DJB’s 2-part plan to tide over crisis, get 200 MGD more water by 2021

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Delhi Jal Board has announced a timeline for the augmentation of the city’s water supply by 200 million gallons per day (MGD) over the next few years. The water utility vice-chairman, Dinesh Mohaniya, said on Thursday that DJB would resort to the twofold strategy of using treated water and sourcing raw water from the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh. Two new water treatment plants will be set up to process the additional water.

The Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal fixed the timeline in which 55-60 MGD of additional water will be made available before next summer, 110 MGD before 2020 and 200 MGD by 2021. Delhi has a total installed capacity for supplying 913 MGD water, of which 375 MGD comes from Yamuna, 240 MGD from the Ganga, 218 MGD from Bhakra and 80 MGD from groundwater resources. Against this, the current demand is estimated at around 1,113 MGD.

“Before 2019 summer, 70 MGD water from the Coronation Park sewage treatment plant will be fed upstream of the Yamuna at Delhi-Haryana border. After flowing 40 km, the mixed water will be filtered again at Wazirabad and Chandrawal water treatment plants,” explained Mohaniya. The Coronation Park facility, expected to be inaugurated in April next year, will be state of the art and provide output water that will be undistinguishable from normal water, according to DJB.

Using treated water in this fashion, Mohaniya argued, would both facilitate natural purification along the river’s course as well as take care of the “cultural objections” to using treated sewage water. At present, water from sewage treatment plants are dumped into drains and flow towards Meerut and Agra via downstream Yamuna.

“People are often reluctant to use treated sewage water despite its quality being very high,” the board vice-chairman said. Explaining the natural purification process, he added, “On average, the biological oxygen demand (BOD) goes down by 1 unit when water travels one kilometre in the river.”
In addition to the treated water, 150 MGD of fresh water will be sourced from the Ganga via Ganga Nahar in Uttar Pradesh. “Talks are on with the UP administration. What we are trying to do is to reduce our over-dependence on Haryana for raw water,” said Mohaniya.

DJB will set up new treatment plants at Sonia Vihar and Dwarka to handle this water.

DJB officials revealed that the Sonia Vihar Phase II project would have a capacity of 140 MGD, while the capacity at Dwarka would double to 100 MGD after the second plant becomes operational, likely by December 2019.

The Renuka, Kishau and Lakhwar Vyasi dams were planned to ensure Delhi got its share as per the Yamuna Water Sharing Agreement of May 1994. But work on these dams has not progressed. “With no water expected from these projects, Delhi has had to look for alternatives sources to meet the spiking demand,” a DJB official said.