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Under-construction tunnel collapses near Shimla after heavy landslide

SHIMLA, AUGUST 13

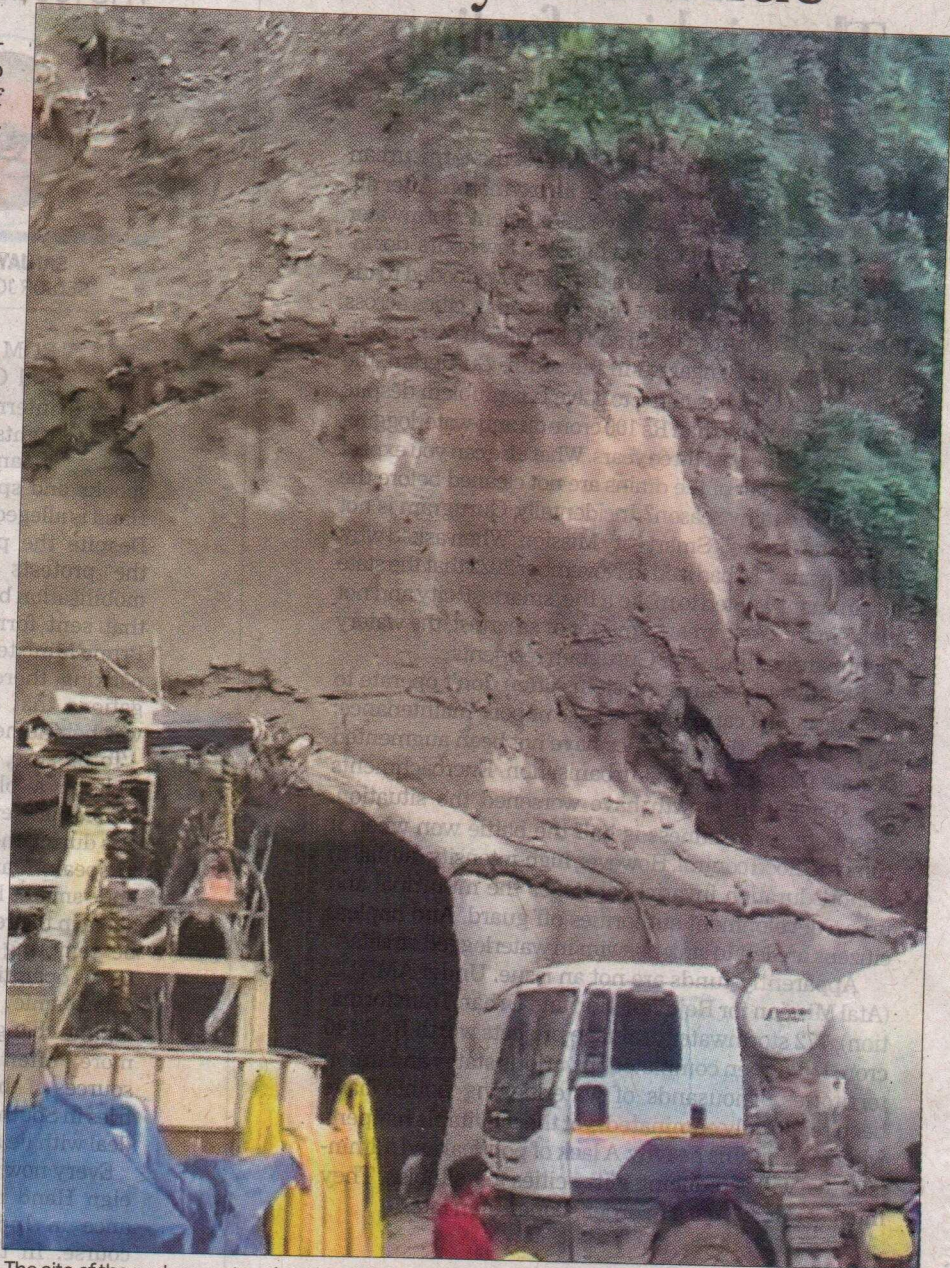
A massive landslide triggered by heavy rain led to the collapse of a portion of an under-construction tunnel on the Kaithalighat-Dhalli stretch of the Kalka-Shimla four-lane project near Shimla today. However, no loss of life was been reported in the incident.

The incident occurred in the Chalaunti locality near the state's capital when a part of the mountain under which a tunnel was being constructed fell on its entry point, resulting in the collapse of the part of the tunnel where the construction work was in progress.

According to reports, debris had started falling at the site on Monday evening due to which workers and the machinery deployed for the construction work were removed from there and taken to a safer place. A video of the incident went viral on social media platforms.

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) had recently completed the stabilisation work on the site. It was set to start the digging work for the construction of this 400-metre tunnel.

Project manager, NHAI, Achal Jindal said that the landslide had overwhelmed the tunnel before its construction work could be completed. He added that efforts were being made to reinforce the tunnel while that debris was being cleared and the area was being stabilised. — TNS



The site of the under-construction tunnel that collapsed following heavy rainfall at Sanjauli in Shimla. PTI

Officials Sweat As River Swells, But Not For Long

After Nearing Danger Mark, Yamuna Level Starts Dropping

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New Delhi: As the water level in the Yamuna approached the danger mark on Tuesday morning, govt officials were on their toes apprehending a reprise of last year's flooding. To their relief, however, the water level began to drop later in the day.

The water level in the Yamuna began rising from 1pm on Monday, when it was at 203.04m. By 7pm that day, it had reached a level of 204.03m. According to data from the Central Water Commission, the level reached a high of 204.38 metres at 3am at the Hathni Kund barrage in Haryana on Tuesday. The level began dropping, however, by 6am and 11 hours later at 5pm, the water level was at 203.93m further declining to 203.83m by 7pm.

The warning mark for the city is 204.5m. While the danger mark is 205.3m, evacuation is implemented when the level reaches 206m.

To learn of the possibility of a flood-like situation, TOI spoke to officials in the Haryana irrigation department, which controls the Hathni Kund barrage. They explained that the water level in Delhi had increased due to the rise in the Yamuna's volume upstream. An official said, "On Sunday, approximately 50,000 cusecs were released from Hathni Kund, the highest volume in recent days. The following day, the volume dropped to below

40,000 cusecs and by Tuesday morning, it had dipped to around 12,000 cusecs before reducing even further."

Officials said that it took 36-78 hours for the discharge volume to reflect in the river's water level in Delhi, depending on the condition of the river. They explained that the rise in water level in Delhi was a result of water being released from Hathni Kund on Sunday, which only arrived in the capital by Tuesday. They, therefore, expected no immediate risk of flooding in Delhi.

An official of Delhi govt's flood and irrigation department concurred. "By 5 pm on Tuesday, the volume being re-

leased from the barrage was 8,274 cusecs. So we expect the river level to drop further. Unless there is a discharge of over two lakh cusecs from Hathni Kund, the river level will remain in control," the official said.

In 2023, the river level rose from the warning mark to the evacuation level within four days. The water began to rise on July 9, crossed the danger mark on July 11 and reached an unprecedented level of 208.66m on July 13, which was 3.33m above the danger level and 2.66m above the evacuation mark. The major reason for this was the 3.5 lakh cusecs of water released from

Hathni Kund on July 11 plus an estimated 11.3 lakh cusecs from Wazirabad. With downstream sewers, drains and the river itself choked, gates of the barrage jammed and the floodplain compromised by encroachments, the water's flow was obstructed, leading to flooding. Thousands of people had to be evacuated and large portions of the city, including densely populated, low-lying riverine areas and key spots such as ITO, Rajghat, and Delhi Secretariat, were submerged.

Delhi govt officials claimed to be better prepared this year to handle a situation similar to last year's.



UPS AND DOWNS: The level reached a high of 204.38 metres at 3am at the Hathni Kund barrage