

India inching towards water scarcity: Union Minister Harish Rawat

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BANGKOK: India is "inching towards water scarcity" and the situation in several states is critical as ground water levels are depleting at an alarming rate, Union Minister for Water Resources said on Wednesday.

Speaking to PTI on the sidelines of the [Second Asia Pacific Water Summit](#), [Harish Rawat](#) called for treating water as a "community resource."

"We are a water stressed nation inching towards water scarcity," Rawat said.

He added that the situation in parts of [Maharashtra](#), [Karnataka](#), [Tamil Nadu](#) and north west India was critical as ground water was dipping at an alarming rate.

"Ground water fulfils 80 per cent of our water needs but its use is being over exploited in many areas," he said while suggesting "an increase in storage capacities" as a means to deal with the depleting water levels.

Also, Rawat talked about "inter basin transfer from surplus flood water areas to water scarce drought areas" as a possible measure to address the problem.

"States are now being persuaded to have basin approach while dealing with water projects," he added. He also focussed on the need for water to be used more efficiently for uses like irrigation through new technology, recycling and reuse.

The summit participants in the final declaration agreed to allocate resources towards water and sanitation sectors, increase transfer of technology, improve irrigation systems and encourage appropriate consideration of water issues in the discussion of the UN development agenda.

The theme of the two-day summit held in the norther Thai city of [Chiang Mai](#) was "Water security and Water-related Disasters Challenges: Leadership and Commitment."