

## **PM to launch 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain'**

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain" campaign via video conferencing on the occasion of World Water Day on Monday, an official statement said on Sunday.

The Jal Shakti Abhiyan is the Jal Shakti ministry's flagship water-conservation campaign. The next leg of the programme, dubbed "catch the rain where it falls, when it falls", will be rolled out across the country's 734 districts covering over 600,000 villages.

It will be implemented between March 22 and November 30, covering the monsoon period in the country.

During the campaign, geotagging of all water bodies throughout the nation will be carried out, which shall form the basis for assessment of the rejuvenation efforts for water bodies across the country, an official said on condition of anonymity.

According to data from the state-run policy think tank. NITI Aayog, nearly 600 million Indians face "high to extreme water stress" and the country's water demand is likely to double by 2030, potentially costing a 6% loss in gross domestic product by 2050.

The programme will be rolled out across the country's 734 districts covering over 600,000 villages. Under the scheme, the government focuses on rainwater harvesting and water conservation, including initiatives such as renovation of traditional water bodies and tanks, reuse of water and recharge structures watershed development and afforestation in 256 districts.

"In the first phase interventions were made in 10,104,338 water conservation and rainwater harvesting projects 7,536,381 renovation of traditional and other water bodies, 7,485,025 reuse and recharge structures and 9,696,381 watershed development," minister of state for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria said recently, quoting figures from his ministry.

India sustains 18% of the world's population and 15% of global livestock with just about 4% of global fresh water resources. India's most water-stressed blocks are in Tamil Nadu (541) followed by Rajasthan (218), Uttar Pradesh (139) and Telangana (137).

On average India receives 1,170mm of rainfall, most of it during the summer monsoon months, but only 10-20% of that is currently tapped. Teams of central government officials will visit each district to sensitise and motivate the public to undertake water harvesting and conservation measures.

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