Banking on rain: More catchment reservoirs along river to help ensure taps don't run dry

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New Delhi: In a bid to catch the Yamuna's excess water during the monsoon and augment the city's drinking water supply, the Delhi Jal Board has started constructing more catchment reservoirs along the river.

In a letter to the Delhi government's revenue department, the Delhi Jal Board has sought help to take 460 acres of land on lease in north Delhi's Burari and neighbouring areas along the river. While 100 acres of this land belongs to the government's flood and irrigation control department, the DJB has shown interest in taking the remaining 360 acres of land from the individuals on a 30-year lease.

Sources said a five-member committee comprising the divisional commissioner, officials of the finance. revenue and irrigation and flood control departments and DJB is being constituted to negotiate with individuals and acquire the land.

According to officials, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had in February given the go-ahead to the construction of two catchment reservoirs along the Yamuna to store the monsoon run-off.



HEALTHY START: According to a Delhi Jal Board official, the pilot project of storing the excess water in Palla had shown positive results

While one reservoir would come in a 460-acre area on the western bank of the river north of the Wazirabad reservoir, a smaller 20-acre reservoir would be built slightly away from the Yamuna but within its catchment area.

"The bigger reservoir will be able to store 1735 million gallons of floodwater

while the smaller one will have the capacity of approximately 220 million gallons, as it will be much deeper," said a Delhi government official privy to the project, adding that it will have minimal or no adverse impact on the river ecology.

Officials said the excess floodwater reaching the Delhi part of the Yamuna A GOVT OFFICIAL SAYS

The bigger reservoir will be able to store 1,735 million gallons of floodwater while the smaller one will have the capacity of approximately 220 million gallons

would be stored and purified in these reservoirs, which will eventually help in augmenting the supply in the capital. While there is a projected demand of 1,236 million gallons per day, the supply is estimated at around 935MGD, with a clear shortfall of 300MGD water. Storage of excess rainwater will solve Delhi's mounting water crisis.

According to a DJB official, the pilot project of storing the excess water in Palla had shown positive results. The Palla project was started in 2019 by digginga shallow pit over 45 acres of land to store excess rainwater. It was observed that in the first year, the groundwater level increased between 1-1.3 metres, while the second year saw it swelling between 0.5 metres to 2 metres during the monsoon flooding cycle, said an official.