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❶ **Three-phase rejuvenation and beautification:** Sludge will be removed from the bottom of the drains and floating booms will be installed to collect trash

❷ Aerators will be installed and floating wetlands grown in the drains to improve dissolved oxygen levels

❸ Modern infrastructure, including cycling and walking tracks, will be developed along the drain

WALKING-CYCLING TRACK ON SHAHADRA LINK DRAIN

IFRAH MUFTI @ New Delhi

DELHIITES will soon get a biodiversity zone over the Shahadra Link Drain where not only morning or evening walkers will be able to walk but the cyclists will get to pedal over a 4-km-long stretch.

In view of the city government's project for the rejuvenation and beautification of major drains flowing into the Yamuna, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has floated tenders to transform the Shahadra Link drain opposite Akshardham into a biodiversity zone.

In September 2021, Water Minister Satyendar Jain said, "Drains will be cleaned, beautified and will carry only clean water. All major drains like Najafgarh, Supplementary, and Shahdara will be converted into clean water channels again."

Jain said, "DJB has been tasked with finding solutions to the issues that worsen the water quality flowing through the drains. Cleaning the drains could enable groundwater recharge in the areas around them."

The purpose of transforming the Shahadra Link Drain into a biodiversity zone is also to utilize the drain water, the recharge of groundwater table, cleaning of Yamuna, and augmentation of water supply.

The government has been

working on the rejuvenation project for four years and the Shahadra drain is one of them. Currently, it contributes to the pollution in the Yamuna by discharging solid waste, sludge, and wastewater into the river.

Advisor to Water Minister Ankit Srivastava said, "Three years ago, we launched a pilot project there and now we have finally floated the tenders. The entire link drain will be converted into 4 km of the walking path, cycle track, and a recharge zone." This stretch begins from the metro rail line of Akshardham and ends at Crown Plaza mall.

Srivastava added, "We had tested this drain and it has excellent recharge potential. No matter how much water is added to it, it will keep on flowing. We have a sewage treatment plant at Chilla, which will be upgraded to help in the project."

He added, "The natural groundwater movement will be towards the Mayur Vihar societies since East Delhi has been made on the sand belt. Also, the amount of water that will be recharged here will flow in the tube wells as well."

"The project will act as a biodiversity zone, recharge point, drain treatment, Yamuna treatment and also as a public engineering and public interface aspect," Srivastava added.

