

lights Delayed Pune will get rainfall for next 5 days, forecasts IMD

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Pune: Sunday's heavy rainfall that lashed Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad provided much-needed respite from the sweltering heat, with India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting similar conditions over the next five days.

IMD's Shivajinagar observatory recorded 29.7mm of rainfall on Sunday, while no rainfall was recorded at the Lohegaon observatory.

Met department said daytime temperatures could hover around 37-38°C, which is 4-5 degrees above normal. Nights would be pleasant, with a dip in temperatures caused by the pre-monsoon showers, an IMD official said.

On Sunday, the Shivajinagar observatory recorded a maximum temperature of 37.7°C, which was four degrees above normal, while the Lohegaon observatory, which covers the airport and fringe areas to the east of the city, recorded 38.8°C, which was 5.8 degrees above normal.

"A low system is prevailing over the southeast and south central Arabian Sea near Lakshadweep. It is likely to form a depression, followed by a low depression in the next 48 hours. Thereafter, in the following 24 hours is likely to become a cyclic storm," an IMD official said on the monsoon progress.

"Because of this condition, the chances of pre-monsoon showers over the southern part of Maharashtra, especially south Konkan and south Madhya Maharashtra, and between Pune and Kolhapur, have increased. This activity will continue till the onset of monsoon over the southernmost part of Maharashtra," the official said.

According to IMD officials, the monsoon got delayed because of a couple of reasons, a weak monsoon current being one of them. "Strong Westerly winds associated with western disturbance and presence of upper air anti cyclone have prevented the progress of monsoon over the southern Peninsula," the official said.

In Vidarbha and Marathwada, day temperatures will remain high, around 40°C, but severe heatwave conditions have reduced. On Sunday, Chandrapur witnessed 44.8°C, which was the highest in the state.

Times of India Centre's push to fast-track river clean-up project

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Pune: The first phase of the Union government and civic body's project of abatement of pollution in the Mula-Mutha is 70% complete at the sewage treatment plant (STP) in Baner.

Union minister for environment, forest and climate change and information and broadcasting Prakash Javadekar announced this at a review meeting of the project at Van Bhavan on Sunday. The project to clean up the river is being undertaken by the Centre along with the Pune Municipal Corporation. The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (Jica) is providing loan for the project.

"This project is the Modi government's gift to Pune city. I'm happy to announce that the first package of the Mula-Mutha river cleaning is now 70% complete at the Baner STP. The chief minister, guardian minister, myself, the mayor and corporation officials, along with the Pune MP, will visit and monitor the progress of the work," he said.

"It is very rare for the Centre to directly sponsor such a project in any city. For Pune, neither the PMC nor the state will repay the loan. The Centre will repay the project loan," the minister said, adding that four more packages as part of the river clean-up project would be announced in the first week of August.

"There will be 'bhoomipujan' ceremonies for each of the packages. The main project is going on in on full swing and will be put on the fast track. I will ensure a monthly follow-up of the project. All agencies concerned were here today (Sunday) and decided the timeline among themselves," Javadekar said.

He added that the project is very important for the city. "Pune is a beautiful city that lies between the two rivers. However, the rivers have become dirty. We have initiated the project at the national level to help clean up the rivers. The Centre will give the city a special grant of around Rs850 crore for the project."

Javadekar said the pro-

AN OVERVIEW



► The project comes under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP)

44km The total length of Mula, Mutha and Mula-Mutha confluence traversing through PMC areas

► The project has been initiated by the Centre and PMC

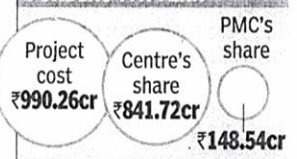
► The Centre has taken loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency

► 11 new STPs will be constructed as part of the project

► This will result in additional treatment capacity of 396 million litres per day

► Project deadline: Jan 2022

FUNDING PATTERN



ject was not being given importance ever since 2004. "In 2014, when I took over the environment ministry, I saw this as a pending file. We then put it on fast track and gave it importance," Javadekar said.

In March 2016, the project received approval. "All agencies will work together for this, so that there is no delay in the project."

The project has been jointly undertaken by the central government and the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC). Mayor Mukta Tilak and BJP MP Girish Bapat were also present at the meeting.

A note on the Jica website stated, "The objective of the project is to improve the water quality in the Mula, Mutha and Mula-Mutha rivers by augmenting sewage collection systems and sewage treatment facilities in the PMC area."

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'River project cannot be known after JICA'

Prakash Javadekar says govt schemes should not be identified by funding body

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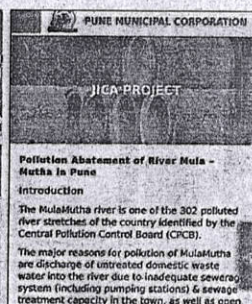
Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar is upset with Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) for identifying the pollution abatement and river cleaning project for Mula and Mutha by the name of its funding agency, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He has asked the authorities concerned to get the references changed in their records. The ruling party members have stated that they will follow the order and will ensure that the name is altered in the records.

The Union government had taken interest in the river cleaning project of Mula and Mutha to revive the water bodies. Accordingly, a loan agreement was signed on January 13, 2016, with JICA for pollution abatement of two primary rivers of Pune by January 2022. Under the agreement, Government of Japan committed to provide a soft loan of about Rs 1,000 crore to India for the project. The major components proposed under the project included construction of 11 new sewage treatment plants (STPs), which will result in a creation of an additional treatment capacity of 396 million litres per day (MLD) over the existing treatment capacity of 477 MLD. The project was first stuck, with the authorities trying to figure out a way to transfer the funds. When the funds fi-

MAHENDRA KOLHE



Union environment minister Javadekar was in city for a review meeting of Mula Mutha cleaning project (L); PMC website shows JICA as project name



nally arrived, they were left unutilised for the past three to four months. Months after the project finally took off, the work for the first phase in Baner is now nearing completion.

During his first visit to the city after becoming the Union environment minister, Javadekar held a review meeting for the project and inquired about the progress. The meeting was held in the presence of PMC Mayor Mukta Tilak, other officer-bearers and officials from various other related departments. The authorities stated that four packages will get the final nod in a few days from now, while in the first week of August the project will officially be launched with a formal function. While Javadekar reviewed the work and inquired about the glitches in the progress of the project, what miffed him was use of the word 'JICA', which is the name of the funding agency, in the name of the project.

Expressing his displeasure, Javade-

kar said, "This is joint river cleaning project. The project is undertaken by Government of India and PMC. Therefore, it should be rightfully called 'Government of India and PMC project of Mula Mutha river cleaning'. JICA is the funding agency and it is not doing a charity for the project. It is only doling out a loan, which will be repaid by the Indian government. Hence, there is no need for the project to be named after the funding agency."

Ironically, while the project is formally known as the 'Pollution abatement of river Mula Mutha in Pune', it is far more popular as 'JICA project', an anomaly that even reflects on PMC website. When quizzed about this, Tilak said, "The scheme somehow gained more popularity as JICA project, the name stuck with the venture. However, as instructed by Javadekar we will make the necessary changes in the name and get it rectified in every available record."

Pune News | *The Indian* EXPRESS

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Pune shopkeeper cheated of Rs 1.5 lakh over promise of foreign currency at 'cheaper rate'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, JUNE 9

FOUR PERSONS have been arrested in connection with an interstate racket that has reportedly cheated several people across the country, including Pune, on the pretext of giving them foreign currency at lower rates.

The investigation into the matter began after a 39-year-old shopkeeper from Ambegaon Churd, in Pune, was cheated in the first week of June by two men who promised to give him 100 currency bills of US\$20 at a cheaper price than the prevailing market rate. The shopkeeper reportedly paid Rs 1.5 lakh to the men, but in return received a bundle of notes containing one US\$20 bill and other blank papers, police said.

The police have so far arrested four persons, two of whom are from Delhi and one each from Assam and West Bengal

According to the FIR, registered at Faraskhana police station, the men had promised to give the complainant US\$10,000 at almost half the market price. They had handed over the fake notes to the victim on June 8.

The police said they have so far arrested four persons, two of whom are from Delhi and one each from Assam and West Bengal, while investigators were on the lookout for the other members of the gang, who are reportedly active in Pune, Mumbai and other cities across the country. The arrests were made on Saturday and Sunday, police said.

Mula-Mutha river cleaning fast-tracked, will complete project on priority: Javadekar

Union Environment Minister says 70 per cent of project's first phase complete, foundation stone for the remaining four phases to be laid in next two months

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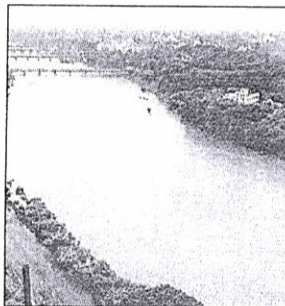
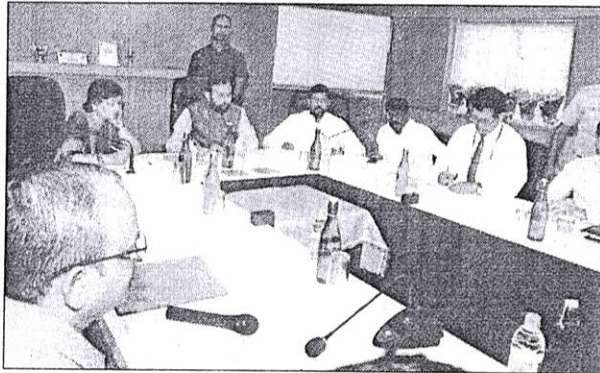
UNION MINISTER Prakash Javadekar on Sunday said that Mula-Mutha River Cleaning Project that aims to reduce the pollution of the river in Pune has been "fast-tracked".

Javadekar, who was in Pune to review the progress of the project, said around 70 per cent of the first phase of the project, including construction of branch sewers in Baner area, had been completed and the foundation stone for the remaining four phases of the project will be laid in the next two months.

Following a meeting with MP Girish Bapat, mayor Mukta Tilak and senior officials of the Union and state governments over the issue, he said: "The Mula-Mutha River Cleaning Project is being carried out in a total of five phases of which we have completed 70 per cent of the work in Baner area. While the approvals for the remaining four phases will be given by the end of July, we will hold the groundbreaking ceremony of these phases in the first week of August."

The central government has already sanctioned a grant of Rs 850 crore for this project, Javadekar said.

Claiming that there were a few "hurdles" which had delayed the process of granting approvals for the last four phases, the Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change added: "However, all of those (hurdles) have now been removed by the government and we have expedited the work on



Union Minister Prakash Javadekar at a meeting to discuss Mula-Mutha River Cleaning Project in Pune on Sunday; (left) the river is among the 35 polluted river stretches in the country which have been classified as the highest risk category by the CPCB. *Express*

this particular project."

He said that the issue has been pending for a very long time, "... however, now as I have taken the charge as the environment minister, I will complete it on priority basis... The dream of Pune city is going to be fulfilled soon, as the project has now been fast-tracked".

The Mula-Mutha river in Pune is among the 35 polluted river stretches in the country, which have been classified as Priority 1 (the highest risk category) by the Central Pollution Control Board. Discharge of untreated domestic waste water into the river due to inadequate sewerage system (including

pumping stations) and sewage treatment capacity in the town, as well as open defecation on the river banks, are a few of the major reasons for the pollution of Mula-Mutha.

Javadekar said that the project to clean the river has been pending for 10 years, from 2004-2014, following which clearance was given to it when he took over as the Union Environment Minister in 2014. He said that all agencies have met to decide on the project's timeline, and assured he would undertake follow-up of the project activities every month.

The minister also pointed out that the project was a joint effort

of the Government of India and the Pune Municipal Corporation for cleaning of the Mula-Mutha river under the National River Conservation Plan, and no part of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as is commonly known.

JICA is the bank, which is providing the finances, but the project is that of Government of India and PMC, he clarified.

Noting that the loan given by JICA will be repaid by the Government of India, the Minister said that this project is a gift of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government to Pune.

A loan agreement was signed between Government of India and JICA in January 2016 for cleaning of Mula-Mutha River under National River Conservation Plan (NRCP). The agreement was signed in the presence of Javadekar, who was the environment minister in the previous government.

As per the agreement, the Government of Japan committed to provide a soft loan of 19.06 billion Yen (about Rs 1,000 crore) to Government of India at an interest rate of 0.30 per cent per annum. The project cost will be shared between Government of India and PMC, the implementing agency for the project, in the ratio of 85:15 respectively. The share of Central Government in the project will be Rs. 841.72 crore and share of PMC would be Rs 148.54 crore. The loan has to be repaid by Government of India in a period of 40 years, including 10-year grace period. The project is scheduled to be completed by...