

4th INDIA WATER WEEK 2016

WATER FOR ALL : STRIVING TOGETHER

APRIL 4-8, 2016

SERIOUS CHALLENGES TO INDIA'S WATER RESOURCES, ALL STAKEHOLDERS SHOULD WORK TOGETHER: UMA BHARTI



Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti lighting the lamp to inaugurate the 4th India Water Week-2016 in New Delhi. Union Rural Development Minister Chaudhary Birender Singh, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh, Minister of State (IC) for Environment Prakash Javadekar and Minister of State for Water Resources Sanwar Lal Jat are also seen. (Source: PIB)

Noting that India was facing serious challenges in the form of increasing demand for water for various purposes, deterioration of surface and groundwater quality and impacts of climate change on water resources, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Uma Bharti called upon all sections of society to work together for conservation and preservation of the precious resource.

Water conservation was very essential for the sustainable development

of the country, said Uma Bharti, adding that all issues related to water had to be taken up on priority and efforts were required at all levels. "Joint efforts are necessary to ensure that all sections of the society get benefitted from water, the precious gift of the nature to us", said the Water Resources Minister while inaugurating the India Water Week 2016 in New Delhi on April 4.

According to Bharti, 'Water for All: Striving Together' was not merely the theme for this year's India Water Week, but also the need of the hour

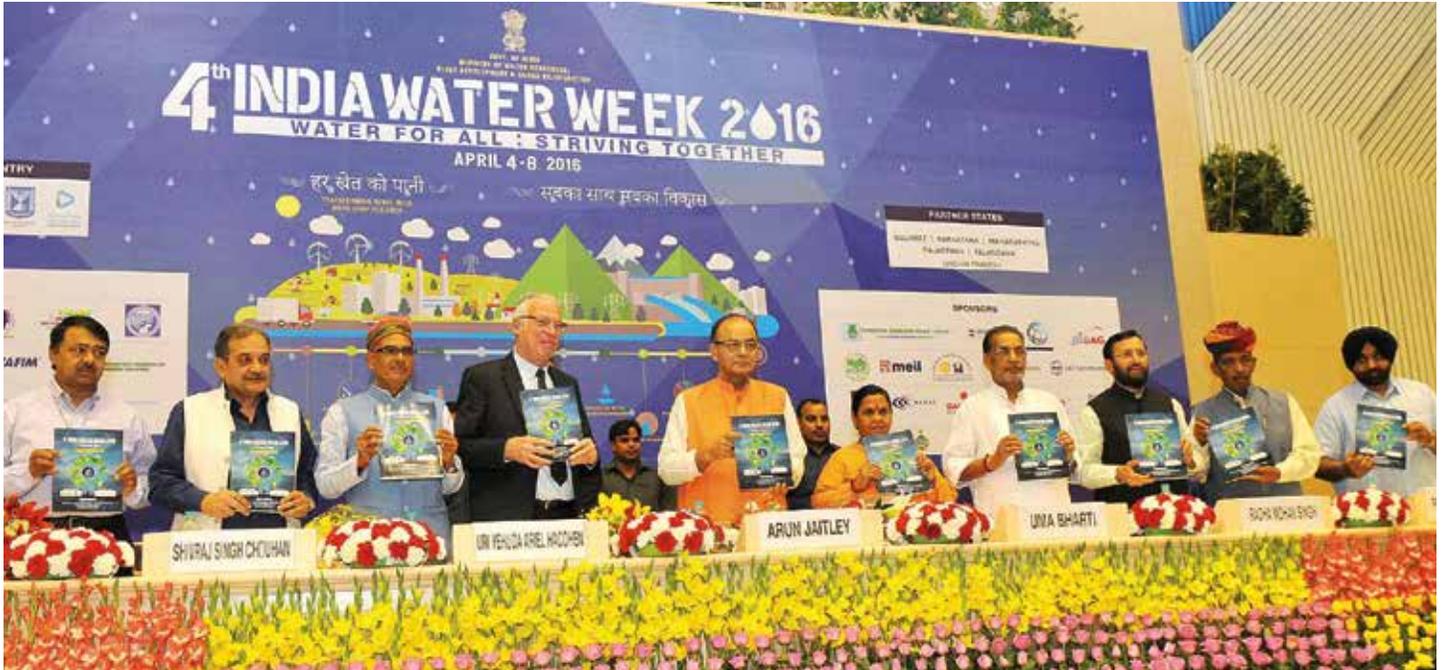
for the entire country.

The Minister said she was worried and concerned about the present water crisis being experienced in various parts of the country. "For the last two consecutive monsoons, the rainfall has been below normal and many parts of the country, particularly Bundelkhand and Vidharba regions, parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are already experiencing drought-like situation".

"Considerable shortfall in the

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CENTRE TO SUPPORT STATES IN CREATION OF IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE, ASSURES FINANCE MINISTER



Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti along with Union Ministers Arun Jaitley, Chaudhary Birender Singh, Radha Mohan Singh, Prakash Javadekar, Minister of State for Water Resources Sanwar Lal Jat, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Agriculture Minister of Israel Uri Ariel, Secretary to Ministry of Water Resources Shashi Shekhar and Special Secretary Amarjit Singh releasing the booklet of proceedings at the inauguration of the 4th India Water Week-2016 in New Delhi on April 4, 2016. (Source: PIB)

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has assured the states that the Centre would offer all support to them in ensuring availability of water for irrigation, underlining the need for channelizing investment in the irrigation sector, raising efficiency of water usage in the agriculture sector and undertaking holistic measures for preservation and conservation of water in the country.

Noting that two successive deficient monsoons in last two years had resulted in a slowdown in growth in the agriculture sector, Jaitley, who was the chief guest at the inaugural session of the India Water Week-2016 in New Delhi on April 4, said the effect of water scarcity could be felt not only on the agriculture sector but also in rural development, environment and even on businesses.

The poor performance of agriculture sector due to deficient rainfall has also impacted services and manufacturing sectors, underlining the fact that growth of the agri-sector was must for the country's

overall economic growth.

The Finance Minister said even though water and irrigation was a state subject, the Centre would offer help to states in completing irrigation projects for ensuring availability of water as the states may not be in a position to fight alone the “challenges” posed by erratic weather conditions.

Irrigation projects could fuel economic growth for rural India and meet the Centre's target to double income of farmers over the next few years, the Finance Minister felt, referring to the “less than adequate” monsoon during the past two years which had resulted in “very marginal” growth of economy.

The trend had its impact on the services and manufacturing sector too and impacted the purchasing power of 55 per cent population of the country. But, investment in irrigation projects, unlike other infrastructure projects, brought almost immediate results and had no lag effect, he noted.

“Investment in irrigation almost gets you immediate result. If you create physical infrastructures in terms of highways, roads, railways, ports, airports, power, etc, it will take a couple of seasons before its impact is seen and before it can contribute to growth and manufacturing”, said Jaitley.

But, irrigation was one area that if investment was made in it now, it would create a facility and the impact would be felt almost by the next season, the Finance Minister added.

Jaitley said the Centre has made its contribution toward improving and creating additional irrigation infrastructure in the recent Budget 2016-17. The NABARD has also been asked to create sufficient funds for undertaking large irrigation projects and under the flagship programme - Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sichi Yojana (PMKSY), efforts are being made to fast track completion of unfinished irrigation scheme in the next couple of years.

CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS CAN BE MITIGATED BY ADOPTING TECHNOLOGY, EFFICIENT WATER USAGE: JAVADEKAR

The Union Government has taken several initiatives like revamping industrial effluent discharge rules, encouraging industries to adopt zero liquid discharge (ZLD) and bring down their water usage and undertaking watershed development schemes to manage challenges posed by declining water resources, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar has said.

The Government has emphasized that the challenge presented by climate change can be mitigated by adopting latest technology for saving water and using it more efficiently, the Environment Minister said at the inaugural session of the India Water Week 2016 in New Delhi on April 4.

The Environment Minister indicated that climate change was being witnessed through ferocity and frequency of erratic monsoons, untimely rains and more cycles of droughts and floods and noted that water needs to be used efficiently as well as conserved.

Javadekar outlined eight initiatives taken by the Environment Ministry that have started showing results, with the most notable being a 30 per cent drop in industrial pollutants flowing into Ganga River.

The Ministry has mandated industries to achieve water efficiency and adopt zero liquid discharge (ZLD) in distilleries and other industries and the target is to reduce 50 per cent industrial water requirement by adopting 3Rs – recover, recycle and reuse. “The construction industry, which uses a lot of water, has also been mandated to harvest water and use it effectively through innovations like recharging it in borewell by filtering”, said Javadekar.

The Government has revamped all waste management rules too, with the aim of reducing pollution of water. Presently, nearly 50 per cent solid waste goes into and pollutes water bodies. Now, efforts

are on to reduce water pollution through new environmental governance.

The Ministry is also taking up intensive watershed development programme in all reserved forests, so as to ensure water and fodder augmentation, which will sustain animal life.

The Ministry has also brought new sustainable sand mining rules, so that the rivers do not die. “The essence of the new rule is that the quantity and place of sand mining will be decided by satellite mapping of the river to know where and how many sand deposits have

accumulated”, he added.

The Environment Minister said special afforestation programmes are also being taken up in catchment areas of rivers and the Government is encouraging river-linking schemes.

“Ken-Betwa is being considered for approval and a decision will be given soon with adequate environmental safeguards”, he added.

Javadekar said that the Prime Minister’s ‘mantra’ – ‘Per Drop, More Crop’ was the guiding theme.

Speaking at the function, Union



Union Finance Minister
Arun Jaitley



Union Minister of State (IC) of Environment
Prakash Javadekar



Union Agriculture Minister
Radha Mohan Singh



Union Minister of State for Water
Sanwar Lal Jat



Union Rural Development Minister
Chaudhary Birendra Singh



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister
Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Minister for Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation and Panchayati Raj Chaudhary Birendra Singh said the prime concern of the Government was not just the creation of additional water-related infrastructure, but on ensuring quality, sustainability and efficiency in water supply service.

Union Minister of State for Water

Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Sanwar Lal Jat warned of grave times ahead in India if the available water resources were not managed properly. "People should help out the Government in this regard", he said, pointing out towards the fact that not too many decades ago, it was not imagined that water would be available in 200 ml or

500 ml or 1 litre bottles.

"No one had thought it would happen. Now water shortage is gaining ground in the country", said Jat, urging all stakeholders to help in the Government's initiatives to have more agriculture from less water and river-interlinking projects, which will help in diverting surplus water to deficient areas of various states.

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rainfall during the months of January and February has adversely impacted the agricultural activities. In many parts of the country, we are also facing serious crisis even for drinking water", said Bharti.

The recent reports about the present stage of water availability in the reservoirs being monitored throughout the country is also quite disturbing and calls for immediate actions to help the people in rural areas, particularly the farmers, she said.

"We have initiated several measures which inter-alia include legislative measures, revamping and restructuring of related organisations, promoting various schemes related to sustainable development of water resources", said Bharti.

The Water Resources Minister said the Central Government was fully committed to water security through implementation of interlinking projects. Ever since the Government has come to power in 2014, interlinking of rivers (ILR) programme under National Perspective Plan (NPP) has been taken up on a high priority in right earnest. "I am confident that the work on Ken-Betwa link would commence shortly", she noted.

Referring to Jal Kranti Abhiyan, Bharti said, "I wish to pursue water conservation as a mass movement".



The objectives of Jal Kranti Abhiyan are strengthening and grassroots involvement of all stakeholders including Panchayati Raj Institutions and local bodies in the water security and development schemes like Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) and to encourage the adoption/utilization of traditional knowledge in water resources conservation and its management, she added.

Welcoming the participation of Israel as a partner country and the Israeli Agriculture Minister Uri Ariel Minister, Bharti said she considered Israel as her

"guru" and as someone who could teach the world and India "how to save water". She looked forward to a visit to Israel and learning about various water management techniques from Israeli experts, the Water Resources Minister added.

Bharti also launched a user friendly Android-based mobile application 'Jal Sanchayan', which comprises all components of rainwater harvesting in a single platform. The application allows users to know location conditions and has an interactive module that enables users to calculate potential rainwater to be harvested in the user's location.