Ahead of UN Water Conference 2026: UAE–India Water Roundtable

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News

Ahead of the 2026 UN Water Conference to be held in Abu Dhabi on 8–10 December 2026, the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in New Delhi convened a 'UAE–India Water Roundtable' (ANI, UAE Embassy release, 15 Nov 2026). UAE Ambassador to India Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi hosted it; Rajya Sabha MP Sujeet Kumar and representatives of the Centre for Policy Research, TERI, CSE, ORF, India Water Foundation, Bisleri and others took part. Discussions covered the water–energy–climate nexus, community-led approaches, desalination, wastewater treatment and reuse, water-use efficiency, climate-resilient infrastructure and financing. Calling water security 'a shared priority for the UAE and India', the Ambassador said UAE expertise and capital could work with Indian programmes on desalination, water reuse and financing at scale. Co-hosted by the UAE and Senegal, the conference is the third UN water conference after Mar del Plata (1977) and New York (2023), and the first co-hosted by two Global South countries. It aims to speed up Sustainable Development Goal 6 (water and sanitation for all) and will hold six interactive dialogues.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Event	UAE–India Water Roundtable – UAE Embassy, New Delhi
Host	UAE Ambassador Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi

Point	Details
UN conference	2026 UN Water Conference – Abu Dhabi, 8–10 Dec 2026
Co-hosts	UAE and Senegal
Series	Third: 1977 Mar del Plata, 2023 New York
Focus	SDG 6 – clean water and sanitation for all
Dialogues	People, Prosperity, Planet, Cooperation, Multilateral processes, Investment – 6
Topics	Desalination, wastewater reuse, efficiency, finance

Background

- UN water conferences: The first UN Water Conference, at Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 1977, adopted the Mar del Plata Action Plan. The second, in New York on 22–24 March 2023, co-hosted by the Netherlands and Tajikistan, produced the Water Action Agenda. In 2010 the UN General Assembly recognised safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right. World Water Day is 22 March.
- Water in the Constitution: 'Water' is Entry 17 of the State List, subject to Entry 56 of the Union List on inter-State rivers. Article 262 provides for the adjudication of inter-State river water disputes, under which the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 was enacted. The Ministry of Jal Shakti was formed in 2019, the year the Jal Jeevan Mission began.
- India–UAE ties: Relations were raised to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2017 and a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed in 2022. The UAE hosted the COP28 climate summit in Dubai in 2023. The Mohamed bin Zayed Water Initiative funds a USD 119 million XPRIZE on seawater desalination.
- World water report: On behalf of UN-Water, UNESCO's World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) publishes the UN World Water Development Report each year on World Water Day. SDG 6 aims to ensure safe water and sanitation for all by 2030.

Tamil Nadu link: Chennai is a pioneer in the seawater desalination discussed at the roundtable – its first large plant, of 100 MLD, opened at Minjur in 2010, followed by plants at Nemmeli, and a 400 MLD plant is being built at Perur. The Kaveri dispute with Karnataka went to the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (1990), set up under the Article 262 framework; after the 2018 Supreme Court verdict, the Cauvery Water Management Authority was formed.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Event: UAE–India Water Roundtable – UAE Embassy, New Delhi; Host: UAE Ambassador Abdulla Saif Al Nuaimi; UN conference: 2026 UN Water Conference – Abu Dhabi, 8–10 Dec 2026; Co-hosts: UAE and Senegal.

What is the background to this news?

UN water conferences: The first UN Water Conference, at Mar del Plata, Argentina, in 1977, adopted the Mar del Plata Action Plan.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. SDG 6, which the 2026 UN Water Conference seeks to accelerate, is about what?

A) Life below water

B) Clean water, sanitation

C) Climate action

D) Zero hunger

Answer: B – Explanation: SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation. Life below water is SDG 14; climate action SDG 13; zero hunger SDG 2.

2. Mar del Plata, host of the first UN Water Conference in 1977, is in which country?

A) Argentina

B) Chile

C) Uruguay

D) Spain

Answer: A – Explanation: Argentina – the Mar del Plata Action Plan. The second conference was in New York in 2023 (Netherlands, Tajikistan).

3. In the Seventh Schedule, 'Water' (water supplies, irrigation, canals, drainage, water storage) is an entry in which list?

A) Union List

B) State List

C) Concurrent List

D) Residuary powers

Answer: B – Explanation: State List, Entry 17 – subject to Union List Entry 56 (regulation of inter-State rivers). Article 262 lets Parliament provide for adjudicating inter-State river disputes (Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956).

4. Where is Chennai's first large seawater desalination plant (100 MLD, 2010) located?

A) Nemmeli

B) Perur

C) Minjur

D) Ennore

Answer: C – Explanation: Minjur (Tiruvallur district). Nemmeli plants followed; a 400 MLD plant is being built at Perur.

5. Which agency publishes the UN World Water Development Report on behalf of UN-Water?

A) UNEP

B) FAO

C) WMO

D) UNESCO

Answer: D – Explanation: UNESCO – through its World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), released each year on World Water Day (22 March).

Sources: ANI (UAE Embassy release, 15 Nov 2026); UN – indico.un.org/event/1025676 (8–10 Dec 2026, ADNEC Abu Dhabi); UN – sdgs.un.org/conferences/water2026; UAE MoFA (30 Oct 2026); UNESCO WWAP. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.