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Level of groundwater extraction lowest in 18 years, finds study

Total groundwater recharge was 437.6 billion cubic metres, as opposed to extraction of 239.16 bcm, reports Ministry of Water Resources

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Groundwater extraction in India saw an 18-year decline, according to an assessment by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) made public on Wednesday.

The total annual groundwater recharge for the entire country is 437.6 billion cubic metres (bcm) and annual groundwater extraction for the entire country is 239.16 bcm, according to the 2022 assessment report. Further, out of the total 7,089 assessment units in the country, 1,006 units have been categorised as “over-exploited” in the report.

By comparison, an assessment in 2020 found that the annual groundwater recharge was 436 bcm and extraction 245 bcm. In 2017, recharge was 432 bcm and extraction 249 bcm. The 2022 assessment suggests that groundwater



Promising data: The last time groundwater extraction was this low was in 2004, at 231 bcm. AKHILESH KUMAR

extraction is the lowest since 2004, when it was 231 bcm.

Such joint exercises between the CGWB and States/Union Territories were carried out earlier in 1980, 1995, 2004, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2017 and 2020.

“A detailed analysis of the information collected from the assessment indicates increase in ground water recharge which may mainly be attributed to increase in recharge from canal seepage, return flow of irrigation water and recharges from water bodies/

tanks & water conservation structures. Further, analysis indicates improvement in ground water conditions in 909 assessment units in the country when compared with 2017 assessment data. In addition, overall decrease in number of over-exploited units and decrease in stage of groundwater extraction level have also been observed,” the Ministry of Water Resources said in a statement.

The full report wasn’t made public by the Ministry.