Why Yamuna river may be visibly cleaner by January

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NEW DELHI: Come January 2019 and the Yamuna might start looking cleaner. Delhi Jal Board has been given a “final” deadline of six months to finish the much delayed work of laying interceptor sewage lines along three of the biggest drains in the capital. “The project is being carried out in six packages along the Najafgarh, Shahadra and Supplementary drains, and 92% of the work is finished. We are currently intercepting almost 93 million gallons of raw sewage per day that was flowing into the Yamuna,” claimed Dinesh Mohaniya, the water utility vice-chairman.

The project, when completed, will transport 242 MGD of raw sewage to the six treatment plants in Kondli, Yamuna Vihar, Rithala, Coronation Pillar, Nilothi/Keshopur and Dwarka. By some estimates, 850-900 MGD of raw sewage currently flows directly into the Yamuna via 21 big and small drains, and the interceptor project is expected to bring about a significant reduction.

A large number of unauthorised colonies, JJ clusters and unplanned localities along the three major drains dump their sewage in them. “The basic idea is that a trunk sewage line, rather than a network of new lines, would better intercept the smaller sewers and block them from flowing into the main drains,” a senior DJB official explained. “By September, we estimate that we will be able to tap around 139 MGD of sewage and jump to 242 MGD by December. Between September and December, a few joint sections that are unfinished and which, therefore, reduce the flow to zero, will become functional.”

The Quarter IV outcome budget of Delhi government has outlined 48 km of the interceptor line being laid against the target of 53kms. “The overall project cost has been pegged at Rs 1,395 crore and work related to an estimated Rs 1,010 crore is over,” the official added. The additional sewage load will help improve the efficiency of the treatment plants, which are currently running way below their capacities. According to the latest economic survey, Delhi’s sewage treatment plants are running at 69% capacity.

According to estimates made by the Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi generates 3,800 million litres of sewage per day. More than half of this is not treated in any way.
Some of the major areas that will benefit from the interception project include Raghubir Nagar, Moti Nagar, Jwalapuri near Paschim Vihar, Bhalswa Dairy, Nanglipura, Tomar Colony near Coronation Park, Budh Vihar, Vijay Vihar, the slum colony near Rithala, Shiv Vihar, Gokulpuri, Zaffrabad near Yamuna Vihar and Seelampuri, Sahibabad and Rajdhani Enclave.