

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

**RAJYA SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1856**

ANSWERED ON 09.03.2026

**DROUGHT AND DECLINING GROUNDWATER LEVELS IN MARATHWADA AND  
VIDARBHA REGIONS**

1856 # Smt. SUNETRA AJIT PAWAR:

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has recently sent a central team to assess the severe drought and declining groundwater levels in the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra;
- (b) the current status of the 'Marathwada Water Grid' project in the State, and the financial assistance provided by the Central Government for it so far;
- (c) whether any special fund has been allocated under the 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana' to promote micro-irrigation in the drought-affected districts of Maharashtra; and
- (d) the long-term plans the Central Government is implementing in collaboration with the State Government to make Maharashtra a tanker-free state?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI**

**(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)**

(a) No.

(b) As intimated by the Government of Maharashtra (GoM), to overcome the drought situation in Marathwada region, an initiative has been taken by the State Government to develop a water grid. Under this initiative, the State Government has planned to connect 11 major dams in the region by pipeline to enable water to be conveyed from dam to dam as and when required.

As further conveyed by the Government of Maharashtra, the State has engaged M/s. Mekorot Development Enterprises, an Israel-based consultancy, for preparation of study reports and Pre-Design Reports of the project. The GoM is also exploring the possibility of securing external financial assistance to support implementation of this initiative. Till date, an expenditure of Rs. 2292.15 lakhs has been incurred from State funding. Additionally, a budgetary provision of Rs. 500 lakhs has been earmarked in the financial year 2025–26 for this project by the State Government.

(c) The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) in the Country including Maharashtra from the year 2015-16. During 2015-16 to 2021-22, PDMC implemented as a component of Pradhan

Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY). From the year 2022-23, the scheme is being implemented under the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY).

From FY 2015–16 to FY 2025–26 (so far), the Government of India has released a total Central assistance of Rs. 3,127.97 crore to the State of Maharashtra. During this period, micro-irrigation has been extended to cover approximately 11,82,775 hectares of area.

(d) Water, being State subject, water resources projects are planned, funded, executed and maintained by the State Governments themselves as per their own resources and priority. In order to supplement their efforts, Government of India provides technical and financial assistance to State Governments to encourage sustainable development and efficient management of water resources under various ongoing schemes.

The Government of India has undertaken several initiatives to address water scarcity in Maharashtra, focusing on conservation, completion of pending irrigation projects, groundwater recharge, and ensuring sustainable water supply. To strengthen irrigation development in the State, a total of 29 major and medium irrigation projects have been included under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana - Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (PMKSY-AIBP). Of these, 17 projects directly benefit the drought-prone regions of Maharashtra, creating an irrigation potential of 5.23 lakh hectares. Further, 8 major / medium irrigation (MMI) projects and 83 surface minor irrigation projects benefiting drought prone areas of Maharashtra including Vidarbha and Marathwada region have been included under special package to Maharashtra. 3 MMI and 73 SMI projects have been reported as complete. Further, 2.16 lakh hectare irrigation potential has been created through these projects.

Micro irrigation development under PMKSY/PM-RKVY is being implemented by Department of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare under the Scheme "Per Drop More Crop".

Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has completed the National Aquifer Mapping (NAQUIM) Project in the entire mappable area i.e., 259914 km<sup>2</sup> in the state of Maharashtra including the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions. The Aquifer maps and management plans have been prepared and shared with the respective State agencies for implementation. The management plans include various water conservation measures through recharge structures.

CGWB has prepared a Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 in consultation with States/UTs which is a macro level plan indicating various structures for the different terrain conditions of the country including estimated cost. The Master Plan envisages construction of about 56 lakh structures in Maharashtra including the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions.

The Government of India, in partnership with States and Union Territories, is implementing the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide functional household tap water connections to every rural household. As of December 2025, approximately 132.40 lakh rural households representing about 90% coverage were reported to have tap water connections in the State of Maharashtra.

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