Given a choice, oil companies across the world prefer baking the Earth for profit. But as the Narendra Modi government focuses on ‘Jal Shakti’ in its second term, India’s staterun energy giants are rushing to seek corporate social salvation by taking up cudgels to clean up water sources — from Himalayan glaciers to lakes and rivers.

Flagship explorer ONGC is on its second clean-up drive to rid glaciers and river beds of garbage in select areas of Uttarakhand and Himachal. It is also deepening 15 lakes in Gujarat and clearing a stretch of Godavari in Andhra Pradesh. IndianOil, the country’s largest oil refiner and fuel retailer, is rejuvenating 37 water bodies across 14 states amid reports of cities running dry during the recent heat wave. The country’s largest power generator NTPC is focusing on water works for farmers in a Nagaram village of Ranjanna Sircilla district in Telangana and measures to reducing captive consumption.

The initiatives indicate the bluechips are looking beyond setting up schools, clinics, sanitation and skilling projects near their establishments to align their substantial CSR (corporate social responsibility) spends with the government’s climate outlook.

“Our natural resources are depleting faster than we had anticipated due to global warming. It’s high time we realise the importance of prudent use of natural resources, whether it is water or fossil fuels,” said IOC director (HR) Ranjan K Mohapatra, who had last year led a drive to clear garbage from Fotu La top along the Srinagar-Leh road.

“ONGC’s ‘Swachhta (cleanliness)’ drive stretches from the Himalaya to the plains. Peaks have been cleaned up along with sensitisation of the populace. Rivers/water bodies are being desilted. The focus is on initiatives to bring about behaviour change through information, education and communication. Securing sustainable growth remains at the top of our agenda,” said ONGC director (HR) Alka Mittal, who headed the CSR wing before becoming the first woman director on the company’s board.