

# MONTHLY UPDATES

AUGUST 2026





### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



**Dr. Arvind Kumar**  
President  
India Water Foundation

**Dear Readers,**

The first seven months of 2026 have offered little room for complacency, and less for comfortable compartmentalisation. What began as separate storylines; a warming atmosphere, a fracturing geopolitical order, a hesitant global economy have by mid-year fused into a single, self-reinforcing condition. It is no longer accurate, or useful, to speak of a climate crisis, a security crisis and an economic crisis as though they occupy different chapters of the same book. Increasingly, they are the same chapter, written in the same hand.

Europe's summer this year did not simply break records; it rewrote the register by which records are kept. Bordeaux recorded its hottest day in more than a century of measurement in late June, as hundreds of French weather stations passed 40°C and many climbed past 44°C. June 2026 became the hottest June ever recorded across Western Europe, with more than a dozen countries setting new national highs and some locations running as much as 8°C above the 1991–2020 average.

Layered onto this warming baseline is a newly declared El Niño, with forecasters placing the odds of its persistence through the end of the year above 90 percent. El Niño does not create heat on its own; it amplifies whatever the climate system is already producing, redistributing moisture and warmth in ways that can simultaneously intensify droughts in one region and trigger destructive flooding in another. For a country like India, whose economy, food security and public health remain bound to the rhythm of the monsoon, this is not an abstract risk. It is a live one.

India's own experience this year is a microcosm of the transversal challenge the Foundation has long argued must define policy thinking. A delayed and deficient monsoon left rainfall roughly a fifth below the long-period average through most of the season, with eastern and north-eastern India recording the sharpest shortfalls. National groundwater indicators have, for now, held largely steady the great majority of monitored wells remain within normal range but that stability conceals acute regional stress: extraction in Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana continues to exceed natural recharge by well over a third, a slow-motion depletion that a single good monsoon cannot reverse and a single poor one can sharply worsen. Hydrologists have been candid that each weak monsoon draws down a buffer built over decades, and that the true cost of this year's shortfall may only become visible months from now, as reservoirs, sowing patterns and rural incomes register the delay. This is the essence of water bankruptcy at the local scale: not a single dramatic failure, but the quiet exhaustion of a reserve that societies had assumed would always refill.



Where the climate system is being pushed past thresholds, the international order is undergoing its own version of the same process. The outbreak of open conflict in the Middle East earlier this year has done what years of trade friction alone could not: it has forced the International Monetary Fund to revise its global growth outlook downward and its inflation outlook upward in the same breath, citing rising commodity prices and tightening financial conditions as the direct transmission channels from battlefield to household budget. Alongside this, the war in Ukraine continues largely unresolved, as in the current calibrated distance between Washington and Beijing, the prevailing description offered by risk analysts is not stability but an unsettled interregnum: an old order dismantled faster than a new one can be built.

Global growth forecasts for 2026 cluster in a narrow, unglamorous band, the IMF near 3.1 percent, the United Nations nearer 2.7 percent figures that count as "resilient" chiefly because they are not worse, and that sit well below pre-pandemic norms. That resilience is also strikingly uneven. Economies plugged into artificial intelligence-driven technology investment are being lifted; energy-importing and conflict-adjacent economies are being weighed down by the same war shock rattling the geopolitical picture. Tariff regimes negotiated, paused and renegotiated over the past year continue to reshape supply chains, dampen European export growth in strategic sectors such as autos and steel, and complicate central banks' efforts to bring inflation home to target. None of this is separable from the climate and water picture: heat stress degrades labour productivity and crop yields; water-driven disruptions to agriculture feed directly into food price inflation; and disaster losses from wildfire to flood are increasingly priced not as one-off shocks but as a recurring line item in national budgets and insurance markets alike.

This is why the India Water Foundation continues to insist that water is not merely one sector among many competing for policy attention, but the connective tissue running through nearly all of them. Water security cannot be separated from food security; food security cannot be separated from social stability; social stability cannot be separated from the capacity of institutions to plan beyond the next election cycle or the next monsoon. The gender dimension the UN's own reporting highlights this year — the hours women and girls lose each day to water collection — is a reminder that these are not only technical failures but failures of inclusion, whose costs fall unevenly and whose solutions must therefore be deliberately equitable, not merely efficient.

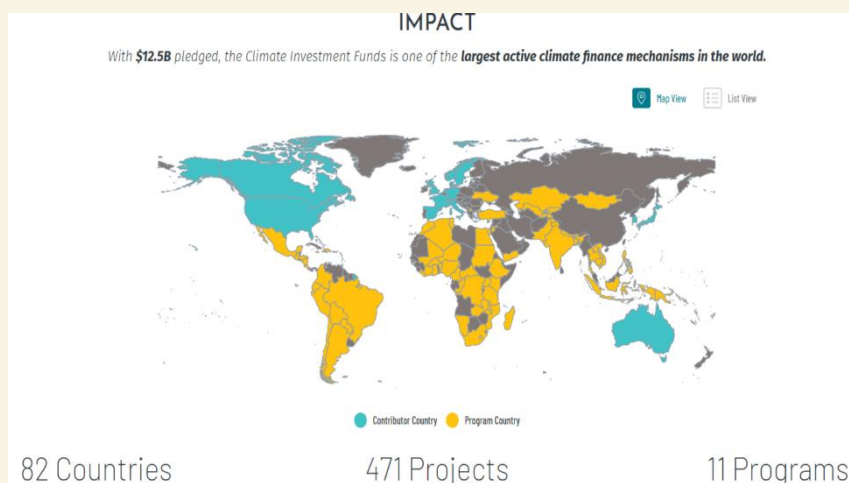
The closing months of 2026 offer two consequential tests of whether the world's institutions can act on this interconnected understanding rather than merely describe it. In November, COP31 convenes in Antalya, Türkiye, carrying forward unfinished business from Belém on the fossil-fuel transition and climate finance. In December, the 2026 UN Water Conference — only the second dedicated global water summit this century — brings governments to Abu Dhabi with a mandate to translate the language of "water bankruptcy" into monitoring frameworks, investment commitments and governance reform. Neither gathering will succeed if it treats water, climate, security and economic policy as adjoining but separate rooms. Both offer a genuine opportunity to do otherwise.

History tends to remember periods less for the density of crises they endured than for the coherence — or incoherence — of the response those crises provoked. The evidence from the first half of 2026 is unambiguous: incremental, single-sector responses are proving inadequate against risks that are, by their nature, systemic. What the moment demands instead is integrated policy design, financing structures that reward resilience rather than merely reconstruction, and institutions willing to treat water as the strategic asset it has always been, rather than the utility it is too often mistaken for.

As this edition of our newsletter shows, that shift is not merely aspirational. It is already visible in community-led water conservation, in scientific cooperation across borders, in policy innovation at state and national level. The task before all of us, in the months leading to Antalya and Abu Dhabi and beyond, is to ensure these local and national efforts are matched by international solidarity equal to the scale of what is now, unmistakably, one interconnected crisis.

## AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MR. MATTHIEU PEGON, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CLIMATE INVESTMENT FUNDS BY DR. ARVIND KUMAR, EDITOR, FOCUS GLOBAL REPORTER

In an insightful interview with Focus Global Reporter, Mr. Matthieu Pegon, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Climate Investment Funds (CIF), spoke with Dr. Arvind Kumar, Editor, on the evolving landscape of climate finance, resilience, private capital mobilisation and inclusive green development. Highlighting CIF's catalytic role across more than 80 developing countries, Mr. Pegon explained how concessional finance can de-risk investments, crowd in private capital and accelerate economy-wide transformation, noting that each CIF dollar generates an average of US\$10 in co-financing. He discussed CIF's growing emphasis on private-sector participation, the innovative CIF Capital Markets Mechanism, and the newly launched ARISE programme aimed at mainstreaming climate resilience into national economic planning and investment. The conversation also explored industrial decarbonisation, just transitions, nature-based solutions, gender and social inclusion, and the importance of South-South knowledge exchange in accelerating climate action. Reflecting on India's energy transition, Mr. Pegon highlighted CIF's partnership with India since 2011 and its evolution from supporting early-stage solar investments to enabling floating solar, battery storage and transmission infrastructure, demonstrating how sustained catalytic finance can evolve alongside a country's growing ambition and market maturity. Concluding with a message for developing countries, he emphasised that climate action must be integrated with poverty alleviation and economic growth, underpinned by country ownership, strong national institutions, cross-sectoral coordination and investment pathways that can transform climate finance into productive, resilient and inclusive economic development.



## HIGH LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE ON MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS TO ACCELERATE SDG 6 VIA WATER TRANSVERSALITY

India Water Foundation organised the High-Level Policy Dialogue on "Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Accelerate SDG 6 via Water Transversality" as an Official Side Event of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2026. Supported by the International Office for Water (OiEau), International Water Resources Association (IWRA), International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) and the World Water Council, the dialogue convened senior policymakers, international organisations, multilateral development banks, river basin institutions, academia and development practitioners to deliberate upon innovative approaches for accelerating SDG 6 through integrated governance, collaborative financing and cross-sectoral partnerships.

The dialogue sought to advance the concept of Water Transversality, an emerging governance framework that recognises water as the foundational connector across multiple development systems rather than as an isolated sector. Through the participation of leading international experts and government representatives, the dialogue explored practical pathways for strengthening policy coherence, mobilising finance, enhancing institutional coordination and promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration to build resilient water systems capable of supporting sustainable development.

Several converging outcomes were recorded. It was agreed that water can no longer be planned in isolation, and must be mainstreamed as economic infrastructure, a geopolitical bridge and a social-justice imperative across ministries and investment frameworks. Cross-sectoral partnerships spanning governments, basin authorities, multilateral banks, philanthropy, academia and communities were identified as indispensable to closing the sector's financing gap, estimated at over 100 billion dollars annually. Disaster risk reduction, disaggregated data, education and community ownership were called upon to be embedded as core pillars of implementation, not peripheral add-ons. Participants were urged to carry this integrated agenda to the 2026 UN Water Conference, where it was proposed that ministries of education, finance and water be brought to a shared table for the first time.

The dialogue was closed with calls for stable regulatory and institutional environments, decentralised wastewater treatment, climate-smart agriculture, and deeper scientific and data collaboration to be prioritised as the global water community moves from commitment to implementation in the final stretch to 2030 and also setting a precedent for 2026 UN Water Conference.



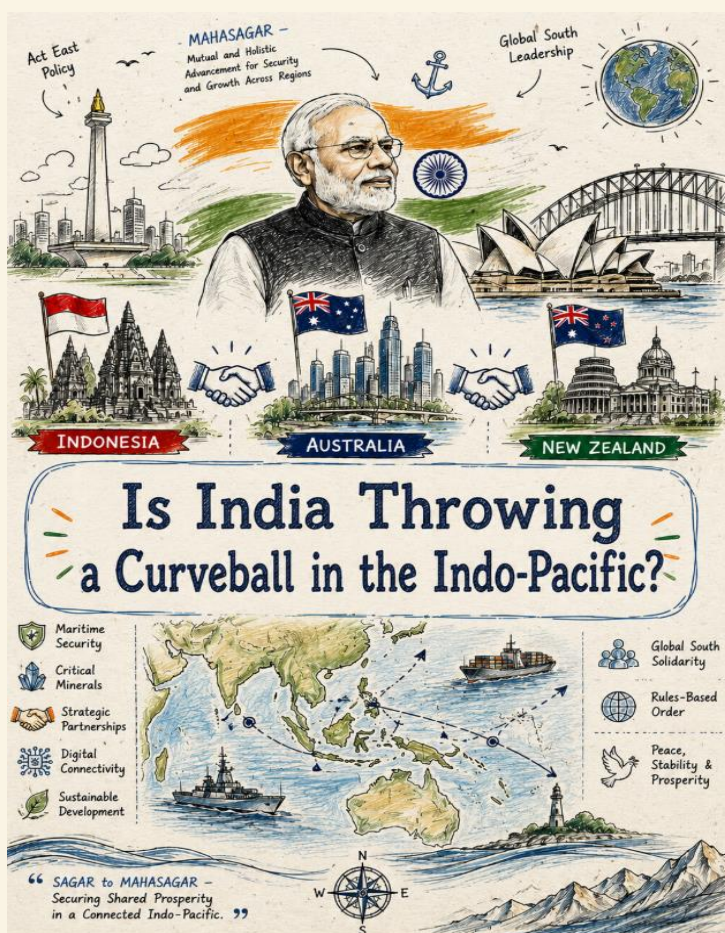


# REPORT: IS INDIA THROWING A CURVEBALL IN THE INDO-PACIFIC?

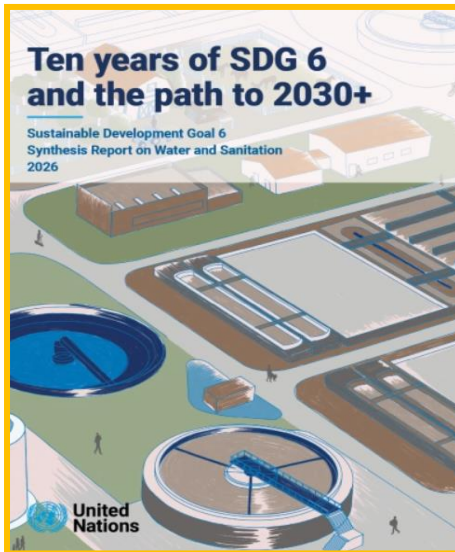
Between 6 and 11 July 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook a six-day, three-nation tour of Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand his most consequential Indo-Pacific outreach since assuming office for a third term. Officially framed as an extension of India's Act East Policy and its newer MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision, the visit resulted in nearly 55 agreements spanning defence, maritime security, critical minerals, clean energy, trade, education, technology and cultural cooperation. The three destinations represented distinct yet complementary pillars of India's evolving Indo-Pacific strategy: Indonesia as ASEAN's largest economy and a leading Global South partner; Australia as a critical strategic, technological and resource partner in the Quad; and New Zealand as an increasingly important Pacific democracy with which India sought to revive high-level political engagement after more than four decades.

The significance of the tour, however, extends far beyond the agreements signed. It must be understood as part of a much broader diplomatic trajectory that has unfolded over the past year. Prior to this Indo-Pacific outreach, Prime Minister Modi had undertaken an intensive series of visits across Europe including France, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy followed by engagements in the United Arab Emirates and Seychelles. Viewed collectively rather than in isolation, these visits reveal a coherent strategic design that stretches from continental Europe through the Middle East and the Indian Ocean to Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

This emerging diplomatic arc reflects a fundamental evolution in India's foreign policy. Rather than pursuing conventional bilateral diplomacy centred on isolated partnerships, New Delhi is increasingly constructing an interconnected network of strategic relationships across multiple theatres. The objective is neither alliance formation nor bloc politics; instead, it is the creation of diversified political, economic and technological partnerships that enhance India's strategic autonomy while reducing excessive dependence on any single power centre.



## UN SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2026



The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation 2026 will serve as the United Nations system's collective input to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) during its in-depth review of SDG 6 in July 2026.

Reflecting on a decade of implementation, the UN SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2026 will assess progress towards ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030. It will explore how SDG 6 has driven action at both national and global levels, strengthened policy coherence, and fostered inclusive dialogue across sectors and stakeholders.

Looking ahead, the report will ask 'what comes next?' It will outline how the momentum generated behind SDG 6 can shape the water and sanitation agenda in the years leading to 2030 and lay the foundation for the vision that follows.

The report will be a key output of Priority Collaborative Action 1.2 of the Collaborative Implementation Plan 2025–2028 of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation, which requires the UN system to provide evidence to strengthen its leadership on SDG 6 and strategically contribute to the negotiations on a possible post-2030 agenda.

## Environmental Performance Index 2026



Harnessing advances in data, science, and technology, the 2026 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) provides a comprehensive assessment of sustainability worldwide. The 2026 EPI ranks 177 countries on 47 indicators across 12 issue categories spanning three policy objectives: Environmental Health, Ecosystem Vitality, and Climate Change. These indicators provide a gauge at a national scale of how close countries are to established environmental policy targets. The EPI offers a scorecard that highlights leaders and laggards in environmental performance and provides practical guidance for countries that aspire to move toward a sustainable future.

EPI indicators provide a way to spot problems, set targets, track trends, understand outcomes, and identify best policy practices. Going beyond the aggregate scores and drilling down into the data to analyze performance by issue category, policy objective, peer group, and country offers even greater value for policymakers.



## SUCCESS STORIES



### Polluted Bengaluru Drain Turns Into Flood Solution Thanks to 500-Year-Old Engineering

Once a sewage-filled open drain carrying 130 million litres of untreated wastewater every day, Bengaluru's K100 has been restored into a thriving public corridor. Its revival is also bringing back the city's 500-year-old Rajakaluve network — an ancient rainwater engineering system that could hold lessons for water-stressed Indian cities.

**READ  
MORE**



### As Cities Flood, East Kolkata Wetlands Show How Nature Can Protect Urban India

As extreme rainfall becomes more frequent across India, the 12,500-hectare East Kolkata Wetlands continue to naturally absorb floodwater, treat sewage, support thousands of livelihoods, and offer a proven climate solution that cities can learn from.

**READ  
MORE**



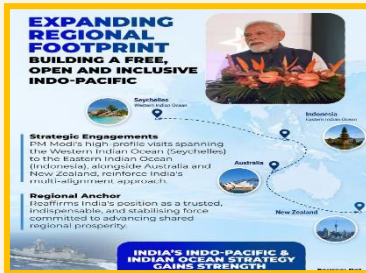
# FRIDAY BLOGS

Is this the point of no return, or just a bad summer?



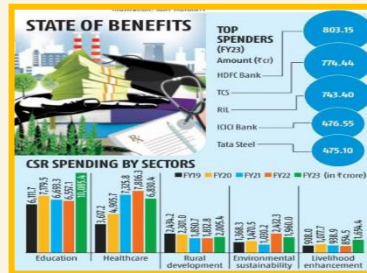
Reimagining India-Japan Strategic Partnership

Reframing the Climate Domino Effect



Are We Witnessing the Dawn of Another Hormuz?

Redefining CSR through the Lens of ESG



# 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

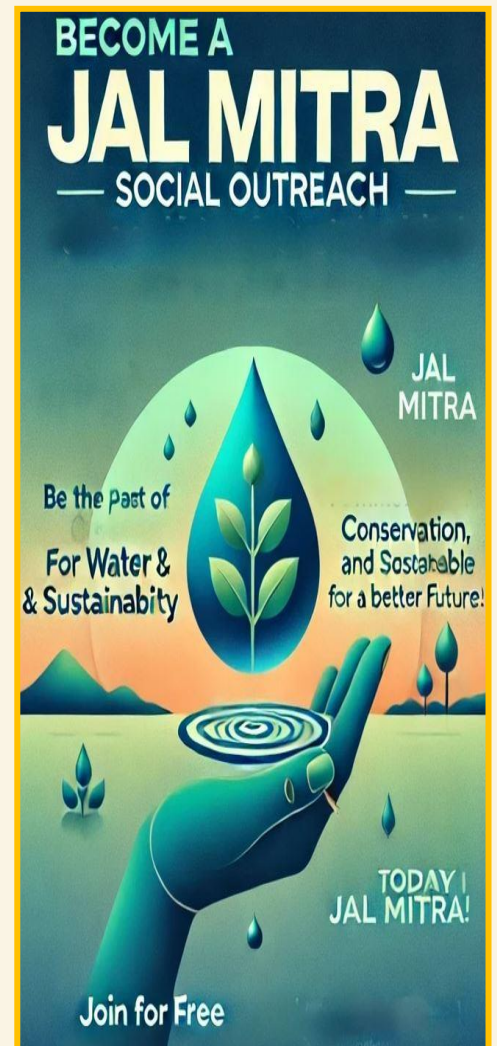
The JalMitra outreach program encourages sustainable living practices by promoting sustainable conservation and restoration projects. The campaign fosters awareness and behavioural change at the grassroots level, enabling communities to adopt environmentally responsible lifestyles that reduce ecological 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](https://indiawaterfoundation.org/jal-mitra/) to apply and join this transformative movement. Together, let's shape a sustainable future!

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



# KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS



# SPOTLIGHT



We are pleased to share that India Water Foundation (IWF) has joined the United Nations Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI), reaffirming our commitment to advancing sustainable, inclusive and responsible development. As a non-profit civil society organisation and think tank, IWF has been working since 2008 to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, environmental sustainability, climate resilience and integrated approaches to water, energy, health and livelihoods.

Joining the UN Global Compact Network India provides an important platform to further strengthen our engagement with businesses, institutions and stakeholders and contribute to collective action towards a more sustainable and equitable future. We look forward to meaningful collaboration, knowledge exchange and partnerships that help translate sustainability commitments into measurable action.

Together, let us accelerate the journey towards a sustainable and resilient future.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

- **10–15 August: Global Pastoralist Gathering and Conference.**

Taking place in Mongolia as part of the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026), this gathering brings together pastoralist representatives and organizations from around the world to discuss sustainable rangeland management, pastoralist livelihoods and resilience ahead of UNCCD COP17.

<https://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/events/>

- **17–28 August: UNCCD COP17 (17th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification).**

Hosted by Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar under the theme "Restoring Land. Restoring Hope," COP17 brings together delegates from 197 Parties, heads of state, ministers, scientists, civil society and the private sector to address desertification, land degradation and drought. The high-level segment in the second week features ministerial dialogues on financing, drought resilience, and rangeland restoration.

<https://www.unccd.int/cop17>

- **23–27 August: World Water Week 2026.**

Organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) in Stockholm and online, under the theme "Water for People and Progress," this is one of the world's leading water conferences, convening policymakers, practitioners, researchers and civil society to advance water security and sanitation solutions, with a focus on human development, health and gender.

<https://worldwaterweek.org/>

- **9 August: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.**

A UN observance recognizing the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to sustainable development, environmental protection, and cultural diversity worldwide.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day>

- **21 August: International Day for Underwater Cultural Heritage (UNESCO).**

Raises awareness of the protection of submerged cultural heritage in oceans, seas, rivers and lakes.

<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/underwater-cultural-heritage>

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>](mailto:contact@indiawaterfoundation.org).

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