disaster prone due to land subsidence. Nearly 700 commercial, residential and army structures in the town have developed cracks due to rapidly sinking land. Thankfully there has been no loss of life reported till date although 60 families have been evacuated from dangerous



buildings till date and a further 6000 to 25 residents are expected to be evacuated by the state government in the coming days.

The holy town being at the junction point for people visiting Auli, a skiing spot has high tourist footfalls. According to the State Tourism Department data 1,65,000 tourists descended on Joshimath in 2021 for visiting Auli whereas nearly half a million pilgrims passed through the town in the same year visiting Char Dham Yatra and Hemkund Sahib. But this figure reached dizzying levels in 2022 when close to five crore tourists, 3.8 crore Kanwar Yatris and 45 lakh Char Dham pilgrims visited the hapless town of Joshimath. Given these spectacular numbers, it was no wonder that the state government held 2022 as one of the most successful years for tourism in Uttarakhand.

The burgeoning tourism brought growing commerce and urbanisation which translated into building of nearly 50 motels and restaurants in the town in total violation of hill building norms. The state government, busy feeding on tourism revenue, turned a complete blind eye to these transgressions. The result was evident in disturbed natural water drainage, undercut slopes, and uncontrolled discharge of water. The fact that the town had formed over time on an ancient landslide site and that a river cur-

rently flows under the town did not help as the base landscape is shifty in nature at best and is unable to handle stress.

But the damages inflicted by tourism, people and commercialisation of Joshimath probably pale in comparison to large scale infrastructure development done in the region in utter disregard for the fragile ecology and geology of the region. In fact, as long back 1976 The Mishra Committee report observed that Joshimath is a deposit of sand and stone — it is not the main rock — hence it is not suitable for a township. But the town still grew and in recent times a slew of developmental initiatives such as Hydroelectric projects, bypass roads and rail projects have transformed the quiet environs of Joshimath town region into a beehive of construction and infrastructure development activity.

These projects in due course took their toll on the local environment and ecology. Many environmental experts, nature conservation NGOs and locals repeatedly raised alarm about the deteriorating ecological conditions of Joshimath. The residents blamed the tunnelling work being done on the Rishikesh-Karnprayag rail project and the dynamiting taking place for



THE NTPC PROJECT TUNNEL PASSING THROUGH JOSHIMATH GOT PUNCTURED IN DECEMBER 2009 AND ABOUT 600 LITRES OF WATER STARTED FLOWING OUT PER SECOND. FOR THE LAST 12 YEARS, THIS WATER HAS BEEN FLOWING OUT

the extension of the Char Dham road for the sinking of land and cracks. The residents also blamed the construction of the Helang bypass, meant to shorten the distance to Badrinath by 30 km, but these protests fell on deaf ears. Over the last three years, the Joshimath Bachao Sangharsh Samiti had also issued repeated warnings to the state government on the sinking town.

The NTPC hydro project at Tapovan-Vishnugad is now fast emerging as the eye of the Joshimath storm. Local environmental activists such as Atul Sati and several other geologists are of the opinion that the NTPC's under-construction power project at Tapovan-Vishnugad and its tunnel passing below Joshimath is to be blamed for the current disaster. Owing to this NTPC has issued a statement that the tunnel is being built using a Tunnel Boring Machine, and not by doing any blasting.

However, experts and activists believe that the NTPC project's tunnel passing through Joshimath got punctured in December 2009 and about 600 litres of water started flowing per second and for the last 12 years, this water has been flowing. This means that an aquifer beneath the town

had burst, and water kept flowing. Now that the reservoir is empty, the land is sinking. This information finds mention in a paper titled 'Disaster looms large over Joshimath', by geologist Dr MPS Bisht and Piyoosh Rautela, Executive Director at Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority.

The authors wrote that "a tunnel boring machine (TBM) was employed for excavating the head race tunnel and on 24 December 2009, it punctured water-bearing strata 3 km inward of the left bank of Alaknanda near Shelong village. The site was a kilometer below the surface, somewhere below Auli. The water discharge was reportedly between 700 and 800 litres per second," the paper says, adding that "the aquifer discharge was about 60-70 million litres daily, enough to sustain 2-3 million people". Bisht and Rautela had warned about the consequences of this accident and said this sudden and large-scale dewatering of the strata had the potential of "initiating ground subsidence in the region". This prediction seems to have ominously come true for Joshimath.

(The first of a two-part series on Joshimath. The author is a policy analyst)

The Pioneer- 19- January-2023

Mission Amrit Sarovar shows a sense of urgency

The Government has requested all the States to ensure completion of 'Amrit Sarovar' in a planned manner

The Niti Aayog, the Prime Minister-headed, says that around 60 crore people in the country face high to extreme water stress. About three-fourth of the households in India do not have drinking water at their premises and rely on unsafe sources of water. Nearly 70 per cent of available water is contaminated and our major rivers are dying because of pollution and other factors, pushing India to 120th slot among 122 countries in the water quality index.

According to the most recent study of the Central Ground Water Board data, as many as 256 of 700 districts in India have reported critical or over-exploited groundwater levels. These data are



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

(The author is a senior journalist)

enough to understand how serious the water crisis has become in the country.

This grim situation has forced the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to embark on a new Mission termed as 'Amrit Sarovar'. With a view to conserve water for the future, the Prime Minister launched it on April 24, 2022. The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as part of the celebrations of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. Altogether, it would lead to creation of 50,000 water bodies of a size of about an acre or more.

This Mission has been launched with a whole of government approach in which six Ministries /Departments, dealing main-

ly with water conservation and sanitation issues, besides the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N), have also been engaged as technical partners.

The Mission works through the states and districts, through refocusing of various schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, XV Finance Commission Grants, PMKSY sub schemes such as Watershed Development Component, 'Har Khet Ko Pani', besides states' own schemes. It may also be mentioned that the Mission encourages mobilisation of citizens and non-government resources for supplementing these efforts.

The 'Mission Amrit Sarovar' is to be completed by

August 15, 2023. Around 50,000 such 'Amrit Sarovar' may be constructed in the country within this period. Each of these 'Amrit Sarovar' will have about an area of one acre with a water holding capacity of 10,000 cubic meter. So far, 12,241 sites have been finalised for construction of 'Amrit Sarovars' by states/districts, out of which, works have started on 4,856 'Amrit Sarovars'.

The Government is trying to ensure people's participation in the Mission for success. For this, local freedom fighters, their family members, Martyr's family members, Padma Awardees and citizens of the local area, wherein an Amrit Sarovar is to be constructed, will be engaged. It has also been

decided that on every August 15, National Flag hoisting will be organised on every Amrit Sarovar site.

The Government has requested all the states to ensure the completion of 'Amrit Sarovar' in a planned manner, emphasising on the use of technology at every stage of the execution. States have also been requested to form the water structure users' association and impart required training for better development of the 'Amrit Sarovars'. Technical and other concerns of the states have already been addressed and the states/UTs have given very positive responses to the Mission.

Coming back to the water crisis, a Niti Aayog report says that India is suffering from

the worst water crisis in its history. The report goes on to add that 21 cities, including Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai, probably exhausted their groundwater resources in 2021.

Agriculture remains the main consumer of water stock in India. In rural India, 80 to 90 per cent of drinking water needs are fulfilled by groundwater resources. What is more worrisome is that groundwater levels in India declined by over 60 per cent between 2007 and 2017, and of the extracted water, almost 90 per cent is used in agriculture. According to a report by the Central Pollution Control Board, cities are home to 36 per cent of India's population but account for 70 per cent of water pollution. This makes

getting water in the majority of the places of the country much more difficult as the water table has dropped, making India the world's largest extractor of groundwater, accounting for 25 per cent of the total. This puts especially women at a higher risk of vulnerability as they have to walk miles for water related needs in rural areas.

In a 2014 report, the Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation estimated that 70 per cent of India's farming is rainfed. Yet, 65 per cent of its total rainfall ends up in the sea. Water pollution is another cause of worry, which further vitiates the problem. Clearly, we all need to work towards efficient and optimal utilization of water and recycling with a sense of urgency.

Punjab Kesari- 19- January-2023

यमुना सफाई: 20 जनवरी को होगी बैठक

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): यमुना की सफाई के लिए एनजीटी द्वारा एलजी की अध्यक्षता में गठित उच्च स्तरीय कमेटी की पहली बैठक शुक्रवार 20 जनवरी को होगी। दिल्ली के मुख्यसचिव इस कमेटी के कन्वेनर हैं और विभिन्न मंत्रालयों व विभागों के सचिव व विभागाध्यक्ष कमेटी में सदस्य नियुक्त किये हैं। एलजी दफ्तर के अनुसार कमेटी की पहली बैठक 20 जनवरी को राजनिवास में सुबह लगभग 12 बजे होगी। इसमें यमुना की सफाई के लिए अब तक किये कार्यों की समीक्षा एवं भावी रणनीति पर चर्चा होगी। यहां बता दें कि न्यायिक निगरानी और सुप्रीम कोर्ट और नेशनल ग्रीन ट्रिब्यूनल (एनजीटी) के विशिष्ट आदेशों के बावजूद यमुना की सफाई में दिल्ली सरकार की पूर्ण विफलता को देखते हुए एनजीटी ने 9 जनवरी को कमेटी का गठन किया था। एनजीटी ने कहा था कि यमुना सफाई की स्थिति असंतोषजनक बनी हुई है। इसीलिए चर्चा के आलोक में हम दिल्ली में संबंधित प्राधिकरणों की उच्च स्तरीय कमेटी का गठन करते हैं।

Amar Ujala- 19- January-2023

यमुना की दुर्दशा पर भाजपा विधायकों का हंगामा

विधानसभा में चर्चा की अनुमति नहीं मिली, भाजपा के छह विधायकों को सदन से बाहर निकाला

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। विधानसभा में बुधवार को यमुना की सफाई नहीं होने और निरंतर गंदा पानी गिराए जाने के मुद्दे पर दो बार भाजपा विधायकों ने हंगामा किया। भाजपा विधायक जितेंद्र महाजन की ओर से यमुना की दुर्दशा पर नियम 280 के तहत चर्चा करने के दौरान व यमुना की स्थिति पर नियम 54 के तहत चर्चा नहीं कराने के विरोध में भाजपा विधायकों ने हंगामा किया। इस दौरान विधानसभा अध्यक्ष रामनिवास गोयल ने भाजपा के छह विधायकों को मार्शल के जरिये सदन से बाहर निकलवा दिया।

सदन में 280 नियम के तहत चर्चा में भाग लेते हुए महाजन ने कहा कि यमुना का पानी आठ साल



मुख्यमंत्री कार्यालय के सामने बुधवार को धरने पर बैठे भाजपा विधायक। अमर उजाला

में 200 प्रतिशत ज्यादा प्रदूषित हो गया है। यही पानी जनता को सप्लाई किया जा रहा है। इससे लोग कैंसर, किडनी, लीवर, फेफड़े और पेट की गंभीर बीमारियों से ग्रसित हो रहे हैं। केंद्र सरकार ने यमुना की सफाई के

लिए दिल्ली सरकार को 2500 करोड़ रुपये दिए, जिसका दिल्ली सरकार कोई हिसाब नहीं दे रही। उनके इस तर्क का आप विधायकों के साथ-साथ विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने विरोध किया। इस कारण सदन में

कुछ देर तक हंगामा चलता रहा। विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने उनसे पूछा कि आखिर केंद्र सरकार ने 2500 करोड़ रुपये दिल्ली सरकार को कब दिए। इस बारे में कुछ देर बाद नेता प्रतिपक्ष रामवीर सिंह बिधूड़ी ने जानकारी दी।

दूषित पानी से भरी बोतल सौंपी

सदन में नियम 280 के तहत चर्चा होने और उपमुख्यमंत्री मनीष सिसोदिया की ओर से कुछ विधेयक प्रस्तुत करने के बाद विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने एमसीडी के महापीर का चुनाव नहीं होने पर चर्चा करानी शुरू की। इस दौरान भाजपा विधायकों ने नियम 54 के तहत चर्चा कराने की मांग की, लेकिन विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने इंकार कर दिया। उनके निर्णय के विरोध में भाजपा विधायक यमुना के दूषित पानी से भरी बोतल लेकर आसन के समक्ष आए और बोतल सौंप दी। उन्होंने कहा कि यमुना का पानी तेजाब में तब्दील हो चुका है। इस बीच विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने कहा कि वह इस पानी की जांच कराएंगे।

Amar Ujala- 19- January-2023

रिपोर्ट

राष्ट्रीय जल विज्ञान संस्थान की प्राथमिक जांच रिपोर्ट में खुलासा

एनटीपीसी टनल और जोशीमठ में रिस रहा पानी अलग-अलग

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

देहरादून। भू-धंसाव का सामना कर रहे जोशीमठ में रिस रहा पानी और एनटीपीसी टनल का पानी अलग-अलग है।

यह जानकारी राष्ट्रीय जल विज्ञान संस्थान (एनआईएच) रुड़की की प्राथमिक जांच रिपोर्ट के आधार पर सचिव आपदा प्रबंधन डॉ. रंजीत सिन्हा ने दी। हालांकि, उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि अभी किसी निष्कर्ष पर नहीं पहुंचा जा सकता है। चार केंद्रीय एजेंसियों की हाइड्रोलॉजिकल मैपिंग की अंतिम रिपोर्ट आने के बाद ही यह पता चल पाएगा कि पानी कहाँ से आ रहा है। डॉ. सिन्हा ने बुधवार को राज्य सचिवालय स्थित मीडिया



जोशीमठ के एक सरकारी गेस्ट हाऊस में आई दरारों का बुधवार को जायजा लेते अधिकारी। एजेंसी

सेंटर में यह जानकारी दी। यह पूछने पर कि क्या पानी में तेल या सीमेंट भी मिला है, डॉ. सिन्हा ने कहा कि इसमें ऐसा कुछ नहीं है। जोशीमठ में दरारों के साथ पानी का अत्यधिक रिसाव होने पर स्थानीय

लोगों ने इसके लिए एनटीपीसी की टनल को भी जिम्मेदार ठहराया था। इसके बाद एनआईएच की टीम ने जोशीमठ में जाकर टनल वाले स्थान और जेपी कॉलोनी के पास से पानी के सैंपल लिए थे।

सैंपल जांच की रिपोर्ट पर थीं सबकी निगाहें

एनआईएच की जांच रिपोर्ट पर सबकी निगाहें लगी थीं। माना जा रहा था कि जांच रिपोर्ट से इस बात का खुलासा हो जाएगा कि पानी टनल से आ रहा है या इसका कोई और स्रोत है, लेकिन प्राथमिक जांच में अब भी रहस्य बरकरार है।

राहत : जल रिसाव में आई कमी... जोशीमठ की जेपी कॉलोनी में पानी का रिसाव काफी घट गया है। बुधवार को यह 100 एलपीएम रहा, जबकि मंगलवार को यह 123 को पानी का डिस्चार्ज 540 एलपीएम था। इस हिसाब से यह काफी राहत वाली बात है।