The IWM, which did a study for augmentation of water in city rivers during the lean period found that the river Pungli could be dredged up and trained to provide round-the-year supply of water. Nearly a Tk 1,000 crore project envisages diverting of 245 cubic metres of water per second from the Jamuna into all rivers and canals around the city through the Pungli. Experts say this diversion is unlikely to impact flow of Jamuna, which during the lean period has an average flow of 2,000 cubic metres of water per second.

"This project is vital for rejuvenating the rivers Buriganga, Turag, Tongi Khal, Balu and Sitalakhya," says SM Mahbubur Rahman, principal specialist and head of the Water Resources Planning Division of IWM.

Restoring flow to the rivers alone would not help. Rahman says that the diverted flow would keep flushing the huge pollution into the downstream and further pollute the Dhaleswari and Meghna.

"At the same time we think about restoring flow to the rivers, we have to compel industries and other polluters to install effluent treatment plants," Rahman adds.

Unanimous support to save rivers

Millions living in the metropolis and its surrounding areas are today united on the issue of saving the rivers. The on-going campaign jointly organised by The Daily Star and Channel-i to save the rivers has drawn a wide range of public support. During the series of photo exhibitions, depicting pollution and encroachments of our rivers at different parts of the city, men, women and children expressed their horror at the present condition of the rivers.

"I was in Kolkata recently and I really appreciate how the river there is neatly demarcated and provides recreation to millions," says Mujibar Rahman, a primary school teacher.

"We really hope that the government will come forward immediately to save these rivers from extinction," Mujibar adds.



The Dream

Imagine a one-stop office under the jurisdiction of a powerful 'Commission' to deal with anything involving the rivers around the city -- their flow, cleanliness, navigation, dredging, embankments and walkways, banks, resources, security and development. The Commission is constitutionally empowered and technically equipped to deal with anything to keep these rivers safe, unlike current situation when at least ten different departments stagger to keep these rivers protected (or else). The Commission is under a single roof that takes decision and implements those within the sharpest possible time and skill.

Imagine a four-lane highway on