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Gurgaon water table declining at alarming rate

Sumi Sukanya, TNN Feb 2, 2010, 12.22am IST



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GURGAON: Gurgaon may have to follow in the footsteps of parched [Delhi](#) and depend on other states for water. A report by Ground Water Cell says that water level has gone down by 7.6 meters in the city and has been depleting at an average rate of 2 meter per year since the past three years.

HUDA officials said while the city receives 60 MGD of water every day, there remains a huge gap between demand and supply as at least 20 MGD more water is needed to fulfill the demand of a population of 18 lakh. In most of the cases this is fulfilled through illegal ground water extraction. The report noted that digging of bore wells was barred in Gurgaon in 2001. But, in the past three decades, 35,000 bore wells have come up out of which only 9,780 are registered. In May last year, Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) had allowed more new bore wells to come up creating a flutter among local authorities in Gurgaon.

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Scientists at CGWA have been warning that Gurgaon's water table has been declining at a rate of about two meters (six feet) every year since 2006. They have warned that at this rate, the city will have no water left by 2017.

Officials said when CGWA allowed drilling of four-inch-wide borewells in August, 2008, more than 25 residents were digging new bore wells every day. "Even though the advisory says that digging bore wells must have a water harvesting system installed in their homes, we hardly found people adhering to the rule," a senior HUDA official said.

Alarmed at the fast-depleting groundwater level, the district administration banned drilling new bore wells in the city in June last year. The ban which became applicable with immediate effect, however had some exceptions. The decision was taken in a meeting of the advisory committee constituted under deputy commissioner R K Kataria for taking regulatory measures to maintain the water table.

The committee decided that no bore well will be allowed to be drilled. Residents facing a shortage of drinking water can apply for digging bore wells to the technical committee which would then seek a report from HUDA and the water supply and sanitation departments about water arrangements in that area.

The ban, however, seems to have done little as revealed by recent report which says that "illegal extraction of ground water is going unabated in the district".

What has added to the worry of experts is the rate at which Gurgaon is growing. "Each developer entering the real estate market promises 24x7 water supply and they are also promising exclusive pools for residents. That's a concern. The boom in Gurgaon can't sustain until the agencies put a check on the extraction of groundwater the city is using up tomorrow's water reserve," R S Rathi, former president of DLF Qutub enclave RWA, said.

Officials, meanwhile, have their hopes pinned on new water supply line known as NCR channel. "The channel which is being constructed at a cost of Rs. 322 crore, will solve the water woes of the entire region and it will curb the habit of putting new bore wells," said a senior HUDA official.

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