Water Management Lessons from Israel

Why in news?

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The Indo-Israeli partnership is likely to extend to areas like water and agriculture.

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What are the facts related to water?

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- India is water stressed. The country's annual **per capita availability of water is less than 1,500 cubic meters (cu.m)** and that scenario is likely to worsen.
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- Currently, about 78% of fresh water in India is used for agriculture.
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- Israel has per capita water availability of less than 200 cu.m.
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- It is an extremely water scarce region. Yet, the country exports high-value agri-produce to Europe and many other parts of the world.
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- The country is known for innovations in water management - be it drip irrigation, recycling of urban wastewater for use in agriculture or desalinisation of seawater for drinking purposes.
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How water is governed in Israel?

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- As per Israel's water law, all water in the country is **common property resource.**
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- The government does **accounting for every drop of water,** ensuring good water governance.
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- As a result, in 2013, of the total water available in Israel almost 16% came from desalinating seawater and another 22% came from recycling wastewater.
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- Almost 62% of the irrigation water used in Israel comes from recycled and brackish water, thus saving potable water for domestic use.
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Whether the micro-irrigation concepts are new to India?

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- Micro-irrigation technologies such as **drip irrigation and sprinklers** are not new to India.
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- India has about nine million hectares under micro-irrigation.
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- It can scale this up several times. But it needs to do so quickly.
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- Israel can offer lessons to India in this respect.
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- Any scaling up of technologies needs the **right policy environment.**
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- Water is not a free good. It **needs to be priced** to reflect its scarcity.
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- Such recycling endeavours with proper treatment that make wastewater safe have relevance in India.
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- India does have the technology for this purpose.
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Where else India can cooperate with Israel?

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- Another area of potential cooperation is **cleaning polluted rivers.**
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- As per government reports, between 2009 and 2015, the number of polluted rivers and river stretches in India has almost doubled.

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- Almost 63% of the total sewage generated in the country is discharged into water bodies without any treatment resulting in acute river pollution.
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- Recently, the Delhi Government has roped in the Israeli firm to clean up an eight km stretch of the Yamuna.
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What is the way ahead?

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- India needs an **integrated approach** to solving India’s emerging water crisis, involving different kind of interactions between Indians and Israeli agencies.
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Source: The Indian Express

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