

# Juhu residents take ill after getting contaminated water

Societies say they have been complaining to BMC for two weeks but problem persists; civic body says ongoing pipeline work could have resulted in temporary supply of discoloured water, and that the problem will be solved soon

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**A** section of Juhu residents have been complaining of receiving discoloured and smelly water supply which, they allege, has resulted in people suffering from diarrhoea and dysentery, with some even being hospitalised.

The residents say that they have complained to the BMC over the past two weeks, but neither have they received a satisfactory reply from the civic body nor has the problem been solved.

Assistant Municipal Commissioner Ramesh Pawar said that ongoing pipeline work in the area could have resulted in temporary supply of discoloured water, and that the problem would be taken care of soon.

The worst affected are residents of Janki Kutir, JVPD Scheme, Birla Lane and neighbouring colonies, who fear that a sewer pipe has ruptured and is contaminating the BMC supply.

With 20 buildings housing 200 people, Janki Kutir Residents Welfare Association, near Prithvi Theatre, is one of the major societies affected. Members here claim that in every building there's been at least three cases of people suffering from diarrhoea, dysentery and nausea.

Janki Kutir resident Mehzabeen Barwani said, "When we began receiving water that was yellow in colour and had a foul smell, we suspected a sewer line had ruptured and contaminated our supply. We im-



Members of Janki Society say that in each of the 20 buildings at least 3 people have suffered from diarrhoea, dysentery and nausea

mediately informed the BMC about it."

Barwani said that the BMC assured them the complaint would be looked into. "But a day later, when the problem persisted, we were told to allow three to four buckets of water to flow away before using the water. That was no solution," she said.

The problem soon spread to neighbouring societies. Dr Sindhu Dafatry, 75, a paediatrician at Ashok Nagar Society on 11th Road, not only treated patients but also took ill herself. "After the first two patients complained of severe stomach ache, I found that they suffered from gastroenteritis. Quite a few children were also brought to my clinic. There's been at least one case in every household in our society. I began advising people to drink bottled water," said Dr Dafatry.

"A BMC employee who came to our area to check out the problem told us that a public toilet pipe could have got damaged. Another explanation given was that the pump used to clear the sewer at Versova has caused the problem. We were not given any satisfactory answer. If there was an issue, the BMC should have alerted us, stopped the supply and fixed the problem," Dr Dafatry added.

Greenfield Society resident and secretary of A B Nair Road ALM Zahida Banatwala said, "There's been at least five cases of hospitalisation in the area. An 82-year-old woman and an infant were among those who suffered from severe diarrhoea after drinking the contaminated water and had to be taken to hospital. The BMC has asked us to



get our tanks cleaned but how can that be a solution?"

Anand Desai of Birla Lane, a trustee of Juhu Citizens' Welfare Group who has been coordinating the complaints of residents, said, "We have started calling for tankers. The water borne diseases have affected children badly, particularly those appearing for exams. Throwing out the first few buckets of water is no solution when the supply itself is contaminated."

Assistant Municipal Commissioner (K West Ward) Ramesh Pawar told Mumbai Mirror that work is being undertaken on water pipes in the area and that the contaminated supply could be a result of that. "The work will be completed soon and the problem will be solved," he said.