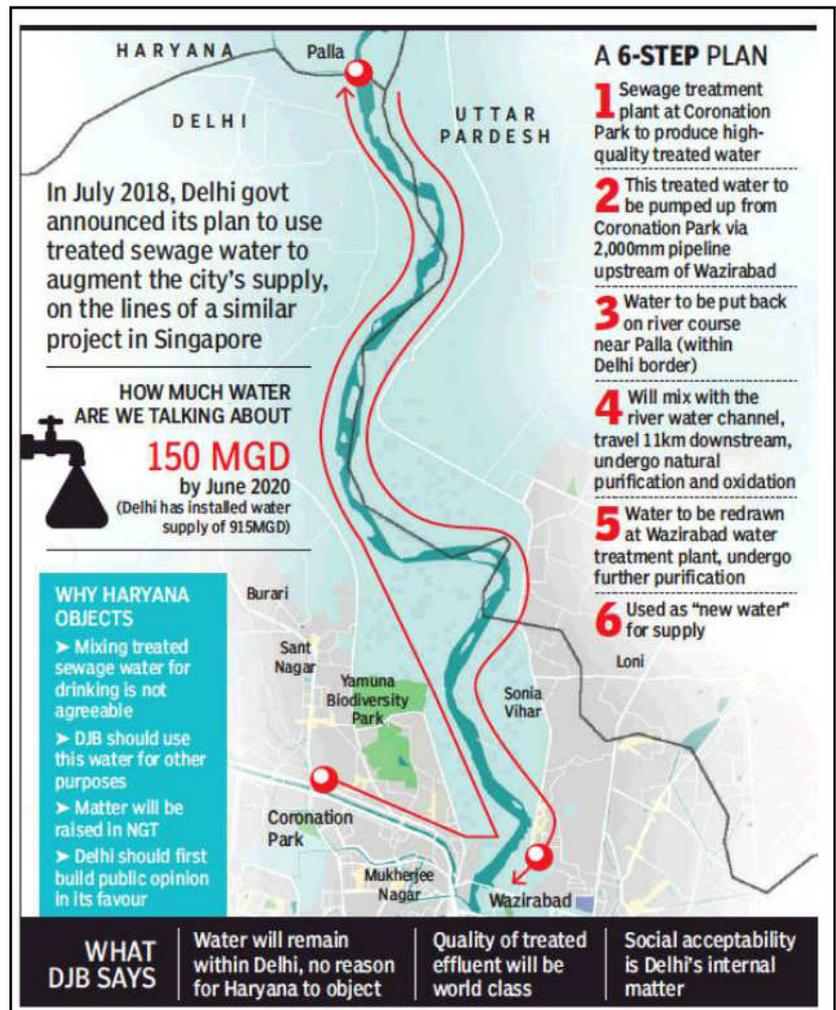


Haryana has problem with Delhi plan to use treated sewage water for drinking

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NEW DELHI: A year after Delhi government announced ambitious plans to use treated sewage water, as Singapore does, to improve drinking water supply, Haryana has succeeded in stonewalling the project. Haryana has questioned the very premise of using treated sewage water for boosting potable water as well as its social acceptability, revealed Delhi Jal Board vice-chairman Dinesh Mohaniya.

At the recent forum of the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB), the statutory body that regulates water allocation and resolves disputes between the basin states of river Yamuna, Haryana initially raised objections about the quantum of water being drawn from the river and then raised doubts about the efficacy of following the Singapore model of using treated sewage water.



Last year in July, Delhi government announced that, taking a cue from Singapore's NEWater policy, it would use treated sewage water to augment 15-20% of overall supply within two years, increasing to 50% in the following five years. Under the plan, treated water was to be pumped from a new water treatment plant at Coronation Park into the Yamuna near Palla inside the Delhi border. Treated water would mix with the river water and travel 11km downstream, in the process undergoing natural purification.

This water would be re-drawn at the Wazirabad treatment plant (WTP) and put through further purification as raw water.

The minutes of the UYRB meeting accessed by TOI show that to counter the apprehensions of Haryana about allocation, DJB had proposed installation of flow meters "at various locations for accounting of treated water from Coronation Pillar and the amount taken up at Wazirabad plant".

The minutes, however, noted that the representative of Haryana said the mixing of treated sewage with raw water for drinking purpose "was not agreeable", and that DJB should "use this water for other purposes instead of mixing it with raw water".

Haryana representative also said the issue of social acceptability of such water would be raised in the National Green Tribunal and "advised DJB to explore all other possibilities and engage in IEC (information, education and communication) activities to build opinion for acceptability". Consequently, UYRB did not accord approval for the project, with the chairman of the body concluding that Delhi should explore the possibilities of other uses of treated sewage water and submit its proposals to the board for further deliberations.

Mohaniya countered Haryana's objections and said, "The water from the Coronation Park STP will be of high quality. The downstream UP towns are currently using water that is much poorer in quality."

Against the current installed water supply of 915 million gallons daily, DJB planned to use 70MGD from Coronation Park in the first phase, 40MGD from Rithala by December 2019 and another 40MGD by June 2020. With UYRB not clearing Delhi's plans, the timeline has now gone haywire.

Meanwhile, due to the lengthy delays, tenders for construction of the mechanism to pump water at Coronation Park have expired and fresh tenders will have to be invited. But work orders cannot be issued before the UYRB approval. Mohaniya said that DJB would pursue the matter with UYRB and, if necessary, approach the courts. He insisted that using treated waste water was key to meeting the city's future water needs.
