



9th India International Water Week 2026 Concludes with Focus on Climate-Resilient Water Management and Sustainable Water Services

**Shri C. R. Patil Calls for Collective Action to Strengthen
Climate-Resilient and Sustainable Water Management at
IIWW 2026**

**IIWW 2026 Brings Together Global Water Community to
Advance Innovation, Knowledge and Sustainable WASH
Solutions**

**India International WASH Conference Highlights Community-
Led Approaches, Digital Innovation and Stronger Institutions
for Sustainable Water Services**

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The 9th India International Water Week (IIWW) 2026 concluded today at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, with the Valedictory Ceremony chaired by Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C R Patil. Held from September 22–25 under the theme “Climate Resilient Water Management”, the deliberations brought together policymakers, government officials, international organisations, development partners, researchers, academia, industry, water-sector practitioners, innovators and young professionals to discuss emerging challenges and solutions for water security.

The valedictory session was graced by Ministers of State for Jal Shakti; Shri V. Somanna, Shri Raj Bhushan Choudhary, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Smt. Archana Varma, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga, Shri Rajeev Kumar Mital, AS & MD, NJJM, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Kamal Kishore Soan, Chairman, Central Water Commission, Shri Anupam Prasad, and Director General, National Water Development Agency, Shri Baleshwar Thakur.



Addressing the gathering, Shri C. R. Patil, Union Minister of Jal Shakti underscored that IIWW 2026 provided a platform for governments, experts, institutions, academia, industry and youth to deliberate on climate-resilient water management. He highlighted three key takeaways: people's participation in water conservation, taking science and technology to the ground, and strengthening international and institutional cooperation. Highlighting the Jal Jeevan Mission's impact since its launch in 2019, he said expanded access to household tap water has contributed to improved health, dignity and quality of life in rural communities, while reducing the time and effort spent by women in fetching water. Referring to a WHO assessment, he said that improved access to safe drinking water under the Mission has the potential to prevent a significant number of deaths among children and reduce the health burden associated with unsafe water. He stressed that the next phase of JJM must focus on ensuring adequate, regular, safe and sustainable drinking water services, with community participation, source sustainability and appropriate technology central to sustaining these gains.



Speaking at the Valedictory Ceremony, Shri V. Somanna, Minister of State, Ministry of Jal Shakti, said that water security fundamentally means ensuring a better quality of life through safe and reliable drinking water, sanitation, clean surroundings and effective wastewater management. Highlighting the transformation brought about by the Jal Jeevan Mission under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, he said the focus must now be on ensuring that drinking water services are safe, adequate, regular and sustainable. He underlined that drinking water, and sanitation must be addressed through an integrated approach, with safe management of greywater, wastewater and solid waste essential for protecting water sources and public health. He highlighted the progress under Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen, including ODF Plus and solid and liquid waste management, as an important foundation for this approach. He said the learnings from deliberations during the India International Water Week would translate into practical action towards sustainable, people-centric water services and the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.



Speaking at the event, Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Shri Raj Bhushan Choudhary, highlighted India's efforts towards climate resilient water resources management through irrigation development, modernisation of command areas, dam rehabilitation, groundwater management and recharge, river rejuvenation, river interlinking, flood management, hydrological forecasting, reservoir management and improved water information systems. He stressed timely completion and effective utilisation of water resources projects and emphasised that investments must ultimately translate into measurable outcomes for people, agriculture, the economy and ecosystems.

Addressing the Valedictory Session, **Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)** emphasised that climate resilience begins with water resilience. He highlighted the hydrological cycle as a global common good and described it as nature's most successful water management system. He stressed the collective responsibility to maintain this cycle and manage water in harmony with nature, with a focus on conserving, reusing and replenishing every drop of water to strengthen community resilience in the face of a changing climate. He further underscored that the long-term success of water programmes would depend on translating the knowledge and solutions discussed at IIWW into implementation and measurable outcomes on the ground.



The Brief Report and Important Recommendations of IIWW 2026 were presented by Shri Rajeev Kumar Mital, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga. The Water Week witnessed 7,224 delegates, 227 exhibitors and 119 paper presentations, with participation of two Partner Countries and 14 Partner States and Union Territories. The recommendations emerging from the seven thematic areas called for stronger and more participatory water governance, safe reuse of treated wastewater, deeper international cooperation, data driven governance, community led groundwater recharge, wider use of digital and emerging technologies, strengthened multi hazard early warning systems and river basin scale approaches for climate adaptation. He also emphasised innovative financing and enabling frameworks for public private partnerships, improved water use efficiency, sustainable sediment management, preservation of reservoir storage, scientific aquifer mapping, environmental flows and community led ecosystem-based water management.

An important component of IIWW 2026 was the **2nd India International WASH Conference 2026**, organised by DDWS in collaboration with the **Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee National Institute of Water and Sanitation (SPM-NIWAS), Kolkata**.

During the Valedictory Session, **Shri Kamal Kishore Soan, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, NJJM**, highlighted the outcomes of the Second WASH Conference, which brought together academic, research and field perspectives on water, sanitation and hygiene. He noted that 57 research papers were presented during the course of 4 days at the event, with additional papers presented at the **SPM-NIWAS**. He said the deliberations highlighted priorities including source sustainability, operation and maintenance, water quality, climate resilience, digital technologies, sustainable sanitation and zero-waste management. He emphasised that sustainable WASH outcomes require active community participation, alongside technical and institutional interventions, and highlighted the India–Africa Round Table as an important platform for knowledge exchange and continued cooperation.



The **India-Africa Roundtable on WASH**, organised by DDWS, witnessed participation from Ambassadors, High Commissioners and senior diplomatic representatives from **22 African countries**, alongside development partners and WASH-sector stakeholders. The Roundtable explored opportunities for cooperation in capacity building, water-quality surveillance, digital platforms, community-led approaches, climate-resilient infrastructure and exchange of implementation experiences.

The participation of young technical professionals was another feature of the Conference. In partnership with the **All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)**, more than **50 engineering students** participated in the WASH Conference, providing an opportunity to connect emerging technical talent with real-world challenges in water and sanitation.

A key highlight of the Valedictory Function was the release of **eight Capacity Building Modules developed under the Jal Jeevan Mission** for Gram Panchayat representatives, Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) members and Sujalam Shakti Group members. The modules were released by **Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C. R. Patil**.



The modules use relatable village situations to explain key aspects of rural drinking water service delivery: institutional roles and responsibilities, source sustainability and water quality, operation and maintenance, technology, community participation and climate resilience. The modules are aimed at strengthening the capacity of local institutions and community stakeholders to manage water services and sustain infrastructure over the long term.

The release of the modules comes as the Jal Jeevan Mission moves towards a greater emphasis on assured, reliable and sustainable service delivery, building on the significant expansion of rural drinking water infrastructure across the country.

The Valedictory Session reiterated the importance of collaboration across governments, communities, scientific institutions, development partners and the private sector in addressing India's evolving water challenges. The deliberations of IIWW 2026 reinforced the need for **evidence-based planning, technological innovation, institutional strengthening, climate-resilient infrastructure and community participation** to advance India's water-security goals.

The 9th India International Water Week concluded with a shared commitment to carry forward the knowledge, partnerships and solutions emerging from the four-day platform and strengthen collective efforts towards **water security, sustainable services and climate-resilient communities**.

During the Valedictory Ceremony, several important publications, reports, protocols and capacity building modules were released. These included two books by NERIWALM on emerging trends and advances in sustainable and efficient irrigation, the Protocol for Riverine Macroplastics Monitoring by the National Mission for Clean Ganga, capacity building modules under Jal Jeevan Mission, the Reports on the 1st Census of Major and Medium Irrigation Projects, 7th Minor Irrigation Census, 2nd Census of Water Bodies and 1st Census of Springs. The Irrigation Atlas developed by the Central Water Commission was also e-launched. Awards under various categories of the IIWW 2026 exhibition were also presented.

Earlier in the day 3 sessions were held as part of **IIWW 2026 with focus on Digital Transformation, Innovation and Stronger Water Governance**. At the centre of these conversations were three sessions convened by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS): “Digital Public Infrastructure in the Water Sector,” “Water Quality and Cost-Effective Technology,” and “Rural Water Supply Governance and Implementation Framework.” Together, the sessions brought diverse perspectives on digital public infrastructure, water-quality management, emerging technologies, research, governance and practical solutions for strengthening rural water services.

The session on “**Digital Public Infrastructure in the Water Sector**” brought together senior government, international and technology experts to explore how interoperable data, AI, geospatial technologies and citizen-centric platforms can transform water governance and service delivery. Chaired by Shri Kamal Kishore Soan, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, NJJM, and co-chaired by Mr. William Rex, World Bank, the session highlighted the vision of “**Water as One Data**”, with Sujalam Bharat positioned as the digital public infrastructure for rural drinking water. Discussions covered trusted and authenticated datasets, geospatial asset mapping, citizen feedback, Jal Seva Analytics, the Rural Data Stack and the evolution of sectoral DPI from foundational platforms such as Aadhaar, DigiLocker and UPI to applications supporting leakage detection, predictive maintenance and asset management.



In his opening remarks, Shri Kamal Kishore Soan highlighted that Digital Public Infrastructure is increasingly being recognised as an important foundation for delivering public services at scale. Drawing on India's experience with Aadhaar and UPI, he noted that common digital platforms can connect systems, support innovation and facilitate delivery of services to millions of citizens. He observed that the water sector presents a distinctive challenge as water services are closely linked with sources, infrastructure, institutions, geography and communities. With the Jal Jeevan Mission increasingly focusing on sustainable water services, improved governance and informed decision-making, the ability to connect and use data across these dimensions assumes greater significance.

Highlighting the broader vision of “Water as One Data”, Shri Soan stated that integrated data can strengthen planning, management and service delivery. Within this vision, Sujalam Bharat has been developed as the digital public infrastructure for rural drinking water. He emphasised that its significance lies not merely in digitising existing processes but in creating a common digital foundation on which future applications, analytical systems and decision-support capabilities can be developed. He stressed that the real value of DPI would not be determined by the volume of data generated, but by its ability to enable institutions to take better decisions and ultimately improve outcomes for citizens.



Speaking on the role of DPI in transforming the drinking water sector, Ms. Swati Meena Nayak highlighted the need to move beyond fragmented datasets and create an integrated, trusted and interoperable digital ecosystem. She noted that the drinking water sector already generates millions of data points through IoT devices, SCADA systems, field-level reporting and other digital platforms. The challenge is to ensure that these datasets are interoperable, authenticated, consistent and capable of supporting governance and policy decisions.



The session also explored how digital infrastructure can enable **more responsive, proactive and citizen-centric water services**. Ms. Sunita Jain highlighted Meri Panchayat for accessing water-service information and reporting issues through geo-tagged evidence, while Mr. Jean Martin shared Singapore's experience of advancing from SCADA and automation to GIS, smart metering, AI and digital twins. The session concluded with a demonstration of Google's Global Flood Hub, showcasing AI-enabled riverine and urban flash-flood forecasting. The discussions underscored that the value of DPI lies not merely in generating data, but in **connecting trusted information across systems and translating it into better decisions, proactive management and improved services for citizens**.



The second DDWS session, **Water Quality and Cost-Effective Technology**, brought together researchers and practitioners exploring innovations across water quality, ecological restoration, climate adaptation, groundwater assessment and water-sector instrumentation. Mr. Abhilash Tiwari presented a microalgae-based phytoremediation pilot that reported improvements in DO, BOD, COD, pH, biodiversity and odour, alongside carbon sequestration and lower operating costs. Mr. Suresh Sharma presented research on extensive green roofs, demonstrating increased rainfall retention and reduced peak runoff across different soil, biochar and manure configurations. The session also highlighted **microplastics as an emerging water-quality concern**, with Mr. Srinivas Bilakanti calling for stronger sampling, analytical and monitoring protocols.

Mr. Birendra Pratap presented borehole geophysical electrical logging as a cost-effective approach to assess basic groundwater-quality parameters such as EC, TDS and chloride where conventional sampling may be difficult. Dr. Muhammed Faisal Rahman highlighted the role of **IP testing** at CWPRS, Pune, in validating water-resource instrumentation exposed to environmental stresses. The discussion underscored how scientific innovation, appropriate monitoring and robust instrumentation can strengthen water-quality assessment, improve reliability of water-sector systems and support more sustainable resource management.

The session on **“Rural Water Supply Governance and Implementation Framework”** examined the shift under Jal Jeevan Mission from rapid infrastructure creation to **reliable, sustainable and accountable water-service delivery**.

Addressing the participants, **Shri Ashok K. K. Meena, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS)**, emphasised that with the substantial expansion of rural drinking water infrastructure under Jal Jeevan Mission, the focus is now shifting from asset creation to assured, reliable and sustainable service delivery. He highlighted the need to strengthen Gram Panchayats as local water-service institutions, supported by suitable service providers and robust O&M arrangements, so that rural households consistently receive safe and adequate drinking water. Underscoring the importance of community-led service assessment, he noted that initiatives such as Jal Seva Ankalan are enabling Gram Panchayats to evaluate service levels, identify gaps and prepare improvement plans through participatory processes. He further stressed the need to professionalise rural water services, strengthen source sustainability and climate resilience measures, leverage digital platforms for monitoring and accountability, and promote continuous capacity building and knowledge sharing. He stated that the ultimate success of JJM should increasingly be measured by the quality, reliability and sustainability of drinking water services and the ability of local institutions and communities to manage and improve them over time.



Speakers highlighted the central role of Gram Panchayats and Pani Samitis in operation and maintenance, supported by clear institutional responsibilities, financing mechanisms, service providers and capacity building. Discussions highlighted groundwater sustainability and source protection, climate-resilient planning, seasonal demand and the need for locally appropriate supply models. Madhya Pradesh's 2026 O&M rules were presented as an example of clarifying Gram Panchayat responsibilities, financial powers and institutional structures, while experiences from Gujarat and Bihar demonstrated the importance of community ownership, transparent tariff systems, professionalised services and digital tools for sustaining schemes.



The session also emphasised **continuous learning, data-driven governance and community-led assessment** as critical to long-term service outcomes. Initiatives such as eGram Seva, Avani and digital dashboards were highlighted for improving transaction visibility and enabling near real-time decision-making, while ECHO India's learning model demonstrated how practical, continuous and locally contextualised capacity building can strengthen problem-solving at the grassroots. The discussion on **Jal**

Seva Ankalan further highlighted the transition towards Gram Panchayats assessing and validating their own service levels, identifying gaps and developing improvement plans. Overall, the session underscored that the next phase of JJM will be defined not by the number of assets created, but by the **reliability, quality and sustainability of services, strengthened local institutions and the ability of communities to continuously assess and improve their water systems.**

The 9th India International Water Week (IIWW) 2026 concluded with a strong focus on the technologies, innovations and governance approaches that can shape the future of water management.

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