Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil launches 'Punah Bharan' app for groundwater-recharge planning; 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain' drive

History, Water, States, Environment & Science · 28 October 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/28



News

Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil launched the 'Punah Bharan' ('recharge') mobile app in New Delhi on 28 October 2026. It was developed by BISAG-N with the National Water Mission (NWM) and the Department of Water Resources, RD&GR. It identifies potential artificial-recharge zones within a 3-km radius of the user and suggests structures suited to local conditions. Its web portal offers village-level Artificial Recharge Structure (ARS) zonation maps and GIS tools, using rainfall, groundwater-level, groundwater-yield, slope and drainage data. It supports the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain' (JSJB: CTR) drive, under which over 1.58 crore artificial groundwater-recharge structures have been built (as of Sept 2026).

Key facts

App	Punah Bharan – 28 Oct 2026, New Delhi
Launched by	C.R. Patil, Union Jal Shakti Minister
Developed by	BISAG-N (Gandhinagar) + National Water Mission, DoWR
Feature	Recharge zones within 3 km; village-level ARS maps

JSJB	6 Sept 2024 – Surat (Gujarat), launched by PM; guided by '3Cs' – Community, CSR, Cost
Progress	JSJB 1.0 – 27 lakh+ (May 2025); JSJB 2.0 – 1.5 crore+ (May 2026); total 1.58 crore+ (Sept 2026)

Background

- Timeline: Ministry of Jal Shakti – May 2019; Jal Shakti Abhiyan – 1 July 2019 (1,592 water-stressed blocks in 256 districts); 'Catch the Rain' – 22 March 2021. In June 2026 JSJB was merged with Catch the Rain as 'JSJB: CTR'.
- Constitution: 'Water' (water supplies, irrigation, canals, drainage, embankments, storage) – Seventh Schedule, State List Entry 17, subject to Union List Entry 56 (inter-State rivers).
- Bodies: Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) – HQ Bhujal Bhawan, Faridabad (Haryana); National Water Mission – one of the eight missions of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC, 2008); BISAG-N – Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics, Gandhinagar.
- Science: artificial recharge sends rainwater into the ground to refill aquifers – through recharge pits, check dams, percolation tanks and by converting defunct borewells into recharge wells.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu was the first State to make rainwater harvesting compulsory in all buildings (2003). The 'Kudimaramathu' scheme to restore minor-irrigation tanks and lakes with farmers' participation was launched on 13 March 2017 by the Edappadi K. Palaniswami government ('kudi' = people, 'maramathu' = repair). The 'Thuli' rainwater-harvesting campaign was launched in Oct 2026.

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