

## Lights, camera and action! DDA wants you to take a closer look at revamped floodplain

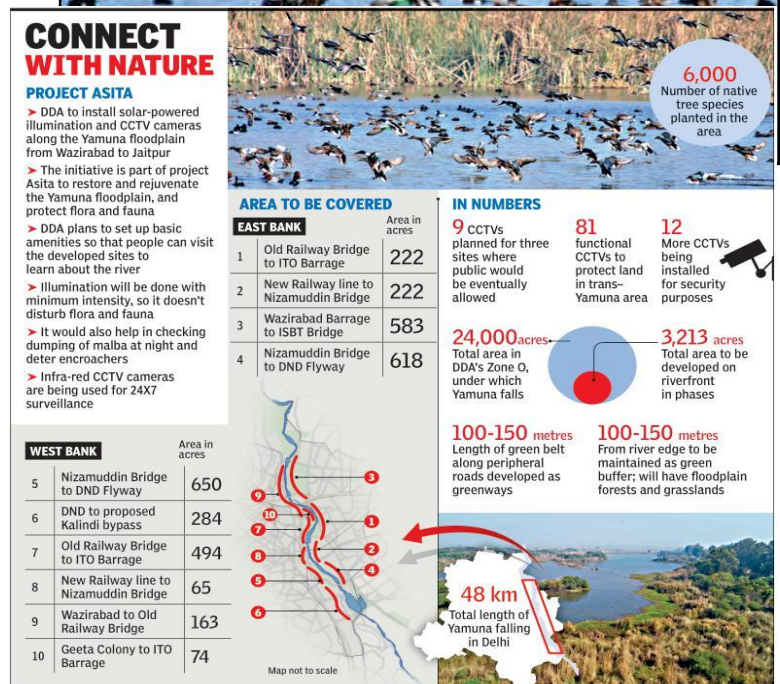
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For the last couple of years, Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has been meticulously working on rejuvenating and ecologically restoring the Yamuna riverfront as part of its ambitious project Asita, which is another name of the river.



Earlier this year, DDA's efforts were chosen to be showcased at the prestigious London Design Biennale 2021, a global gathering of the designers, curators and design institutes. The authority now wants Delhiites to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the riverfront from close quarters, but without disturbing the flora and fauna of this ecologically sensitive zone.

DDA plans to provide solar-powered illumination of the Yamuna floodplain from Wazirabad in north Delhi to Jaitpur in the south near the Delhi-Haryana border, a span of nearly 25km. DDA is first going to appoint a consultant for the project, which includes installation of infra-red CCTV cameras that will also operate on solar power.



As part of the ongoing Asita project, which aims at both rejuvenation of the floodplain and protection of its flora and fauna, the authority also wants to provide basic amenities in the area so that public may visit the sites to know about the river and understand its importance, said a senior official.

"For this, illumination of the Yamuna floodplain with minimum intensity is required, keeping in mind not to disturb its flora and fauna," the official said. "Malba dumping will be checked and encroachers will also be deterred along the Wazirabad-Jaitpur stretch." The project is expected to be completed in a year.

"Nine CCTV cameras have been planned for three sites in coordination with the landscape wing of DDA and the number may increase with time," the official said. "These will be used for 24x7 vigilance of the area."

As part of an initiative to protect land in the trans-Yamuna area, 81 CCTV cameras are already functioning. "These are for surveillance and monitoring of the Yamuna floodplain and work for installing 12 more CCTV cameras is in progress," he said.

As part of the overall Asita project, an area of up to 150 metres from the river is being developed as wetlands, where grasses and tree species that are natural in that environment are planted.

For areas beyond this, which are closer to habitation, DDA has planned parks and other facilities that people would be able to visit. "However, such leisure areas are not allowed close to the river and the wetland and leisure areas will not be mixed up," he said. While DDA will develop visitor's zones, parks, nature trails etc, the wetlands will remain off limits for the public.

As part of Phase 1 of Asita, DDA had taken over 494 acres of the Yamuna western riverbank between Old Yamuna Bridge and ITO Bridge and created wetlands and a green buffer area along the river, apart from parks, recreational areas, green walkways, cycle tracks etc. These facilities are already open to the public.

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