

Delhi's Mounting Water Bill Crisis: Over ₹1.4 Lakh Crore in Unpaid Dues



The Delhi Jal Board (DJB), the capital city's water utility, is grappling with a colossal financial challenge as outstanding water bill dues have surged past ₹1.4 lakh crore (approximately \$17 billion). This staggering sum, encompassing various categories of consumers and government entities, highlights a systemic issue impacting the DJB's financial health and its capacity to maintain and expand critical water infrastructure.

According to data released by the Delhi Water Minister on Friday, July 25, 2025, the largest portion of these dues, ₹66,000 crore, is owed by commercial users. Domestic consumers collectively account for ₹15,000 crore in unpaid bills. However, a substantial and equally concerning share, exceeding ₹63,000 crore, is due from various government departments, both under the Delhi government and the Central government.

Among the government defaulters, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) tops the list, owing a significant ₹26,147 crore to the DJB. Following closely within the central government bodies, Indian Railways is identified as a major defaulter with outstanding dues of ₹21,530.5 crore. The Delhi Police also features prominently on this list, with unpaid bills amounting to ₹6,097 crore. In total, Delhi government departments owe ₹33,295.79 crore, while central government agencies contribute ₹29,723.37 crore to the accumulated arrears. Smaller entities like the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) have comparatively lower dues of ₹1.4 crore and ₹1.1 crore, respectively.

Water Minister Parvesh Verma has indicated that the government is preparing for a significant recovery push to address these long-standing arrears. "The recovery plan will include high-level

meetings with department heads, especially those with large pending bills, to discuss repayment timelines or installment options," the minister stated. Officials emphasize that the non-recovery of these dues, particularly from top government defaulters, directly jeopardizes planned upgrades, essential maintenance work, and the expansion of vital water infrastructure across the city.

The issue of unpaid bills has been compounded by common complaints from residents regarding inflated bills, often caused by faulty or estimated meter readings, or bills issued during the COVID-19 lockdowns when premises were vacant. To address this, the DJB is working on a plan to waive the Late Payment Surcharge (LPSC) for domestic and government users and intends to replace traditional meters with smart ones to prevent future billing disputes. This move, however, currently excludes commercial users.

The accumulated debt, which officials say has been growing for over a decade, underscores the urgent need for a robust and sustained recovery mechanism to ensure the financial viability of the Delhi Jal Board and the continued provision of water services to the capital's populace.