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Study to evaluate impact of aid provided by Delhi govt for parks

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New Delhi: To assess the impact of financial assistance provided by Delhi Parks and Gardens Society (DPGS) of Delhi government to residents' welfare associations, NGOs and societies for maintaining and developing green areas in the capital, the planning department has decided to conduct a study.

According to officials, a survey agency is being hired, which will interview the general public as well as the office bearers of the RWAs and NGOs given the responsibility to maintain parks. DPGS gives Rs 2.5 lakh per acre annually as 'grant-in aid' for each park being maintained by private players. The scheme was launched by chief minister Arvind Kejriwal with the aim to transform Delhi into a "city of parks".

GREEN PUSH

1,560 parks being funded 368 RWAs, NGOs and societies

₹2.5 lakh per acre per year allocated

518 acres covered

2,90,257 free plants distributed in 2021-22

110 non-funded parks

Though the actual number of parks in Delhi under DDA, NDMC and MCD is more than 16,000, there are 1,520 parks that are being maintained by 368 RWAs, NGOs and societies.

The field survey will be conducted in May and the final report is expected to be

submitted to the government in the month of June, a planning department official said.

"The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of financial assistance provided by DPGS for maintaining and developing parks and gardens with the objective to increase the greenery in Delhi. It will also focus on the problems or requirements of the agencies that have adopted these green spaces in maintaining and developing them. The study will also suggest ways and means about how the public can also contribute in making Delhi greener than earlier," the official said.

"It will further help us analyse if these agencies face any problem in getting the no-objection certificate from the land-owning agency concerned and the area MLA to set up the decentralised sewage treatment

plants," the official added.

Officials said questionnaires have been designed to understand the perceptions of the agencies that have adopted the parks as well as of the general public.

The agency will also have to conduct a survey of 10 parks in each of 11 districts, which are not being funded by the government. A total of 2,700 people will be interviewed by the agency and the digitally collected data will be made available to the government on a real-time basis.

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Feedback sought on law crucial to city development

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NEW DELHI: The Union ministry of housing and urban affairs (MOHUA) has sought comments from other ministries and stakeholders regarding amendments to the Delhi Development Act, 1957 -- a year after it announced modifications that would be essential for implementing some key development reforms such as land pooling.

A senior MOHUA official aware of the development said, "The Cabinet note has been prepared for the proposed amendments in the DD Act and circulated for comments from other ministries and stakeholders. We will soon finalise it and seek Cabinet's approval. The amendment will then be tabled in Parliament."

When asked if the amended draft will be tabled in Parliament in the second half of the Budget session, which starts from March 14, the official said, "We can't comment on it now, as we will first have to first get the Union Cabinet's approval."

A second official who asked not to be named added that the amendments will ensure the implementation of several clauses such as land pooling and transferable development rights in the Master Plan of Delhi-2041, which was approved by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on February 28.

The ministry announced its decision to amend the DD Act on March 8, 2022. The proposed amendments seek to make it mandatory for landowners in the villages on the periphery of the city to participate in land pooling so that developers can get contiguous land parcels. The amendments also seek to push regularisation of the unauthorised colonies.

The modifications in the Act will also enable the implementation of the Green Area Development policy, which is aimed at regulated development in 88 green-belt areas such as Dhansa, Mitraon, Tikri Kalan, Kapashera, and parts of Ghumanhera, Bamnoli and Bijwasan. Under the policy, regu-

ACCORDING TO DDA ESTIMATES, THE POLICY MAY HELP PROVIDE 1.7 MILLION DWELLING UNITS IN DELHI

lated development of farmhouses and educational institutions will be allowed in these areas. Last August, the ministry placed the proposed amendments in the public domain, and received 177 comments. While some people and activists welcomed the modifications, others expressed the apprehension that the "mandatory" clause in the land pooling policy may attract litigation.

The land pooling policy, which was first notified in 2013, and then again in 2018, is critical for the development of areas on the city's periphery, and may help meet Delhi's housing demand. According to DDA estimates, the policy may help provide 1.7 million dwelling units in the city. The policy is yet to be implemented since it is essential to have 70% "contiguous land parcel" in a land pooling sector (which is nearly 100 hectares).

"To address this bottleneck, a provision for mandatory land pooling has been proposed in the draft amendment Act," the second DDA official said.

DDA is yet to send the approved 2041-Master Plan to MOHUA, which will study and notify it. The plan, besides other provisions that aim to make Delhi a 24x7 city with a robust night-time economy, also mentions the land pooling policy as one of the key measures to achieve urban regeneration.

Bhupinder Bazad, president of the master plan committee of Delhi Dehat Vikas Manch -- an association of landowners in land pooling areas -- said, "The land pooling policy has been delayed by nearly a decade. This has led to unauthorised and unplanned development. We want the Centre to notify the MPD-2041 and amend the Act at the earliest."

Illegal mining in Haryana impeding Yamuna flow, says Delhi in fresh row

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NEW DELHI: Construction of bunds and illegal sand mining in Haryana is impeding the flow of water in the Yamuna towards Delhi, leading to water supply crisis in several parts across north, south and central Delhi, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) said on Monday even as the Haryana government rejected the charges and denied any illegal activity in the river.

DJB vice-chairperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said the water crisis is "unprecedented" since the current water levels in the Yamuna are usually seen in May.

"This year, the water levels started dipping around February 23, three months before the usual lean summer period, and if the similar situation persists, the water supply crisis will become uncontrollable in the summer months," Bharadwaj said.

Giving a presentation to reporters about the ongoing crisis on Tuesday morning, Bharadwaj showed PowerPoint slides with satellite pictures and maps displaying bunds on the Yamuna. He claimed that dredging was going on in at least 32 locations along the river in Haryana districts of Yamunanagar and Sonapat.

For the past two weeks, water supply to Moolchand, South Extension, Greater Kailash, Kalkaji, Govindpuri, Tugalkabad, Sangam Vihar, and Ambedkar Nagar in south Delhi; and Civil lines, Model Town, Kamla Nagar in north and Karol Bagh, Paharganj in central Delhi has remained disrupted. Jal board officials have maintained that low water levels in the Yamuna has hit treatment of fresh water at two (Wazirabad and Chandrawal) of the agency's nine water treatment plants.

According to DJB, the Yamuna water level was at 671.5 feet on Tuesday compared to the standard 674.5 ft at Wazirabad barrage — considered the standard for the river stretch in the Capital.

The Haryana government hit back at DJB, saying the state was supplying water in excess of the water-sharing agreement between the two states. It said that the sand mining was being carried out legally by creating temporary pipe crossings without obstructing the

Behind the water crisis in the Capital

Delhi has alleged that illegal sand mining in Haryana has led to low levels of water in the Yamuna

ISSUES ACCORDING TO DJB

Dredging

According to Delhi Jal Board, dredging and sand mining are taking place on at least 32 sites between Yamunanagar and Sonapat, such as Memarpur and Machroal (Sonapat) and Amadapur (Yamunanagar)

● DREDGING SPOTS

Yamuna-nagar



Locations and photos shared by DJB

Check-dams

Illegal bunds and check-dams have been developed to stop the flow of the river

Pollution

Delhi is only getting polluted water from drain 2 (Panipat drain) and drain 8 (Sonipat drain) that carry industrial effluents

Karnal

Panipat

Sonipat

UTTAR
PRADESH

DELHI

At Wazirabad pond

674.5 ft
Normal pond level at Wazirabad

671.5 ft
Level at Wazirabad on March 7

Haryana says

We are supplying water in excess of the agreement between the two states. Sand mining is being carried out legally without obstructing the river flow

MAJOR GAP BETWEEN DEMAND AND SUPPLY

1,380
MGD
Demand

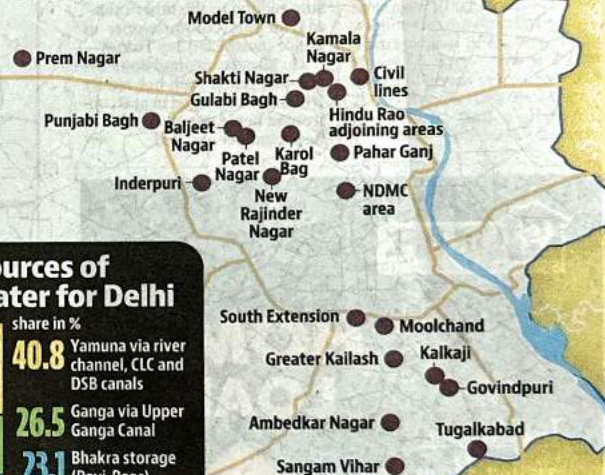
998
MGD
Peak supply

Action taken

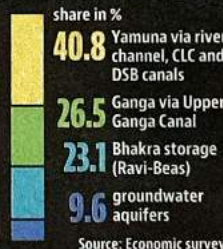
Rationalisation by diverting water from Haiderpur WTPs to minimise impact

Water pressure reduced all over the Capital

AREAS AFFECTED



Sources of water for Delhi



river flow.

Bharadwaj, however, alleged that share of Yamuna in Delhi's overall water generation has gone down from "40% to 5%". He also alleged that with industrial pollutants being released from Panipat and Sonapat, the ammonia levels in raw water have gone up to 3.5

parts per million (ppm) — 3.5 times the maximum treatable limit. "Delhi is only getting drain water and Yamuna has been essentially stopped using a series of bunds," he added.

Jawahar Yadav, officer on special duty (OSD) to Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar,

said on Tuesday that Delhi has a drinking water share of 719 cusecs from Yamuna and Ravi-Beas waters against which Haryana is delivering 1,050 cusecs of water to the Capital. Yadav also said that sand mining in the river was done legally in "non-monsoon season" in accordance with the govern-

ment mining policy. "For this, temporary pipe crossings are provided so that there is no obstruction to river flow. We are not obstructing any natural river flow. Regular checking is being done by the mining department to curb illegal mining if any," he added.

Meanwhile, Delhi water minis-

ter Kailash Gahlot reviewed preparedness for meeting the water demand in summer. "In the water deficit areas in Delhi, DJB supplies water through 1,200 tankers. In order to augment the water supply, DJB is working on boosting extraction of ground water in high water-table areas."