

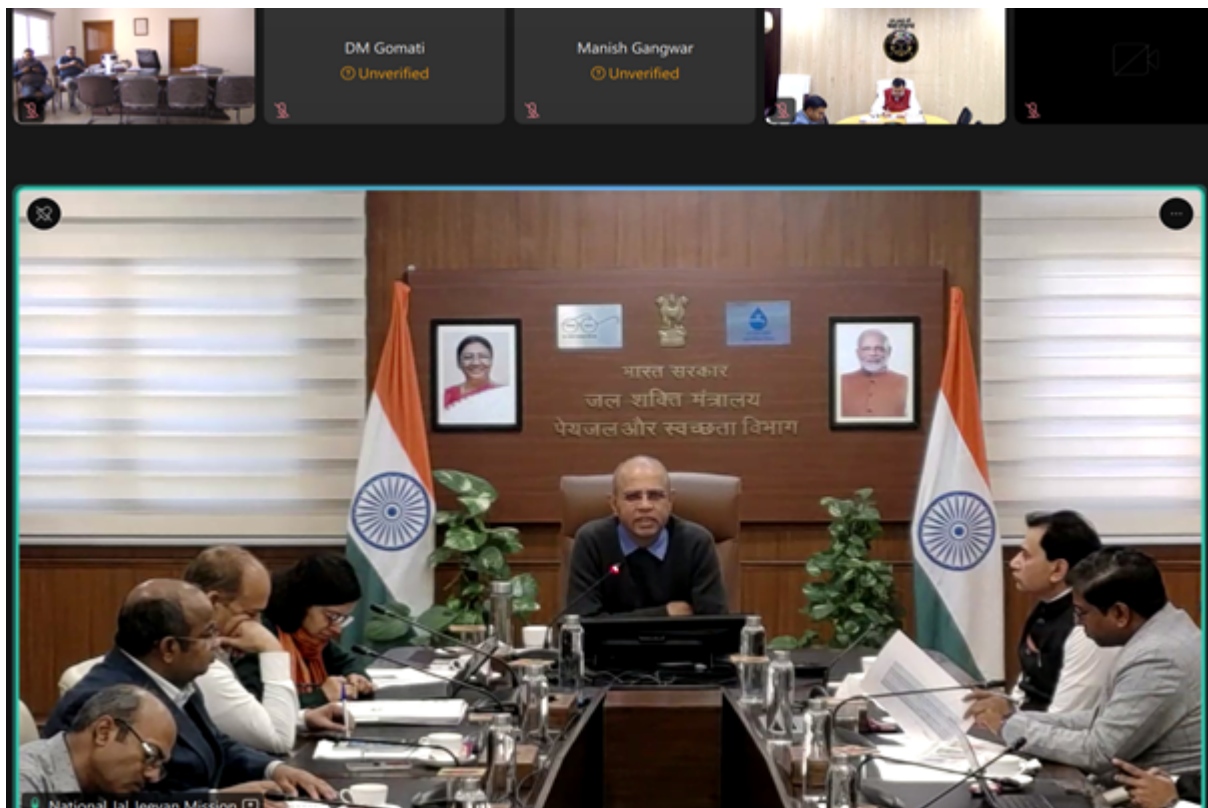
DDWS holds 6th District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad

Jal Utsav: Blending Culture, Tradition, and Community Spirit to Awaken Pride, Awareness, and Collective Responsibility for Water

Districts share field innovations in Community Engagement, Water Source Rejuvenation, Smart Water Utility, Digitised Water User Charge Collection, Water Quality, Water Audit by School Students & IEC

Posted On: 17 FEB 2026 6:15PM by PIB Delhi

The Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, organised the **6th edition of the District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad** today, bringing together senior officials, district administrations, and sector experts to deliberate on strengthening the implementation of Har Ghar Jal under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).



The virtual event was chaired by **Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, DDWS**, and witnessed participation from District Collector/Deputy Magistrate/ District Officials across the country.

In his address, **Secretary, DDWS, Shri Ashok K.K. Meena** highlighted the Mission's journey since launch of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019 and noted the significant progress achieved by States over the past six years despite the constraints. He emphasized that while the initial years focused on rapid asset creation, **the Mission has now entered a crucial phase of transitioning towards community-owned and community-managed rural water service delivery**, an approach that is central to strengthening long-term functionality and service quality.

Underscoring the pivotal role of District Collectors in steering this shift, he stressed the importance of **systematic handover of schemes to Gram Panchayats, in line with constitutional provisions**, and the need to ensure that communities assume full ownership of operations and maintenance. Referring to encouraging examples from various States, including **24x7 systems** successfully managed by Gram Panchayats and strong leadership demonstrated by **women Sarpanches**, he said that these models reflect the growing strength of local governance in the water sector. He informed about the forthcoming extension of Jal Jeevan Mission, which will prioritize saturation of single-village schemes, expansion of solar-based infrastructure, comprehensive asset mapping through PM Gati Shakti, creation of a unified scheme database, and financial reconciliation to enhance transparency.

He urged all districts to accelerate scheme handovers, strengthen community-led processes under **Rajya Jal Utsav and Lok Jal Utsav**, and intensify efforts to ensure sustainable service delivery, reaffirming the commitment to achieving the vision of safe, adequate drinking water for every rural household.

Smt. Ankita Chakraborty, Deputy Secretary – NJJM, welcomed Secretary-DDWS, Additional Secretary and Mission Director – NJJM, Mission Directors from States and all participating District Collectors/ District Magistrates to the 6th District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad. She congratulated the districts whose initiatives were selected for presentation, noting that their efforts are contributing to a growing national repository of best practices in rural water service delivery. She highlighted that the Samvad serves as a platform for peer learning and exchange of innovative ideas, underscoring that districts are the fulcrum where policies translate into outcomes and community-led approaches shape sustainable systems. Referring to the days' focus on **Jal Utsav-Jal Mahotsav**, she emphasized the shift towards community-owned and managed rural water services, and the pivotal role of district leadership in ensuring service quality, convergence, and citizen engagement.

DDWS Presentation on Jal Utsav-Jal Mahotsav

A detailed presentation on **Jal Utsav-Jal Mahotsav** was made by **Shri Y.K Singh, Director, NJJM**. During the session he brought out that Jal Utsav will function as a multi-tiered public engagement framework to strengthen water sustainability as a people-led movement.

He explained that the initiative seeks to reconnect water with local culture, traditions, and community experience, transforming conservation and sustainable use into a cultural expression anchored at the grassroots.

He informed that **Jal Utsav will be celebrated through three verticals**,

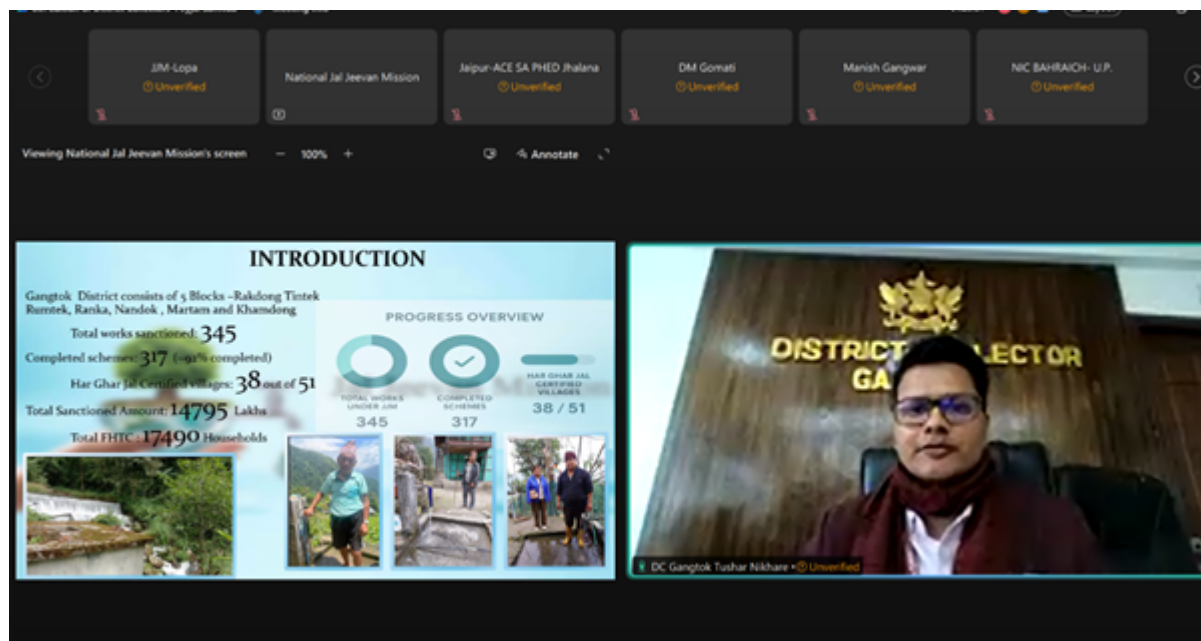
- i. Jal Mahotsav at the National level,
- ii. Rajya Jal Utsav at the State/UT level, and
- iii. Lok Jal Utsav at the Gram Panchayat level.

The national **Jal Mahotsav** will be observed from **8th to 22nd March**, coinciding with International Women's Day and culminating on World Water Day, with participation across all levels. States and Union Territories have been encouraged to organise **Rajya Jal Utsav** in alignment with their local context and timelines. At the village level, **Lok Jal Utsav** will be shaped by local customs, water-related traditions, and cultural practices, ensuring that celebrations reflect community identity.

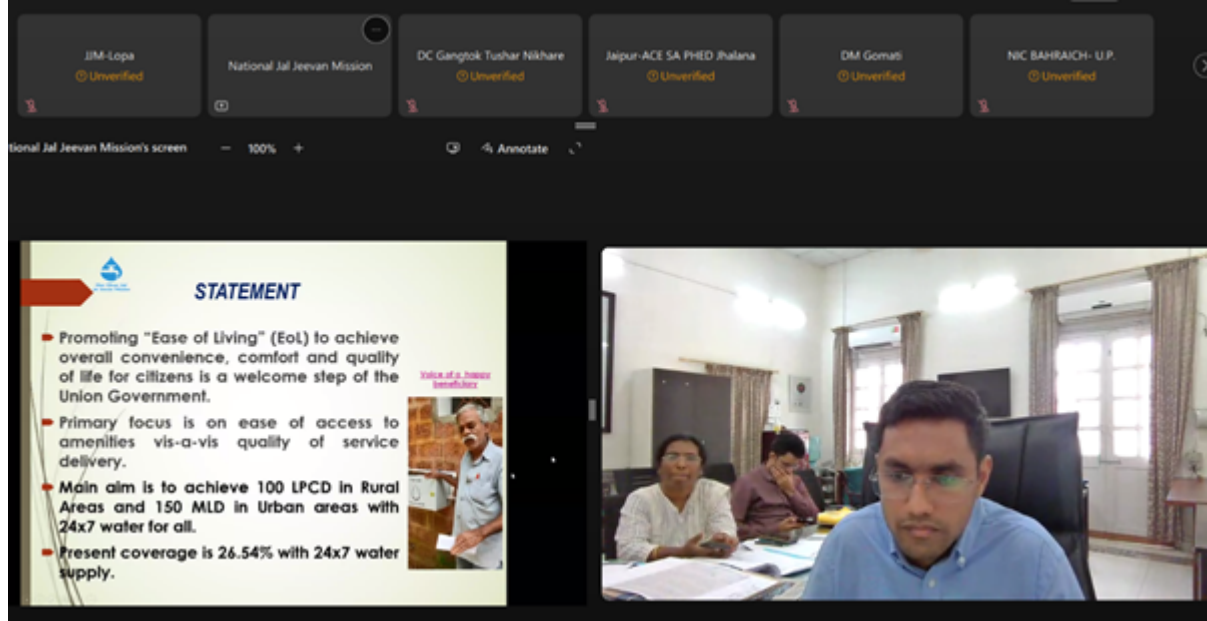
He highlighted that Gram Panchayats are to prepare **Lok Jal Utsav calendars**, allowing local events to be integrated into the overarching Jal Utsav framework. He emphasised that while the national Jal Mahotsav follows a fixed window, States and Gram Panchayats have been provided full flexibility to celebrate their respective Jal Utsavs according to local traditions and seasonal patterns. He reiterated that Jal *Utsav is not a centrally imposed programme*, but a **decentralised, culturally rooted, community-driven celebration** to strengthen public participation under Jal Jeevan Mission.

District Presentations

The following districts presented their progress and field practices. Each presentation was delivered by the respective District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner/ District Officials.

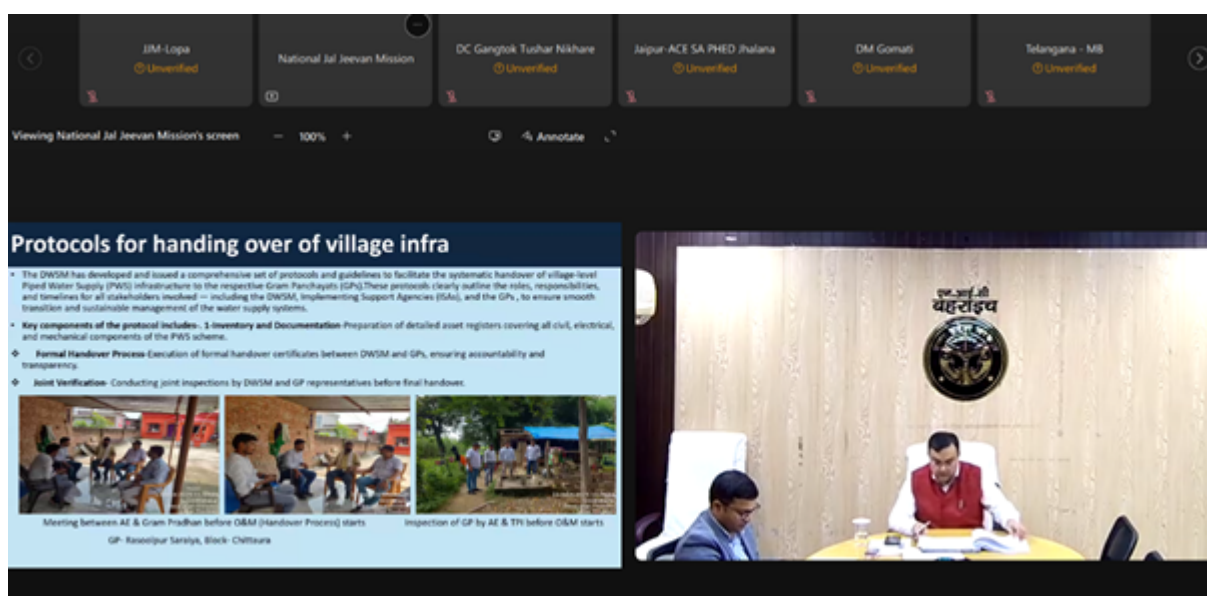


- **Gangtok, Sikkim:** Sh. Tushar G Nikhare, District Magistrate highlighted intensive efforts on **water source rejuvenation**, especially through **Dhara Vikas**, where recharge pits, trenches, and ponds are helping revive stressed springs. The district has leveraged **15th Finance Commission convergence**, strengthened source development, and introduced a monitoring system for quick leak and damage reporting. He shared that Gangtok is promoting community-led O&M through trained barefoot technicians, VWSC involvement and women's participation, supported by sensitisation campaigns. The **Upper Singbel** success story demonstrated how augmentation and community engagement restored a previously failing scheme, ensuring reliable tap connections and easing the burden on women and children. Going forward, the district aims to scale Dhara Vikas, strengthen O&M systems, and deepen community ownership to ensure sustained rural water supply.
- **North Goa, Goa:** Sh. Ankit Yadav, District Collector & Magistrate presented the district's technology-enabled model for inclusive drinking water service delivery. Goa has achieved **100% household access to safe drinking water** and was declared *Har Ghar Jal* in October 2020. The district provides **metered functional tap connections to every household**, ensuring uniform coverage across rural and urban areas. North Goa has adopted fully digital, real-time billing supported by **QR-code enabled payments**. North Goa is now transitioning toward a **Smart Water Utility**, introducing IoT-based real-time monitoring, SCADA integration for WTPs and STPs, and a unified mobile application offering citizen-centric services such as billing, leak reporting, new connections, and grievance redressal. These initiatives underscore the district's focus on modern, efficient, and accessible water governance.



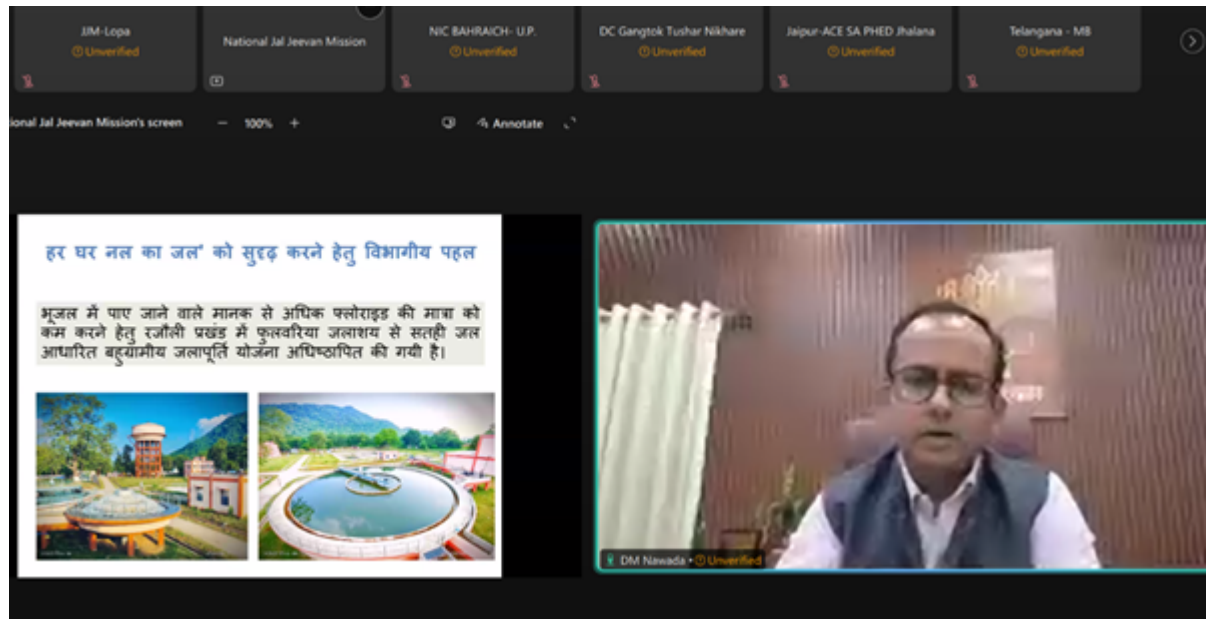
- Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh:** Sh. Akshay Tripathi, District Collector, highlighted strong institutional mechanisms led by DWSM, including **third-party inspections**, lab and field water testing, digital dashboards, and regular review meetings to ensure timely completion and quality assurance. The **IEC-driven community engagement**, with school WASH activities, village-level awareness sessions, and women-led FTK testing to strengthen behavioural change and water quality vigilance. The district has also institutionalized structured protocols for **village-level handover**, including joint verification, asset documentation, and capacity building of GPs and VWSCs for O&M.

The **district-level Call Centre for water supply monitoring**, functions as a single-point grievance platform and enables real-time oversight of supply hours, water quality complaints, and leakages. The district is also integrating **IoT-based sensors, smart flow meters, chlorine-residual sensors, and pressure loggers**, supported through SCADA-linked dashboards for continuous monitoring.

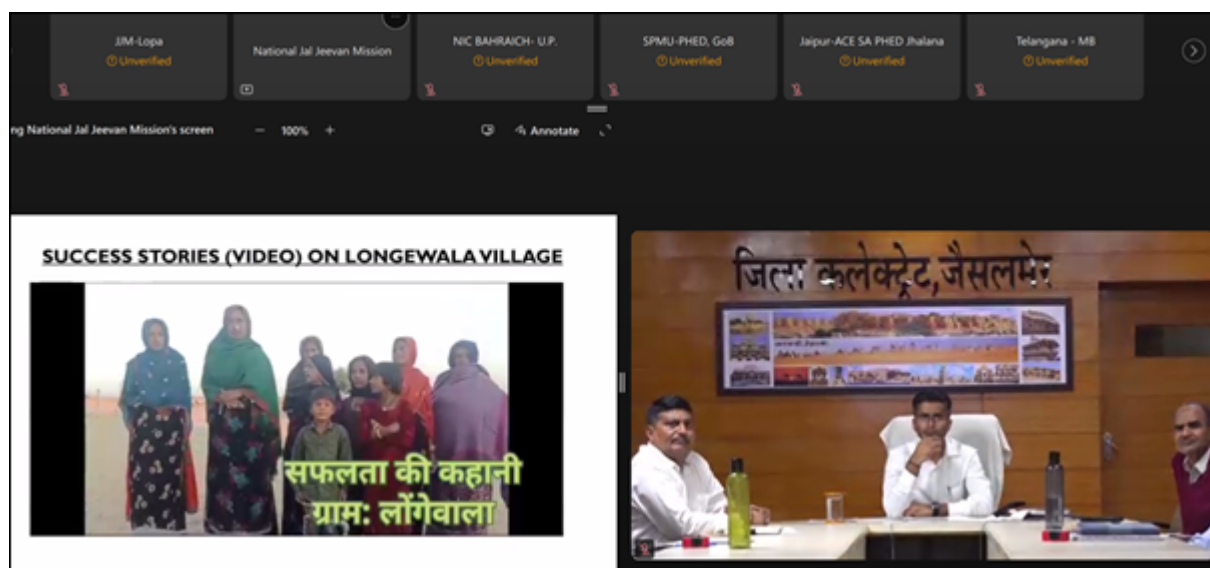


- Nawada, Bihar:** Sh. Ravi Prakash, District Magistrate, emphasized the use of **Peyjal App** for **real-time monitoring** of water supply, leak alerts, and quality testing updates, enabling close supervision of scheme functionality across villages. He also shared that **Jal Chaupal** is conducted monthly as a community platform to discuss tap connections, water quality, and usage practices, improving participation and awareness. Through the **Rajouli Multi-Village Surface Water Supply Scheme**, households in fluoride-impacted habitations now receive **treated, safe, fluoride-free water**, significantly reducing dependence on contaminated

groundwater and improving health outcomes. Strengthened water-quality surveillance, FTK testing in all Panchayats, and proactive repair mechanisms have further improved service reliability and public confidence.

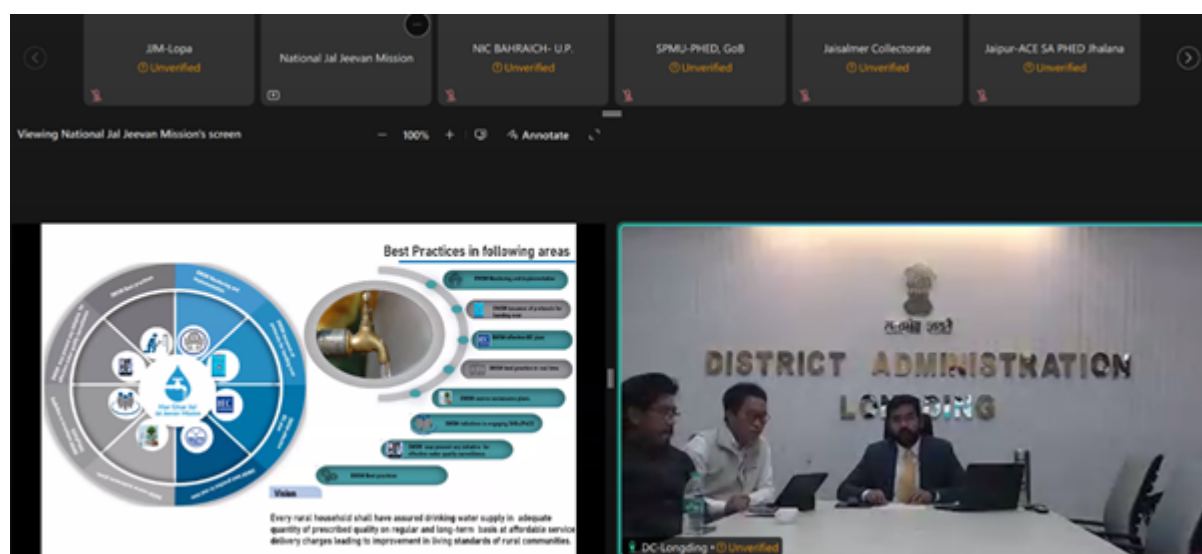


- **Jaisalmer, Rajasthan: Sh. Pratap Singh, District Collector** shared that the district is prioritising **source sustainability** through measures such as **rainwater harvesting**, **artificial recharge structures**, and conjunctive use of canal and groundwater to address its arid conditions. Village-level storage capacity is being increased to ensure buffer supply in water-stressed periods. He said that **traditional Tankas** are being revived and expanded through **dovetailing with Finance Commission grants and VB-G RAM G**, strengthening community-owned water harvesting systems. VWSC-led monitoring, leakage control, and groundwater awareness activities further support long-term water security in the district.



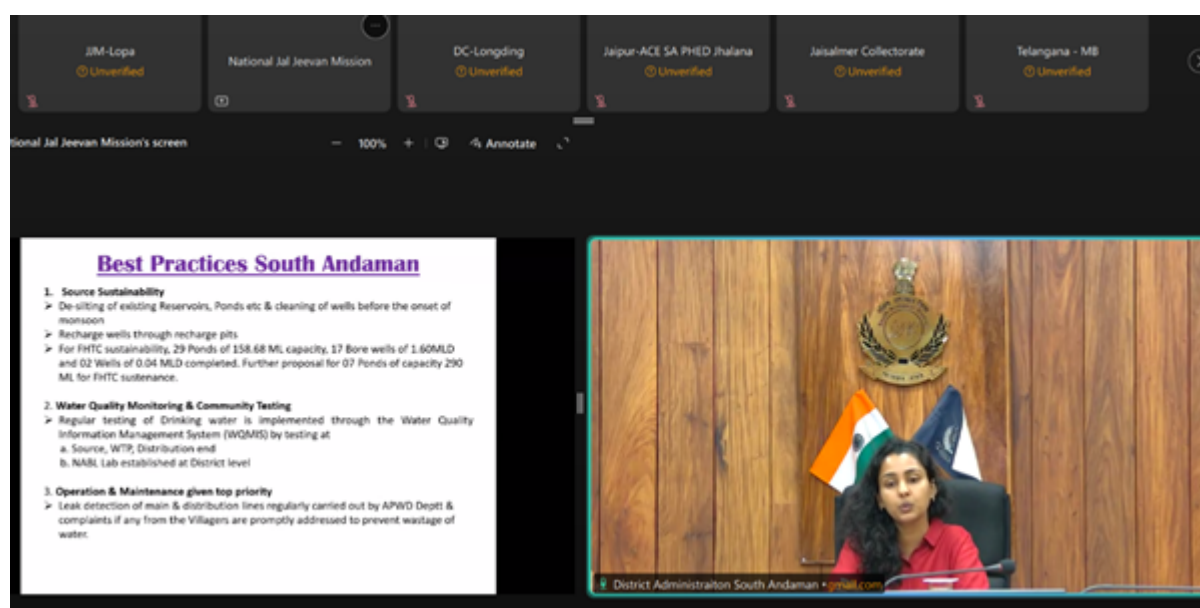
- **Longding, Arunachal Pradesh: Sh. Kunal Yadav, Deputy Commissioner** talked about the district's strong focus on **source sustenance** through extensive **rainwater recharge pit construction** at village catchment areas under convergence with **14th and 15th Finance Commission funds**, with villagers voluntarily identifying and protecting catchment zones under the state's Drinking Water Catchment Areas Act. Live exhibitions and IEC campaigns on **catchment protection and water recharge** have helped reinforce community awareness. In villages such as **Kaimoi**, **competitions among colonies** have significantly strengthened **community ownership of O&M**, tariff collection, and upkeep of water supply assets. These locally driven initiatives have not

only improved maintenance discipline but also built a sense of pride and stewardship among residents, contributing to the sustainability of water systems.



- **South Andaman, Andaman and Nicobar Islands:** Smt. Purva Garg, Deputy Commissioner shard the district's strong focus on **water security**, supported by extensive **source-sustainability measures** such as desilting reservoirs, cleaning wells, and constructing **29 ponds with a combined capacity of 158.68 ML**, along with recharge wells and borewells for long-term FHTC sustenance. The administration actively **sources ideas from communities**, especially through PRI consultations and DWSM meetings, which have led to solutions such as rejuvenation of local water sources, strengthening of check-weirs, and community-driven catchment protection.

South Andaman has introduced **water audits by school students**, using a standard assessment format to identify wastage and promote responsible water use. The district also conducts extensive IEC activities viz. awareness rallies, nukkad nataks, print media campaigns, and a unique '**Water Concert**' at **Marina Park** to build public consciousness around conservation. These community-driven and youth-led initiatives have significantly strengthened behavioural change and reinforced long-term water security across the district.



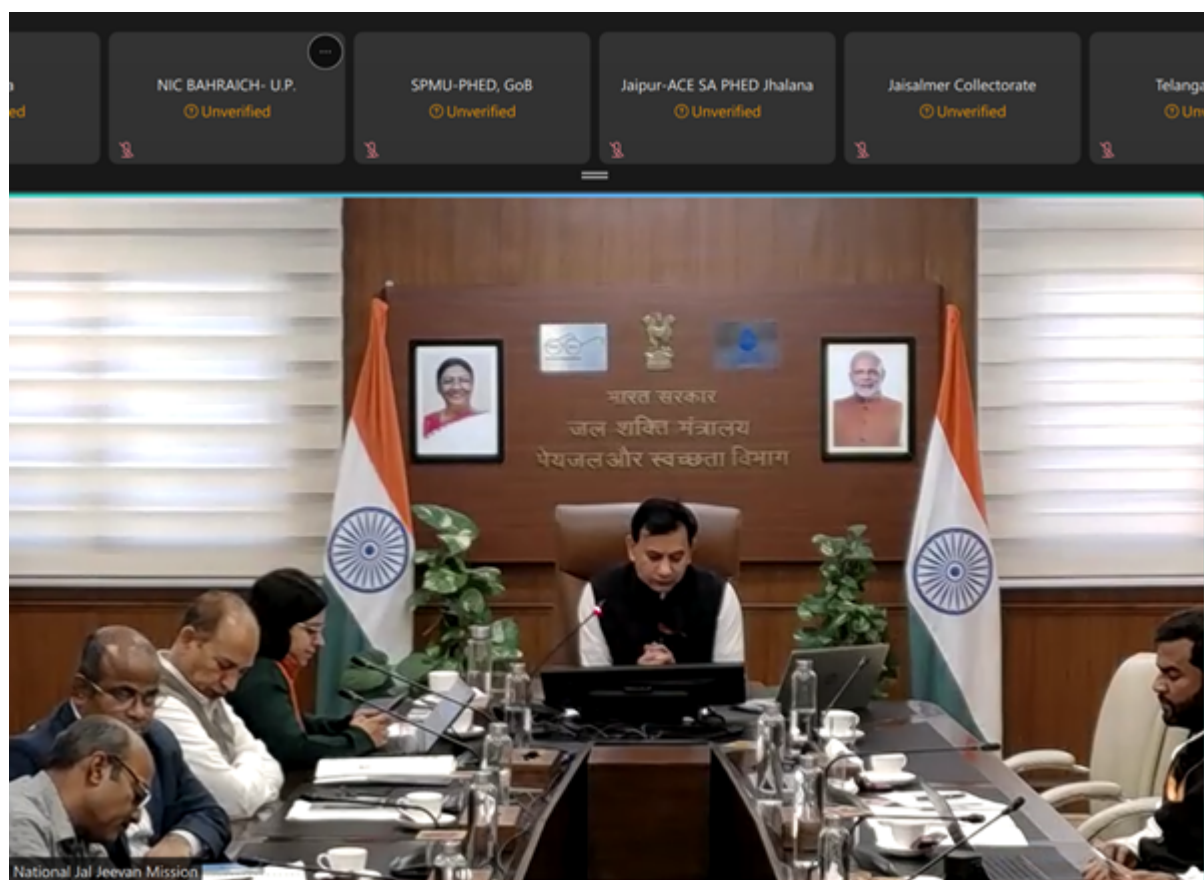
These presentations showcased both achievements and ongoing challenges, underlining the diversity of approaches adopted to accelerate progress under Har Ghar Jal.

In his concluding remarks, **Shri K.K. Soan, AS&MD - NJJM**, said the day's presentations had covered critical areas such as coverage, functionality, source sustainability, water quality, greywater management, desalination, and community ownership, and emphasized that the effectiveness of all these efforts ultimately rests on the leadership of District Collectors. He reiterated that at the cutting-edge level where national policies translate into services it is the District Collector who ensures functionality, accountability, and timely resolution of challenges.

He urged districts to make regular and active use of the **District Water & Sanitation Mission (DWSM) Dashboard**, which is now fully operational. He requested that DWSM meetings be held regularly every month with dashboard data reviewed beforehand and action points clearly recorded and followed up. He highlighted several priority areas requiring district attention, including **Jal Seva Aaklan, Jal Arpan, Jal Utsav** through community engagement, use of the Panchayat-level dashboard, capacity building of Panchayat Secretaries, and strengthening of engineering teams and ensure functional DTUs.

He further informed that **NITI Aayog** has been requested to review Jal Jeevan Mission progress during field visits of Central Prabhari Officers (CPOs), particularly for districts covered under the **Aspirational District Programme (ADP)** and **Aspirational Block Programme (ABP)**, CPOs will assess JJM progress during field visits and virtual interactions. He therefore urged districts to maintain up-to-date data, clear action plans, and evidence of field-level progress.

He stated that while substantial progress has been achieved, the next phase of the Mission requires deeper consolidation with a sharper focus on **functionality, sustainability, and community ownership**. He expressed confidence that with continued support and leadership from District Collectors and district authorities, the Mission will move forward with renewed strength and purpose.



The 6th edition of District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad was attended by participants across the country including District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner/ District Officials, Mission Directors and State Mission Teams, from State/UTs.

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