Centre sets up team for water harvesting

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With nearly 29% of total blocks in the country remaining water-stressed, the Centre has decided to stepped up various water harvesting and conservation efforts from July 1. It has appointed 255 dedicated officers of very senior rank and set up 550 teams for the exercise during monsoon and post-monsoon phases in next five months.

These officers - 255 additional and joint secretary-level officers as ‘central prabhari officers’ and teams of 550 director and deputy secretary-level officers as ‘block nodal officers’ - will look for implementation of water harvesting works on the ground in 1,593 water-stressed blocks, falling under 255 districts.

The campaign - ‘Jal Shakti Abhiyan’ - will begin on July 1 and continue till November 30 in two phases - July 1 to September 15 (monsoon phase) and October 1 to November 30 (retreating monsoon phase). Though the country has a total of nearly 5,500 blocks, the campaign will be restricted to the water-stressed ones where the problem is compounded due to delayed monsoon and depletion of reservoirs.

Underlining water crisis in 226 districts in the country, even Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday spoke about his government’s priority to deal with it. Replying to debate in Rajya Sabha on the Motion of Thanks to the President's address, Modi said he was trying to mobilise everyone to tackle this and see how the government could give priority to water in MPLAD funds. “We also have to make society aware on water issues,” he said.