

Areas with poor groundwater quality to get RO plants

Private companies will bear a major share of the expenditure, says Water Minister

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The Delhi government is planning to install reverse osmosis (RO) plants in areas where groundwater levels are shallow, but not usable due to high salinity and hardness, to solve the water shortage in the city, Water Minister Satyendar Jain said on Thursday.

The government also promised that every slum in the city will get a RO plant.

"He (Mr. Jain) instructed officials to install small RO plants in the areas where water is supplied through tankers so that people don't have to wait for water tankers to arrive. One small RO plant will be installed for every 500 households to ensure that drinking water is available round the clock. Additionally, every jhuggi will be given at least one RO plant and wherever the population is more than 2000, more than one RO plant will be provided," a statement from the Minister's office said.

Private companies will



Residents of Sanjay Camp seen filling water from a tanker in Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

bear a major share of the expenditure for setting up the RO plant and the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) will buy clean drinking water at a fixed rate from them, the government said.

Authorities said that based on initial studies done by DJB officials, the cost of water, in this case, will be equal to the existing cost of water treatment through conventional means.

In the first phase, RO plants with a total capacity of 363 million litres per day (MLD) will be installed in

areas where surplus groundwater is available, the Minister said. Over 7.25 lakh households are expected to benefit from the project.

"Raw water will be supplied from the groundwater to these RO plants, after which purified water will be supplied to the households. The Delhi government is targeting to install these RO plants only in those areas where surplus groundwater is available but its poor quality makes it unfit for use," the statement said.

Okhla, Dwarka, Nilothi-

Nangloi, Chilla and Najafgarh will be targeted in the first phase of this project and is expected to be completed in a year.

According to the Central Ground Water Board report, Delhi's groundwater has over 22 lakh million gallons litres of saline water. This water can be converted into drinking water after RO treatment and can be supplied with the existing water supply of DJB, as per the Delhi government.

DJB is currently supplying 4,230 MLD water against a demand of 5,130 MLD in the city. This project will augment an additional 363 MLD, hence reducing the deficit of 900 MLD to 540 MLD.

DJB is also working on other initiatives such as extraction wells, groundwater recharge through lake rejuvenation, ammonia treatment plants etc. to augment the water supply. All these projects are part of the broader umbrella of the Delhi government aimed to achieve round-the-clock water supply.