

CENTRE SET TO ROLL OUT 'JAL SHAKTI' SCHEME FOR WATER-STARVED AREAS

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

The Centre is set to initiate the Jal Shakti Abhiyan to ramp up rainwater harvesting and conservation efforts in 255 water-stressed districts from July 1, in line with the government's promise to focus on water.

Though water is a State issue, the campaign will be coordinated by 255 central IAS officers of Joint or Additional Secretary-rank, drawn from ministries as varied as Space, Petroleum and Defence, according to a notification issued by the Department of Personnel and Training on Wednesday.

The campaign seems to follow the model of last year's Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, where central officials monitored the implementation of seven flagship development schemes in 117 aspirational districts across the country.

The campaign will run from July 1 to September 15 in States receiving rainfall during the south-west monsoon, while States receiving rainfall in the retreating or north-east monsoon will be covered from October 1 to November 30. Overall, 313 blocks with critical groundwater levels will be covered, along with 1,186 blocks with over-exploited groundwater and 94 blocks with low groundwater availability.

Progress monitored

The Jal Shakti Abhiyan would aim to accelerate water harvesting, conservation and borewell recharge activities already being carried out under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme and the Integrated Watershed Management Programme of the Rural Development Ministry, along with existing water body restoration and afforestation schemes being undertaken by the Jal Shakti and Environment Ministries.

Progress would be monitored in real time through mobile applications and an online dashboard at indiawater.gov.in

A major communications campaign on TV, radio, print, local and social media will be carried out, with celebrities mobilised to generate awareness for the campaign.

Teams led by 255 Joint Secretary and Additional Secretary-rank officers and 550 Deputy Secretary-level officers from various central ministries would fan out across the country, making at least three trips of three days each to cover districts and blocks.

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