

■ **First-Ever Census of Water Bodies Unveils Crucial Insights into Nation's Water Resources**

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has conducted a groundbreaking census of India's water bodies, marking a major milestone in the nation's efforts to manage and preserve its precious water resources. The census provides a comprehensive inventory of both natural and man-made water bodies, including ponds and lakes, yielding valuable data on the current state of India's water resources. According to the census, over 24 lakh water bodies have been enumerated in the country, with more than 23 lakh water bodies located in rural areas and nearly 69,000 in urban areas. The census has brought to the fore disparities between rural and urban areas, as well as varying levels of encroachment, highlighting the urgent need for targeted policies and interventions to address these issues. The census has paved the way for evidence-based decision-making and informed policy formulation in this critical area.