



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

A Drying India: Building Water Security

THE HINDU

4 July 2026

ENVIRONMENT

GS1

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotesFree UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →

ADVERTISE

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

epicbharat@gmail.com



A Drying India: Building Water Security

 **The Hindu**

4 July 2026

GS1
GS3

 Source: ujjyari.com — researched, fact-checked & UPSC-mapped

 **Every fact web-verified against primary sources** (<https://ujjyari.com/how-we-verify/>)

THE LIFT LINE

India's per-capita annual water availability has fallen from 5,177 cubic metres in 1951 to about 1,486 today, and is projected to touch roughly 1,367 by 2031. On the Falkenmark scale, the country is already water-stressed and edging toward scarcity, even as it remains the world's largest user of groundwater.

WHY THIS EDITORIAL MATTERS FOR YOUR EXAM

Water security cuts across geography, environment and economy, and is a recurring Mains theme touching agriculture, **federalism** (<https://ujjyari.com/terms/federalism/>) and climate.

GS Paper 1: Distribution of key natural resources; salient features of India's physical geography; monsoon and its variability.

GS Paper 3: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation; water resources and their management; issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies; cropping patterns and irrigation.

Prelims angle: Falkenmark thresholds, **CGWB** (<https://ujjyari.com/terms/cgwb-central-ground-water-board/>) **Dynamic Assessment**, Jal Jeevan Mission, Atal Bhujal Yojana, Ken-Betwa Link, National Perspective Plan.

Mains angle: Why groundwater overexploitation persists, the **MSP-power-paddy nexus** (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/nexus/>), and the case for demand-side water management.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Water stress is measured against the Falkenmark indicator: below 1,700 cubic metres per person per year is water-stressed, and below 1,000 is water-scarce. India, at about 1,486 and falling, is firmly in the stressed zone (source: Central Water Commission).

The pressure on groundwater is acute. India withdraws about 245 billion cubic metres (BCM) per year, roughly a quarter of all global withdrawals, making it the world's largest groundwater user. Groundwater meets about 80 per cent of drinking-water needs and about 64 per cent of irrigation. The CGWB Dynamic Assessment 2024 (released January 2025) put the overall stage of extraction at 60.47 per cent, with 751 assessment units (11.1 per cent) classified as over-exploited.

The 2026 monsoon forecast is below normal, at about 90 per cent of the Long Period Average, sharpening the concern.

THE CORE ARGUMENT / ISSUE

The demand side, not just the supply side

For decades, water policy meant building supply: dams, canals, tubewells. But the binding constraint now is demand. Agriculture consumes about 80 to 90 per cent of freshwater, and rice plus sugarcane alone account for over 60 per cent of irrigation water. Minimum Support Prices and free or subsidised power push water-guzzling paddy in already water-scarce Punjab and Haryana, a policy-driven distortion.

From infrastructure to service delivery

The Jal Jeevan Mission (Har Ghar Jal), launched on 15 August 2019, lifted rural tap coverage from about 17 per cent in 2019 to about 81.6 per cent. It has now been extended to December 2028 as “JJM 2.0” (Cabinet, March 2026), signalling a shift from building infrastructure to ensuring sustained service delivery, that is, functional, quality water at the tap, not just a pipe.

SCHEME	FOCUS	KEY FEATURE
Jal Jeevan Mission (2019)	Rural tap water	About 81.6 per cent coverage; JJM 2.0 to Dec 2028
Atal Bhujal Yojana (https://ujiyari.com/terms/atal-bhujal-yojana/) (2019)	Groundwater	7 states, 80 districts, 8,562 gram panchayats; World Bank-aided
Ken-Betwa Link (2024)	Interlinking	First project under National Perspective Plan; Daudhan Dam

The interlinking question

The Ken-Betwa Link is the first project under the National Perspective Plan for river interlinking, with its foundation stone laid on 25 December 2024. Its Daudhan Dam lies within the Panna Tiger Reserve, drawing significant environmental scrutiny, a reminder that supply augmentation (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/augmentation/>) carries ecological costs.

A note of caution on data: NITI Aayog's widely cited warnings that "600 million face water stress" and "21 cities may run out of groundwater" come from its 2018 Composite Water Management Index. They should be cited as that report's warning, not as a current, verified statistic.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT THIS (ANALYTICAL FRAME)

Think of water security as a stool with three legs: supply augmentation (dams, interlinking, recharge), demand management (crop diversification, efficient irrigation, pricing signals), and governance (community water-security plans, [aquifer](https://ujivari.com/terms/aquifer/)-level management). India has historically leaned heavily on the first leg. Atal Bhujal Yojana's 8,562 gram-panchayat community water-security plans represent the governance leg; JJM 2.0's service-delivery pivot strengthens it. True security needs all three legs level.

THE DIAGRAM IN WORDS

Imagine a bathtub with a wide-open tap (rainfall and imports) at the top and a large drain (agriculture, at 80 to 90 per cent of use) at the bottom. The water level (per-capita availability) is dropping because the drain runs faster than the tap fills. Recharge measures (Atal Bhujal, rainwater harvesting) add small inlets; demand management (crop shift away from paddy and sugarcane) narrows the drain. Only when the drain narrows does the level stabilise.

WAY FORWARD

- Realign incentives: reform MSP and power subsidies to reward less water-intensive crops in stressed regions; scale up "Per Drop More Crop" and micro-irrigation.
- Manage aquifers, not just wells: expand Atal Bhujal's participatory, aquifer-level planning nationally.
- Complete the JJM 2.0 pivot to measurable service delivery, with water quality and quantity metrics.
- Weigh interlinking projects against ecological costs; prioritise recharge and watershed treatment before large transfers.
- Prepare for a below-normal monsoon with [contingency](https://ujivari.com/vocab/contingency/) cropping advisories and reservoir management.

PYQ LINKAGE AND PRACTICE

Relevant PYQ threads: 2020 GS1 "How will the melting of Himalayan glaciers have a far-reaching impact on the water resources of India?"; 2013 GS3 on watershed management; 2016 GS3 on drought.

Practice question (15 marks, 250 words): “India’s water crisis is less about scarcity of rainfall and more about the mismanagement of demand.” Critically examine, with reference to groundwater extraction and cropping patterns.

Sources: *The Hindu* (<https://www.thehindu.com/>)

Source: A Drying India: Building Water Security — Ujjyari.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Editorial Analysis

RELATED DAILY ARTICLES

3 Jul **Tiger Conservation Roadmap Flags 25 Priority Reserves**

3 Jul **Assam's Borjuli Wetland: India's First Biodiversity...**

2 Jul **Monsoon 2026 Opens with a Rainfall Deficit Under El...**

1 Jul **Delhi Notifies Its Electric Vehicles Policy 2026**

Ujiyari Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · **Free Daily** Current Affairs for UPSC & State PCS

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/07/th-building-water-security-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → \[bharatnotes.com\]\(http://bharatnotes.com\)](#)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com