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## Nemmeli to get 2nd desalination plant at Rs 1,000cr

CHENNAI: The day is not far when all of the city's water needs will be met by mega plants that desalinate seawater — or so successive governments would have us believe.

But the latest such project is meant to meet the needs of long neglected areas that are now part of the extended city limits. [Chief minister J Jayalalithaa](#) said in the assembly on Tuesday that her government would set up an additional [desalination plant](#) in Nemmeli at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore.

The city receives 200 million litres a day (mld) from the two existing desalination plants at Minjur and Nemmeli. However, experts question the feasibility of desalination because of the high costs involved. "The desalination plant will augment the city's water supply by another 150 MLD," Jayalalithaa said. The project will come up on a 10.5-acre site abutting the recently commissioned first Nemmeli unit off East Coast Road.

Jayalalithaa had in March launched the first plant with a capacity of 100mld. The chief minister said the water will be

supplied to 6.46 lakh residents of Alandur, Perungudi, Kottivakkam, Puzhuthivakkam, Pallikaranai, Madipakkam, Sholinganallur, Karapakkam, Neelankarai, Injambakkam, Semmanchery, Uthandi and Okkiyam Thoraipakkam.

The government has also decided to complete its ambitious desalination plant at Pattipulam off ECR within four years. The Pattipulam plant will have an initial capacity of 200mld. This will be expanded to 400mld at a later stage. The AIADMK chief took credit for the [Veeranam](#) water supply scheme commissioned in 2004 during her previous regime.

"It was my government that launched the Veeranam scheme to end the water crisis at the time with a supply of 180mld," she said. "We also came up with the Minjur desalination plant in north Chennai," she said.

In what should cheer residents of areas recently added to the city, the government will take up at least nine drinking water schemes for these localities at a cost of 192.2 crore. In the current fiscal, at least 14 additional areas with a total of 3.47 lakh people will be covered at a cost of 303.78 crore.

The growing water demand and depleting storage in reservoirs, however, have alarmed the city's water managers. "The situation is getting bad. If we don't come up with alternatives right now, the future appears to be grim," a senior official said.

While the Nemmeli plant provides some degree of relief, supply

from Veeranam remains unsatisfactory.