

Waterman marches through Delhi for Yamuna

Rajendra Singh, the waterman of India and his colleagues from Jal Biradari and Yamuna Satyagrah today marched over 11 km from Wazirabad to Akshardham from 6.00 am till 11.00 am to understand for themselves the ground situation as regards river Yamuna and to raise public awareness about the sad state in which it finds itself in the capital today (27.5.2007). The march was the culmination of the current phase of the Yamuna Satyagrah Yatra which had started on 23rd May 2007 in scorching heat from Hathnikund Barrage on the border of Uttarakhand, HP, UP, and Haryana. The marchers have consisted of representatives from the states of Uttarakhand, UP, Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan.

"We found vast areas of river bed under changed land use by Delhi Metro stations, power distribution facilities, residential and commercial buildings, and of course the sprawling complex of Akshardham" said Rajendra Singh of their experience of the march.

The group of Yamuna Satyagrah Yatra met and deliberated over the critical situation that river Yamuna in Delhi today finds itself and resolved to ask the state for the following immediate steps:

- a) Change immediately the site of the Commonwealth Games 2010 village out of the river bed
- b) Take immediate steps to provide free flowing water to the river in accordance with the 1994 accord between all the riparian states of river Yamuna
- c) Appoint an independent panel of experts to evaluate from environmental impact and from public safety angle the status of all existing buildings and constructions in the river bed
- d) No plans for the river Yamuna and other rivers in the country should be made on the basis of models as existing in western and European rivers as our rivers are fundamentally different from them
- e) A law for the conservation of river Yamuna should be immediately promulgated
- f) The Yamuna Development Authority should be recast and made into a Yamuna Preservation and Protection Authority as the river do not need development but protection and preservation
- g) Panchvans should be recreated in the river bed
- h) River Yamuna should be cleaned and revived into a centre of spiritual and cultural growth

The group also resolved to put the state on probation of six months from today and watch the activities of the state as regards river Yamuna before deciding on next steps. The Yamuna satyagrah would keep organizing the awareness generation Yatras on the lines of the Yatra of today.