

# Blame game goes on... as JNNURM projects get delayed

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The authorities are busy playing the blame game even as several projects under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) continue to lag behind schedule in Uttar Pradesh by up to a year, escalating their cost.

While the state government blames the Centre for not releasing funds on time, thereby putting pressure on the implementing agencies, Independent Review and Monitoring Agency (IRMA), the Central government-appointed monitoring agency, says the quality of construction under the scheme is poor.

"The fact is that JNNURM projects in UP are behind schedule as the state is not getting funds in time. After release of the first installment for a scheme, the second and the subsequent ones are delayed for a few months. Sometimes, we have to stop work because we do not have funds to complete the project," Jal Nigam Managing Director AK Srivastava told "The Pioneer" recently.

The state gets funds for the JNNURM projects from the Centre in four installments. The second installment is released only after the completion report is submitted. "This is ridiculous. The work should be carried out in continuation. You cannot lay drain lines of one area and then wait for money for it to be laid in the second area," Srivastava says, adding that Uttar Pradesh has lodged protests in meetings with Central government officials but nothing has happened so far.

UP Jal Nigam's project manager at



Kanpur, Sushil Kumar Verma, also airs the same complaint. "Sometimes our projects are discontinued for three-four months at a stretch. We try to run them with our own resources but it is not possible to do so all the time," he says.

Besides, there is always problem in getting land for setting up sewage treatment or solid waste management plant. "Acquiring land for development schemes has now become very tedious. On three occasions, we tried to acquire land for setting up a sewage treatment plant (STP) in Varanasi but every time we failed. Similarly, we are literally struggling to get land in Allahabad," the Jal Nigam MD said.

"If we somehow get the land and start

work, we get stuck up because of inadequate supply of raw material. Uttar Pradesh does not have stockists who can supply PVC pipes and other materials in large quantity. As we get these from Delhi and neighbouring states, we also lose valuable time," he adds.

The IRMA, however, disagrees. In its report submitted to the UP government, it has pointed to the poor quality of material being used in JNNURM schemes. It says that ₹325.21 crore was sanctioned under this scheme for different nullahs but the expenditure has gone up by ₹175 crore.

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