



Center for
Sustainable
Development Goals



Focus
Global
Reporter



INDIA WATER FOUNDATION'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026 EDITION

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Dear Readers,

Dr. Arvind Kumar
President
India Water Foundation

The world today stands at a defining moment, confronting what the United Nations has described as the triple planetary crisis: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. These are not isolated environmental challenges; they are deeply interconnected systemic threats that are reshaping economies, destabilising ecosystems, and increasingly influencing public health, food security, and social stability. The global policy discourse in 2026 has strongly reflected a growing realisation that solutions must be equally interconnected. Events, partnerships, and policy frameworks emerging across the world this year reveal a collective shift towards integrated sustainability, particularly through the lens of the Water–Energy–Health–Environment (WEHE) nexus.

This integrated thinking was vividly reflected during World Wetlands Day 2026, which reinforced wetlands as not merely ecological assets but as natural infrastructure sustaining water security, climate resilience, biodiversity, and community livelihoods. The global emphasis on traditional ecological knowledge resonated strongly with India's long-standing civilisational relationship with water ecosystems. India's continued expansion of its Ramsar network, now nearing one hundred internationally recognised wetlands, signals a strategic recognition that protecting wetlands directly contributes to climate adaptation, disaster resilience, groundwater recharge, and biodiversity conservation. Yet, the observance of World Wetlands Day also served as a reminder that urbanisation pressures, pollution, and hydrological disruptions continue to challenge ecosystem sustainability. The message was clear: ecological conservation must be embedded within development planning rather than treated as a parallel agenda.

This ecological consciousness seamlessly extended into the global economic and political dialogues at the World Economic Forum 2026 in Davos, where sustainability was no longer framed as a moral obligation alone but as a core pillar of economic resilience and geopolitical stability. India's engagement at Davos reflected its emergence as a key architect of sustainable growth narratives. Discussions centred on climate finance, resilient supply chains, green infrastructure, and digital innovation highlighted India's positioning as both a major growth engine and a critical partner in global sustainability transitions. Importantly, India emphasised that development pathways for emerging economies must remain inclusive while accelerating decarbonisation. The dialogues reinforced that climate action, economic growth, and social equity are increasingly converging rather than competing priorities.

This convergence was further reinforced during India Energy Week 2026, which positioned India at the centre of global energy transition discussions. The forum highlighted India's pragmatic approach pursuing energy security while steadily expanding renewable energy capacity and green fuel innovation. With massive projected investments in energy infrastructure and hydrogen ecosystems, India is attempting to strike a balance between development imperatives and decarbonisation commitments. The discussions also reflected a broader global recognition that the energy transition is fundamentally linked with water sustainability and public health outcomes. Cleaner fuels reduce pollution-related diseases, while improved energy infrastructure enhances water treatment, sanitation, and climate resilience. Thus, India Energy Week demonstrated that energy transition policies are increasingly being shaped through a multi-sectoral sustainability lens.

India's sustainability transition is also being strengthened through strategic economic diplomacy, particularly through the landmark India–European Union trade agreement. Beyond trade liberalisation, the agreement represents a structural integration of sustainability standards into economic cooperation. The partnership is expected to accelerate green technology transfer, strengthen clean manufacturing, and promote climate-aligned trade mechanisms. For India, the agreement opens opportunities to align industrial expansion with low-carbon supply chains, enhance renewable technology adoption, and attract sustainability-linked investments. By integrating environmental governance with economic architecture, the EU–India partnership underscores the growing global shift towards climate-conscious trade frameworks.

Parallel to this, the evolving India–United States trade and strategic cooperation framework further complements India's sustainability ambitions. The expanding partnership spans energy technology collaboration, supply chain diversification, advanced manufacturing, and clean energy investments. The agreement is expected to strengthen India's access to advanced technologies in sectors such as renewable energy, hydrogen, and aerospace innovation, while enhancing economic resilience. More importantly, the partnership reflects a shared understanding that economic stability and environmental sustainability must advance simultaneously, particularly in the context of global supply chain vulnerabilities and climate risks.

When viewed collectively, these developments illustrate a significant transformation in global governance thinking. Wetland conservation strengthens water resilience and biodiversity security. Energy transition initiatives accelerate climate mitigation and public health benefits. Trade agreements facilitate green technology transfer and sustainable industrialisation. Global economic forums create platforms for collaborative sustainability solutions. Each of these developments is no longer operating in isolation; rather, they form interconnected pillars of a broader sustainability framework.

India's evolving policy and diplomatic engagements suggest that the country is increasingly positioning itself as a bridge between environmental stewardship and economic development. By integrating ecological conservation, energy innovation, health security, and climate diplomacy, India is advancing a governance model that reflects the core philosophy of the Water–Energy–Health–Environment nexus. This integrated approach recognises that sustainable development cannot be achieved through sectoral silos, but through coordinated policy ecosystems that balance environmental integrity with inclusive growth.

As the world continues to navigate the uncertainties of the triple planetary crisis, the emerging global narrative offers cautious optimism. The convergence of conservation commitments, energy transitions, strategic trade partnerships, and multilateral cooperation signals a growing acknowledgement that sustainability is not merely an environmental agenda but a comprehensive development paradigm. The real challenge ahead lies in sustaining momentum, ensuring equitable transitions, and translating policy commitments into measurable ground-level impact.

AN EXCLUSIVE

INTERVIEW WITH

**MS. MADHUSHREE CHATTERJEE, SECRETARY, UN-WATER & CHIEF,
NATURAL RESOURCES AND INTERLINKAGES BRANCH, UN DESA**

In a thought-provoking interview, Ms Madhushree Chatterjee, Secretary, UN-Water & Chief, Natural Resources and Interlinkages Branch, UN DESA shares with Dr Arvind Kumar, Editor, Focus Global Reporter a comprehensive perspective on how water has evolved from a sectoral concern to a central pillar of global sustainable development. Drawing from her extensive experience within the UN system, she reflects on the transition from the WASH focus to the integrated, nexus-driven approach of the SDGs, positioning water as a critical connector across poverty reduction, food security, energy, gender equality, climate resilience, and economic growth.

Ms. Chatterjee discusses the operational impact of the UN System-wide Strategy on Water and Sanitation, efforts to break institutional silos, and the persistent challenges of data gaps under SDG6, particularly in the Global South and Small Island Developing States. The interview also offers deep insights into the Blue Economy, sustainable ocean governance, resilience building for SIDS, and the future of water in the post-2030 development agenda. As the world approaches 2026, a pivotal year for global water governance, she underscores the indispensable role of civil society, NGOs, and the private sector in translating global commitments into measurable, on-ground impact.



READ HERE



ANALYSIS OF 2025-2026 UNION BUDGET

Union Budget 2026–27 signals continuity in social-sector and green spending, but still falls short of the scale needed for a climate-resilient, healthy and inclusive “Viksit Bharat”. The headline message is incremental strengthening of water, health and rural development, with a more mixed picture on environment and energy.

On environment, the allocation for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change rises about 8% to ₹3,759 crore, but remains modest given India’s ecological and climate risks. Funding for the National Mission for Green India has more than doubled to about ₹212 crore, and Project Tiger/Elephant funding has also increased, signalling support for forests and biodiversity. However, the Control of Pollution programme has been cut from ₹1,300 crore (RE 2025–26) to ₹1,091 crore, even as urban air quality continues to be a public health emergency. This creates a tension between ambitious climate narratives and thin core environmental capacity.

Water and rural water security see a significant course correction. After last year’s steep under-spending, allocations for the Jal Jeevan Mission have been restored to roughly the pre-cut level, with about ₹68–70,000 crore earmarked for rural drinking water. The focus now clearly shifts from laying pipes to service reliability, source sustainability and community-managed operation and maintenance, with digital and AI-based monitoring to reduce leakages and failures. This is positive for rural resilience, but the Budget still underplays urban water security, wastewater treatment and flood management, which are central to climate adaptation.

Energy provisions send mixed signals on the transition. A ₹5,000-crore increase for the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana strengthens rooftop solar and decentralised renewables, while higher support for bioenergy, battery and solar glass manufacturing and critical minerals aims to localise clean-energy supply chains. At the same time, allocations for transmission and storage fall to ₹600 crore from ₹800 crore, and support for electric mobility remains tepid, risking bottlenecks in integrating high shares of renewables. Large outlays for coal gasification, CCUS (including a ₹20,000-crore CCUS package) and nuclear expand India’s low-carbon options but raise concerns about cost-effectiveness and lock-in.

Health is a relative winner. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare receives about ₹1.05–1.06 lakh crore, nearly a 9–10% rise over the previous year’s revised estimates.

The National Health Mission gets ₹39,390 crore, reinforcing primary care, maternal and child health and disease control, while the PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission jumps to ₹4,770 crore to upgrade district hospitals, critical-care blocks and labs. PM-JAY's ₹9,500-crore allocation, higher funding for ICMR and health research, and push for digital health and allied health professionals together strengthen the preventive–curative continuum and are crucial for climate-sensitive disease burdens.

Rural development architecture is being fundamentally redesigned. The new VB-G RAM G scheme receives about ₹95,692 crore and becomes the single largest component of the Rural Development Ministry's ₹1.94-lakh-crore budget, while MGNREGA is scaled down to ₹30,000 crore. VB-G RAM G promises 125 days of work and explicitly anchors employment in durable assets for water security, climate-resilient agriculture, rural infrastructure and disaster-related works, with a strong emphasis on outcome-oriented, climate-linked assets.

Overall, Budget 2026 modestly advances the environment–water–energy–health–rural nexus: stronger health systems, restored water allocations and an asset-focused rural jobs programme are clear positives. Yet underpowered pollution control, uneven energy-transition support and still-small core environmental spending suggest that India is upgrading its social infrastructure faster than its ecological safeguards. For a truly climate-resilient, water-secure and healthy rural India, future budgets will need to scale up green investments and align fiscal signals more consistently with net-zero and adaptation goals.





REPORT ON WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM 2026

The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2026, held in Davos, Switzerland, brought together global leaders from governments, international organisations, industry, academia, and civil society to deliberate on the most pressing challenges shaping the future of humanity. The 2026 meeting was strongly anchored in rebuilding global trust, strengthening multilateral cooperation, and accelerating collective action across climate resilience, sustainable development, digital transformation, and inclusive economic growth. A central theme of the discussions was the recognition that fragmented global responses are inadequate to address interconnected systemic risks such as climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, geopolitical instability, and widening economic inequalities.

A major focus of the Forum was sustainability-driven transformation, with climate action, water security, energy transition, and resilient infrastructure identified as foundational pillars of future development. Global leaders emphasised the urgent need to shift from policy commitments to implementation, highlighting scalable solutions, cross-border partnerships, and innovative financing mechanisms to accelerate progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Water security emerged as a critical global priority due to its close linkages with climate adaptation, food security, urban resilience, and public health, reinforcing the importance of integrated water resource management and nature-based solutions.

The Forum also highlighted the transformative role of technology and innovation in enabling sustainable transitions. Digital governance, artificial intelligence, data-driven policymaking, and green technologies were recognised as key enablers for improving infrastructure efficiency, strengthening resource management, and enhancing governance transparency. Equally important was the focus on inclusive growth, ensuring sustainability transitions generate equitable benefits for vulnerable populations and developing economies, particularly across the Global South.



REPORT ON INDIA ENERGY WEEK 2026

India Energy Week 2026 (IEW 2026), held from 27–30 January 2026 at the ONGC Advanced Training Institute, Goa, served as a strategic platform reinforcing India's leadership in shaping the global energy transition. The event convened policymakers, global energy leaders, financial institutions, technology innovators, and multilateral organizations to advance dialogue on energy security, sustainability, and inclusive growth.

At a time of accelerating climate challenges and geopolitical uncertainty, IEW 2026 highlighted India's commitment to balancing energy access, affordability, sustainability, and security. The discussions reflected a pragmatic transition approach one that aligns decarbonization goals with economic development, industrial competitiveness, and social equity. Emphasis was placed on integrated energy planning, recognizing the interlinkages between power systems, hydrocarbons, renewables, hydrogen, mobility, digital infrastructure, and resource governance.

A central theme of the forum was energy resilience and national security, with focus on diversification of supply chains, domestic manufacturing, indigenous innovation, and strategic infrastructure development. Clean energy technologies including renewables, green hydrogen, energy storage, sustainable fuels, and digital solutions were positioned not only as climate imperatives but as engines of long-term economic transformation and employment generation.

For the India Water Foundation (IWF), IEW 2026 carried particular relevance through the growing recognition of the energy–water–climate nexus. The interdependence of energy systems with water security, ecological sustainability, and climate resilience emerged as a critical governance priority. The forum reinforced the importance of integrated policy frameworks that align energy planning with environmental stewardship and resource sustainability.

Overall, India Energy Week 2026 strengthened India's position as a global convener of energy dialogue and a driver of sustainable development. Its outcomes provide a strong foundation for advancing coordinated strategies that integrate energy security, climate action, water sustainability, and resilient governance core priorities for IWF's long-term strategic engagement.



VIDEO MESSAGES

World Wetlands Day 2026

On World Wetlands Day 2026, Dr Arvind Kumar, President India Water Foundation highlights why wetlands must be recognised as strategic natural infrastructure central to **India's water security, biodiversity, livelihoods, nutrition, climate resilience, and cultural heritage**. This year's theme, **Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage**, reminds us that community-led wisdom, integrated with modern science and policy, offers scalable solutions for sustainable development. As India reaches 98 Ramsar Sites, the call is clear: protect wetlands not just as ecosystems, but as foundations of economic resilience and human well-being



30-Day Countdown to the Water Transversality Global Awards & Conclave 2026 Begins



Dr. Arvind Kumar, President and Founder of the **India Water Foundation**, invites global leaders, policymakers, industry partners, researchers, and practitioners to unite at the **Second Edition of the Water Transversality Global Awards & Conclave**.

Set against the backdrop of the triple planetary crisis the Conclave will champion **ESG Transversality** to advance a **sustainable Water–Energy–Health – Environment Nexus**. The focus moving from dialogue to decisive action through policy innovation, collaborative governance, and scalable, real-world solutions



HYDRO International 2025

The conference intends to provide a platform to water resources professionals, academicians and young researchers to discuss and share their ideas. The conference mainly aims at providing a forum for the dissemination of recent contributions from academicians, scientists, researchers, practitioners and consultants in the fields of hydraulics, hydrology, water resources and coastal engineering.



The Indian Society for Hydraulics (ISH) is a technical, educational, non-profiteering national organization, established in 1992 to serve as a common platform for engineers, scientists and technical personnel working in hydraulics and other allied fields.



Tracking progress on food and agriculture-related SDG indicators 2025

This report provides an analysis of regional and global figures and trends for the 22 SDG indicators under FAO's responsibility, thus fulfilling one of FAO's key roles as custodian agency. The world is at a moderate distance from achieving roughly half of the food and agriculture-related SDG indicators under FAO custodianship; one-quarter of the indicators are close to being achieved, whereas another quarter remains far or very far from being achieved. Meanwhile, progress since 2015 has deteriorated on over three-fifths of the indicators; one indicator has stagnated; whereas only the remaining one-third of indicators have registered an improvement or slight improvement.

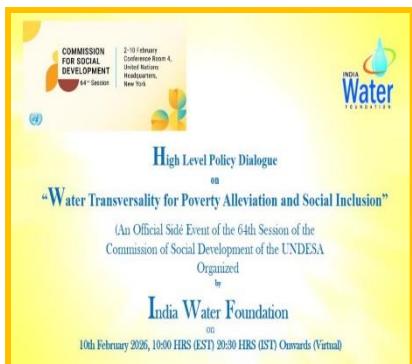


EVENT ALERT!



Join us for the **2nd Water Transversality Global Awards & Conclave 2026**, a two-day conference on “*ESG Transversality for Sustainable Water, Energy, Health and Environment Nexus.*” This landmark event will explore ESG integration, the Water-Energy-Health & Environment Nexus, global collaboration, and innovations driving carbon neutrality. Don’t miss this convergence of policy, industry, and sustainability leadership.

[Please click here for more information.](#)



High-Level Policy Dialogue on Water Transversality for Poverty Alleviation and Social Inclusion

The dialogue will underscore water as a cross-cutting enabler of social development, livelihoods, health, food security, climate resilience, and human dignity, highlighting its pivotal role in addressing multidimensional poverty and social exclusion. By bringing together policy leaders and experts, the session aims to demonstrate how integrated and inclusive water governance can accelerate progress on SDG 6 and the broader 2030 Agenda, ensuring that no one is left behind.

SUCCESS STORIES



Floating Solar Panels? How They're Lighting up Homes & Saving Billions of Litres Across India

It's early morning at the Ramagundam reservoir in Telangana's Peddapalli district. The water is still, broken only by the occasional ripple of a passing bird. From the shore, you see something unusual — thousands of gleaming blue panels stretching far into the distance, quietly soaking up the sun.

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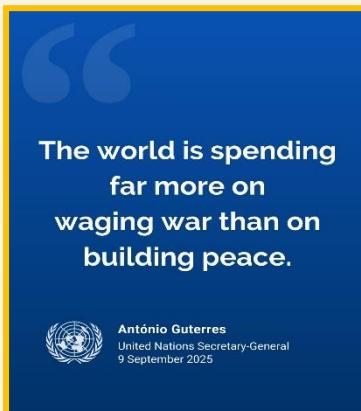


It's 3-4 Degrees Cooler Inside': This Gorgeous Sustainable Home is Surrounded by Mango Trees

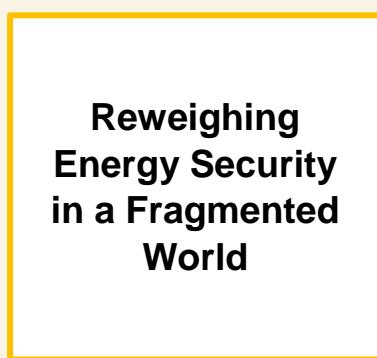
Designed by Shriya Parasrampuria and Prashant Dupare of Blurring Boundaries, this home is surrounded by five mango trees. Built using upcycled tiles, marble, and locally sourced bricks, the house exemplifies sustainable living.

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FRIDAY BLOGS



People First or Nation First: Mantra for New World Order?



A Call to Re-energise ESG Ecosystem



INVITATION TO JOIN DIRECT MEMBERSHIP

At the India Water Foundation (IWF), we're more than just a network—we're a movement. By becoming a member, you join hands with individuals, organizations, and institutions passionate about sustainability, environmental conservation, and driving meaningful change.

Why Join Us?

We're committed to creating opportunities for every member to make a real impact. Here's what we offer:

- Shape Policies with Us: Be part of advocacy efforts that influence sustainable development strategies.
- Learn and Grow Together: Attend our exclusive workshops and training programs, designed to keep you at the forefront of innovation.
- Connect with Change-makers: Collaborate with a global network of experts, innovators, and leaders.
- Make a Grassroots Impact: Help us drive community-led projects that promote resource efficiency and environmental resilience.
- Be Recognized for Your Efforts: Let us celebrate your contributions through awards, features, and event opportunities.

Who Can Join?

We welcome everyone who shares our vision, including: Companies, institutions, and organizations of all sizes, NGOs, government bodies, and Intergovernmental organizations

Individuals—from young professionals to retirees, who want to create positive change

Whether you're a policymaker, innovator, or community advocate, there's a place for you here!

JOIN NOW



**IWF Direct
Membership!**

We are stronger together



Learn more about joining
India Water Foundation
Membership by scanning
QR code below



INVITATION TO JOIN SOCIAL OUTREACH MEMBERSHIP

Our Special JalMitra Social Outreach Membership

The JalMitra outreach program encourages sustainable living practices by promoting sustainable conservation and restoration projects. The campaign fosters awareness and behavioural change at the grassroots level, enabling communities to adopt environmentally responsible lifestyles that reduce ecological footprints and contribute to national and global sustainability goals.

Anyone can join this collective effort and become a Jal Mitra free of cost.

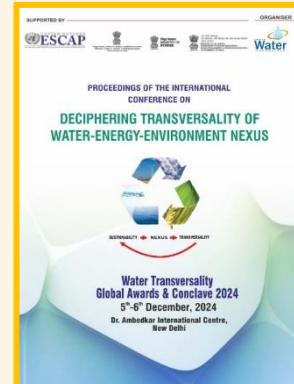
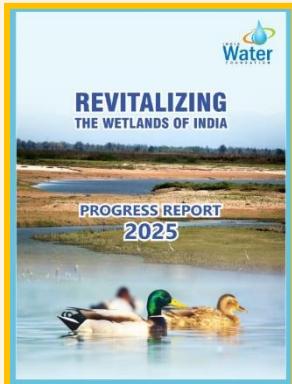
How to Join?

Take the first step today! Visit [Become an IWF Member](#) to apply and join this transformative movement. Together, let's shape a sustainable future!

<https://indiawaterfoundation.org/jal-mitra/>



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS



LEARNCASTS

Global minimum tax: Understanding the Side-by-Side package

Webinar

Date

11 Dec 2024

Time

16:00-17:00

Location

Virtual

[Register here](#)



[Learn more and register](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **16–18 Feb: WBCSD India Connect at Mumbai Climate Week 2026.** In Mumbai, India, this event catalyzes citizen-driven climate action focusing on food systems, energy transformation, urban resilience, and corporate sustainability partnerships.
<https://www.wbcsd.org/events/wbcsd-india-connect-at-mumbai-climate-week-2026/>
- **17–19 Feb: GreenBiz 26.** Leading sustainability conference in Phoenix, AZ, USA, convening executives for strategies on de-carbonization, circularity, ESG disclosure, nature-positive solutions, and net-zero transitions.
<https://www.greengb.com/article/esg-events-in-2025-important-dates-for-your-calendar>
- **24–28 Feb: International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD+20).** To be held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, this forum advances rural development, land reform, food security, and sustainable agriculture policies.
<https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/news-dates-for-major-environmental-negotiations/>
- **25–27 Feb: High-Level Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 UN Water Conference.** Hosted in Dakar, Senegal, this meeting advances preparations for the 2026 UN Water Conference and its six themes on accelerating SDG 6, cross-sectoral water action, and finance and governance for water and sanitation.
<https://www.unwater.org/news/2026-united-nations-water-conference-preparatory-meeting>
- **26–28 Jan: World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2026.** Silver jubilee edition in New Delhi, India, under the theme "Transformations: Vision, Voices, and Values for Sustainable Development," uniting leaders on SDGs, climate action, energy transitions, and global partnerships.
<https://www.footprint-intelligence.com/blog/20-biggest-sustainability-conferences-2026>
- **28 Feb – 2 Mar: International Conference on Environment and Renewable Energy (ICERE 2026).** Scheduled in Nha Trang, Vietnam, ICERE focuses on renewable energy innovation, environmental sustainability, low-carbon technologies, and green infrastructure development.
<https://icwmr.terias.ac.in/index.php/IRIS-2026/about>
- **06 – 07 March: Water Transversality Global Awards and Conclave 2026.** The event will spotlight India's growing ESG leadership in balancing energy access with decarbonisation goals, highlighting strategic investment opportunities, breakthrough technologies and enabling global partnerships that are shaping the next era of water energy health environment nexus progress.
<https://iwatertransversalityawards.com/>

IWF e-newsletter is a monthly compilation of news items on IWF-related issues in the domain of Water, Agriculture, Climate Change, SDGs, inclusive development and Water Resources Management that might be of interest to the IWF fraternity. The information contained in the NEWSLETTER does not purport to be exhaustive and is taken "as it is" from external sources and is freely available on the internet. No evaluation on the part of the IWF Office is being made in terms of the authenticity of the information that it may contain. IWF Office makes no guarantee, either express or implied, as to the accuracy of the information published. Your valuable feedback on the usefulness of the bulletin is solicited at <contact@indiawaterfoundation.org>.

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