

New water management plan for 11 districts

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JAIPUR: The government has identified 80 blocks in 11 districts of western Rajasthan where a new initiative to conserve water will unfold.

Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) on water management and use will be made for around 8,900 villages with participation of the government, university, NGOs and local communities.

The project will be launched today with the signing of an MoU between the Water Resources department and the newly-set up Centre for Water Management and Research at the University of Rajasthan.

The government has prioritised 80 blocks in the state where the water situation is especially bad and calls for urgent action. The districts are Barmer, Churu, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Jalore, Junjhunu, Nagaur, Pali, Sirohi, Sikar, and Rajsamand.

"The Centre will be the nodal authority to bring coherence and supervision in the overall water management scenario and give expert advice," said AD Sawant, vice chancellor of

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the university. He said around Rs 5 crore would be needed to execute the project.

Sawant, who mooted the idea of the centre, felt that the university should contribute to the society and play a role in bringing academia, government and civil society together.

The government will also harness expertise of NGOs working in the water sector in Rajasthan, said Principal Secretary, water Resources, Ram Lubhaya.

"Those NGOs that fulfill the government criteria will be taken on board to raise awareness and train people and officials in villages and districts. Agencies will make DPRs for water management schemes in around 8900 villages and dhams and the local communities will be involved in decision-mak-

ing," he said.

"The project is being funded by the European Commission Partnership Programme. The government wanted to implement the plan through the university," said Prof AK Sinha, who is director of the Centre. The European Commission had in April announced Rs450 crore for water management projects in Rajasthan.

A coordination and management unit (CMU) will be formed comprising experts in the water sector and government officials, said Sinha.

Under the CMU there will be an advisory and management committee under the vice chancellor, an expert committee, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) committees in districts and Water Resources Centres at the block level, he said. "The IWRM committees will chalk out a water usage plan on the demand and availability. They will take into account usage by households, agriculture and industry and then decide how much water should be given, what cropping pattern and industry will be suitable," he said.

(The article is under the aegis of CSE Fellowship)

3 SENTENCED FOR BEATING FOREST OFFICIALS

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JODHPUR: A fast track court has sentenced three persons to five years' stringent imprisonment for attacking forest workers who were investigating a deer hunting case.

The accused were charged with attacking the workers with weapons, creating hurdles in government work and damaging government property.

Judge Rekha Sharma said the accused Amraram Bagaria, Ramsukh Bagaria and Keria Bagaria, all residents of Radaud in Bhopalgarh station area, deserved no leniency.

The prosecution said on September 30, 2008, the Regional Forest Officer (wildlife flying), Sureshchandra Gaur, had gone to Bagaria forest on along with a forest guard for the inquiry in deer hunting case.

The accused had tried to snatch 12 bore gun from guard and injured them with sharp-edged weapons. They also damaged a vehicle also. of the forest department.