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## DJB to NGT: Treatment plants commissioned at 33 waterbodies

**New Delhi:** Delhi Jal Board has informed the National Green Tribunal that it has commissioned water treatment plants at 33 waterbodies for revival. It said that of these, three will be revived by the end of December.

The DJB, however, added that it was unable to revive one waterbody in Bijwasan following public resistance. Another was dropped from its list of 1,040 waterbodies as its revival was not feasible.

The Jal Board said that it would revive 25 waterbodies under Amrut 2.0 or the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation. It added that the majority of 155 water bodies under it have been handed over to the DDA or the revenue department.

"Work is in progress at three waterbodies and is likely to be completed by December 2023. Work at one waterbody had to be abandoned due to public resistance and one has been dropped due to non-feasibility and replaced by another waterbody," a DJB report said. The report stated that six wetlands had been rejuvenated. These are Smriti Van at South Delhi, Todapur in New Delhi and three others in south-west and one at Mundka.

"It is pertinent to mention that DJB has taken up rejuvenation work by utilizing its own budget and till date, approximately Rs 92.73 crore has been spent, i.e an average cost of Rs. 2.51 crore per water body," the DJB said.

The Delhi wetland authority in 2021 made a list of 1,040 wetlands and decided to notify them under wetland management rules. **TNN**



Locals look for their belongings in the debris.

SANJEEV VERMA/HT

## Tughlaqabad Fort demolition debris to take month to clean

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**NEW DELHI:** A week after authorities led by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) embarked on a massive demolition drive to remove encroachments from the Tughlaqabad Fort in response to court orders, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is faced with the herculean task of clearing thousands of tonnes of debris and construction waste from the site.

MCD has been tasked with cleaning up the 100-bigha (62-acre) site where several semi-permanent structures at Bengali Colony in Chhuriya Mohalla, near the Tughlaqabad village towards the monument, were demolished.

According to a senior municipal official involved in the task, the removal of demolition waste and debris is expected to cost around ₹1.14 crore, with the drive lasting one month, according to engineering and maintenance department estimates. "We have invited bids to bring in private companies to do the clean-up and transport the debris to the construction and demolition waste plant," the official, who requested anonymity, added. The corporation estimates that approximately 35,785 cubic metres of debris will be cleared during the exercise.

The civic body intends to transport the debris from the fort area to the Tehkhand construction and demolition waste processing plant, which has a capacity of 1,000 TPD (tonnes per day). According to the project report, the corporation will hire six backhoe loaders (excavators) for debris collection, and ₹95 lakh will be spent on debris loading, stacking, and transportation. "The process for hiring machinery and manpower will be completed on Tuesday, and the agency will be given a 30-day period to clean the site," an MCD official said.

To avoid dust pollution during

the exercise, the agency must follow National Green Tribunal (NGT) guidelines, said officials.

"We have mandated that no obstruction to traffic flow or inconvenience to pedestrians should be caused. The contractor will also be required to take appropriate protection measures, such as raising appropriate height windbreakers on all sides of the site to ensure that no construction material dust flies outside the area," the official quoted above said.

The demolition drive, led by ASI and the district administration, began on April 30 and May 1 in response to the Delhi high court's orders in the SN Bhardwaj versus ASI case. ASI officials previously told HT that the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) gave it a maintenance area of 2,661 bighas around the Tughlaqabad Fort in 1995. Section 19 of The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, states that no one, including the owner or occupier of a protected area, may construct any building within the protected area. Furthermore, Section 20 of the same Act prohibits new construction activity within 100 metres of the prohibited area in all directions.

Over time, the land surrounding the fort was infringed upon, resulting in a legal battle after SN Bhardwaj filed a public interest litigation in 2001, seeking protection of the fort premises. Following that, the high court ordered that the encroachments be removed. The Supreme Court declared the entire Tughlaqabad Fort to be protected in February 2016, and ordered ASI to stop land grabbing and encroachment there. On January 11, this year, ASI posted 1,248 notices on houses in Chhuriya Mohalla, directing residents to leave the area within 15 days or see their homes demolished. On March 24, the high court ordered ASI to remove encroachments within four weeks, triggering the two-day demolition.