

Ashram pipeline repair triggers jams in SE Delhi

Paras Singh

paras@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Traffic movement across parts of south-east Delhi descended into chaos on Tuesday after authorities shut the Ring Road section between Maharani Bagh and Ashram Chowk for emergency repairs on a leaking sewage pipeline.

The closure triggered massive congestion on key arterial roads, including Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mathura Road, Eastern Avenue and CV Raman Marg, leaving commuters stranded for hours. Vehicles travelling from Sarai Kale Khan and the DND Flyway towards south and central Delhi were among the worst affected, with motorists blaming poor traffic management and inadequate diversion planning for worsening the situation.

A senior Delhi Jal Board (DJB) official said a major 1,200mm sewage line near Ashram Chowk had developed a leak, causing the road surface near the intersection to settle. "If the work was delayed, it could have led to a complete cave-in. This deep line carries sewage from Red Fort, Supreme Court, WHO, and the New Delhi area towards Okhla STP. Some agency must have carried out drilling or repair work, which triggered the leakage. We sought permission from traffic police and started the repair works around Monday midnight. The leakage has been repaired, and we are hoping that the situation will be resolved by Tuesday night," the official said, requesting anonymity.

According to a Delhi Traffic Police advisory issued late Monday, the affected Ring Road carriageway was closed from 10pm on June 15 and is expected to remain shut for three to four days to facilitate repairs. DJB officials said the time frame remains tentative and includes monitoring after repair and filling work to ensure no fresh leakages emerge.

The road closure, however, led to severe disruption for commuters and residents alike. Ritu Sharma, who was caught in traffic on Eastern Avenue Road, said

the diversions had not been planned adequately.

"Such narrow roads cannot take the load of the entire Ring Road. We have been stuck here for almost an hour and there is no one to regulate traffic or those driving on the wrong side," she said.

Residents of nearby colonies said local roads were overwhelmed by diverted traffic. Chitra Jain, president of the New

Friends Colony RWA, Ashoka Park, said many residents found it difficult even to leave their homes.

"All leading roads are jam-packed. Commuters have been diverted to colony roads which do not have the capacity to shoulder such volume. We can't take our cars out, and some of us were forced to walk from Ring Road to our houses," she said.

Despite the diversions, con-

gestion remained severe through the day. A commuter told HT that a 2km stretch between Maharani Bagh and Mata Mandir in New Friends Colony took over two hours to negotiate.

Police said additional personnel had been deployed around Ashram, DND and other affected locations and expressed hope that congestion would ease during non-peak hours as repair work progresses.