

Press release

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From source to tap: Duhaua community takes charge of its rural water services

Danish Ambassador joins handover ceremony under India's Jal Jeevan Mission



MIRZAPUR, UTTAR PRADESH, 15 September 2026.— The Ambassador of Denmark to India, H.E. Mr Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen, visited Duhaua village in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, today to attend 'Jal Arpan', a ceremony marking the formal handover of the village's rural water supply scheme to the local community under the national flagship programme Jal Jeevan Mission.

The event brought together Mr Pawan Kumar Gangwar (IAS), District Magistrate; Mr Vishal Kumar, Chief Development Officer, District Administration; Ms Vijeta, Additional District Magistrate, Namami Gange; Mr Vinod Mishra, Country Manager of UNOPS in India; senior government officials; and over 400 community members, of which more than 300 were women.

The Ambassador visited the Water Treatment Plant at Lalganj, Naraina Kala village, and was briefed on the plant's operations and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, tracing the journey of water from source to tap.



Ambassador and senior government officials at the Water Treatment Plant

This treatment plant is a part of a multi-village scheme sourcing its water from Belan river. Under Jal Jeevan Mission, the treated water is providing clean drinking water to 258 villages, of which three villages – Amravati, Bhawanipur and Duhaua – are UNOPS intervention villages. The delegation then travelled to Duhaua village, where Jal Sahelis trained by UNOPS welcomed the Ambassador with a traditional reception, followed by an interaction

with community in the village to observe the rural water supply scheme in operation and to interact with the community members. At the overhead tank in Parsia, the Ambassador spoke with the pump operator and participated in Jal Bandhan activity, symbolizing the community's commitment to water conservation. He also planted a tree sapling in the premises.



Traditional welcome of the Ambassador by a local woman

Together, these engagements, from the treatment plant to the village and the water infrastructure at the local level, offered a glimpse of the complete source-to-tap journey and the community ownership needed to sustain it. This spirit of ownership was at the heart of the Jal Arpan programme that followed.

Jal Arpan: Celebrating Community Ownership

The Jal Arpan programme was held at Jay Prakash Narayan Sarvodya Balak Vidyalaya, Parsia, opening with a welcome to dignitaries and an address by the Gram Pradhan of

Duhaua, alongside a live demonstration of water-quality testing and interaction with community.



Ambassador and dignitaries pouring water from the smaller pot to the bigger pot, symbolizing the official handover process to the community

"Denmark and India have a long-standing and very strong partnership on water. Through our cooperation with India, Denmark is proud to support the Jal Jeevan Mission, working together with UNOPS to help bring reliable and safe drinking water to rural households. Denmark is proud to be the only international country partner supporting the Jal Jeevan Mission, and we see this as a reflection of the trust and depth of our partnership with India," said Ambassador Kristensen.

He emphasized, "Ultimately, a water supply scheme is not about pipes, pumps or infrastructure. It is about people. It is about a child being able to grow up with access to safe water; about families having water close to home; and about women and girls having more time for education, livelihoods and family life. Ownership by the community is essential for sustainability. "



Ambassador tying a sacred thread on the tap symbolizing protection of the asset/infrastructure also called Jal Bandhan

The programme featured Jal Vandana, a children's prayer for water, followed by Jal Shringar, the formal ceremony handing over the water supply scheme to the community. Children performed a play on water and sanitation, and the event closed with a collective Jal Shapath (water pledge), reaffirming shared responsibility for conserving and responsibly using water.



The gathering participating in the water oath

Ms Amrita Maurya, a Village Water & Sanitation Committee (VWSC) member outlined how the community would manage the scheme going forward, underscoring the role of VWSC as micro utilities responsible for the continued, sustainable delivery of water services.

“Through the UNOPS-Denmark partnership, we are proud to support the Jal Jeevan Mission and our shared vision of developing an 'ideal village' model. We must underscore the importance of strengthening water security by focusing on three key dimensions: availability, accessibility, and quality, always ensuring that no one is left behind. I also want to highlight how vital community empowerment is the key to long term sustainability of any mission. Moving forward, UNOPS is very interested in expanding our support to reach even more villages across Mirzapur, ” said Mr Vinod Mishra, Country Manager for UNOPS India.

The Jal Arpan programme demonstrated that sustainable rural water services depend not only on infrastructure, but also on community ownership, local institutions, women's participation, awareness and responsible water use.

The Additional District Magistrate for Namami Gange, noted that Mirzapur’s undulating geography presents unique challenges in ensuring water supply. She appreciated the efforts of UNOPS and its team in supporting the programme, noting that access to water has now improved across most parts of the district. She thanked UNOPS for its continued support and commended the team for its efforts towards strengthening water access for communities in the region.

The programme reaffirmed that sustainable water security goes beyond infrastructure, placing communities, particularly women, at the centre of managing and sustaining water services.

UNOPS in Mirzapur

Under the Green Strategic Partnership between the governments of India and Denmark, UNOPS is supporting the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to deliver safe drinking water to rural households across 478 villages in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Assam. In Uttar Pradesh alone, the initiative has expanded since its 2021 launch to cover over 200 villages across 11 districts by 2026. Since entering its second phase in October 2022, the project has placed a strong emphasis on community empowerment, particularly in districts like Mirzapur. UNOPS works directly with local institutions – including Gram Panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees – using participatory approaches to build



operational capacity, strengthen local systems and champion the active participation of women and local institutions to ensure long-term, community-led ownership of rural water services.

By placing community ownership and women's participation at the center, UNOPS ensures that water schemes remain reliable, functional and sustained long after construction is complete.

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Notes to the editors:

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