

Signs of recovery as biochemical oxygen demand dips in Najafgarh drain in 6 mths

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New Delhi: Concerted efforts to improve the quality of water flowing in the Najafgarh drain have started showing concrete results with the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) witnessing a consistent decline in the past six months.

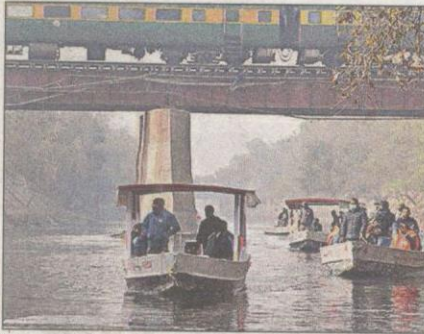
According to an analysis carried out by Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), the BOD levels have registered a variation of almost 30 per cent since the agencies started the desilting of Najafgarh drain. Officials added that the BOD levels at two spots in the Yamuna — near the interstate bus terminal and before Okhla barrage — too have recorded a decline of 21 and 25% respectively.

Biochemical oxygen demand is the amount of oxygen consumed in one litre of water by microorganisms while they oxidise the entire organic matter present in it at a specified temperature.

The BOD level in Najafgarh drain was recorded at 75 in August 2022, which fell down to 53 in January. Similarly, the BOD levels in the Yamuna at ISBT and Okhla (after confluence of Shahdara drain) were registered at 48 and 75, respectively, in August, while it came down to 38 and 56 in January.

Officials said the reduction of BOD is the sign of self-healing power of the river and the

File photo



Lieutenant governor VK Saxena is closely monitoring the rejuvenation work

drain. The standard for BOD is 3mg/l or less for river and 30mg/l for drain.

Officials said following the insistence of lieutenant governor VK Saxena, who is closely monitoring the rejuvenation work, the irrigation and flood control department had started the desilting work of the drain in August 2022. The agencies had also started tapping the sub-drains and feeder drains falling into the drain from November last year.

As per the data, 80,000 cubic metres or 1.3 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of silt has been removed from the drain since August 2022. While 50,000 cubic metres (80,000 MT) was

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The improvement of water quality in the Najafgarh drain is heartening and shows what is possible with the right efforts. There are many other drains in the city. Hopefully, similar improvements can be carried out in them.

removed using the conventional desilting through departmental resources, 30,000 cubic metres (48,000 MT) was scrapped through the partial gravitational technique.

Officials said that 'partial gravitational desilting', a sustainable and cost-effective concept, was extensively used for dredging the ports of Gujarat and the same was deployed in Najafgarh drain for better results.

"In the last five years, the annual average desilting done in Najafgarh drain was about 60,000 cubic metres or 90,000 MT," said an official.

Another official said there are at least 44 sub and feeder drains that need to be tapped to stop the flow of untreated sewage into the Najafgarh drain. While 12 such drains have already been tapped, six are likely to be tapped by the end of January.

The 54-km long drain originates from Najafgarh lake and joins the Yamuna downstream of Wazirabad while travelling through South-West, West, North-West and North districts.