GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

RAJYA SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. *226

ANSWERED ON 11.08.2025

CGWB OPERATIONS IN WEST BENGAL

*226. SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

(a) number of scientists currently employed at the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) office in Kolkata, the sanctioned strength, and the reasons for vacancies;

(b) current status of groundwater resources in Kolkata and West Bengal, including levels of depletion, areas identified as critical, and measures being implemented to address these challenges;

(c) the infrastructure deficiencies faced by CGWB scientists in Kolkata, including the availability of vehicles for fieldwork and equipment, and the steps being taken to resolve these issues; and

(d) whether Government has undertaken any recent studies or assessments on groundwater contamination in West Bengal, and the key findings from such studies?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI C R PAATIL)

(a) to (d) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. *226 TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.08.2025 IN RAJYA SABHA REGARDING "CGWB OPERATIONS IN WEST BENGAL"

(a) CGWB is multi-disciplinary scientific organization and nature of work in CGWB, which encompasses varied geographic terrains and hydro-geological conditions, and hence there is no system of Region-wise sanctioned strength. The requirement of scientists of various disciplines by each Region is assessed from time to time based on the activities being handled by the region and postings are done accordingly. At present, 24 Scientific Officers of various disciplines (i.e Hydrogeology/ Geophysics/ Chemical/Hydrometeorology) are posted at CGWB, Eastern Region, Kolkata.

(b) Dynamic Ground Water Resources of the country including West Bengal are being assessed annually, jointly by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and State Governments. As per the latest assessment of 2024, the total annual ground water recharge for the state of West Bengal is 25.89 Billion Cubic Meters (BCM) and the Annual Extractable Ground Water Resource is 23.56 BCM. Further, the Stage of Ground Water Extraction (SoE) which is a measure of Annual Ground Water Extraction for all uses (irrigation, industrial and domestic uses) over Annual Extractable Ground Water Resource is calculated as 45.63% for the State of West Bengal.

Furthermore, as per the 2024 assessment, out of 345 assessment Units (Blocks) in West Bengal, 10 (2.9%) units are categorized as 'Critical' and there are no over-exploited Blocks in West Bengal.

Dynamic groundwater resource assessment for Kolkata has not been carried out since Kolkata is devoid of shallow aquifer zone.

Water being a State subject, sustainable development and management of groundwater resources is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Central Government facilitates the efforts of the State Governments by way of technical and financial assistance through its various schemes and projects. In this direction, several significant steps have already been taken by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and other central ministries for sustainable development of ground water resources in the country, including West Bengal. Some of the important ones are given below:-

i. Efforts of the Central Government for augmenting the ground water resources of the country including West Bengal, are mainly channeled through the flagship campaign of Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA). JSA is a time bound and mission mode programme being conducted annually since 2019 by the M/o Jal Shakti wherein all the efforts and funds under various schemes and projects are converged to deliver water harvesting and artificial recharge works on the ground. Currently, JSA 2025 is underway with special focus on over-exploited and critical

areas. As per the available information under JSA, completion of around 2.33 lakh water conservation and artificial recharge works has been coordinated through convergence in West Bengal in the last 4 years.

ii. Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 has been prepared by the CGWB for the entire country, including West Bengal and shared with States/UTs providing a broad outline for construction of around 1.42 crore rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the country to harness 185 BCM (Billion cubic meter). The Master Plan recommends construction of about 42 thousand Rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge structures in West Bengal like Contour bunds, Check Dams, Injection wells, Sub-Surface Dykes etc.

iii. CGWB has taken up National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme (NAQUIM) under Ground Water Management & Regulation (GWM &R) Scheme with an aim to delineate aquifer disposition and their characterization. Entire mappable area of the country of around 25 lakh sq. km, including 71,947 sq. km in West Bengal, has been mapped under the scheme and district-wise management plans have been shared with the respective State/District administrations for implementation.

iv. Department of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare (DA & FW), GoI, is implementing Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) Scheme in the country including West Bengal, since 2015-16, which focuses on enhancing water use efficiency at farm level through Micro Irrigation and better on-farm water management practices to optimize the use of available water resources.

v. Mission Amrit Sarovar was launched by the Government of India, which aimed at developing and rejuvenating at least 75 water bodies in each district of the country. As an outcome nearly 69,000 Amrit Sarovars have been constructed/rejuvenated in the country.

vi. To further strengthen the momentum of Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: A Community-Driven Path to Water Sustainability in India has been launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister with a vision to make rain water harvesting a mass movement in the country. By promoting community ownership and responsibility, the initiative seeks to develop cost-effective, local solutions tailored to specific water challenges across different regions.

vii. Ministry has circulated a Model Bill to all the States/UTs to enable them to enact suitable ground water legislation for regulation of its development, which also includes provision of rain water harvesting. So far, 21 States/UTs including West Bengal have adopted and implemented the ground water legislation.

(**c)** The Ministry has taken proactive steps to improve the infrastructure and logistics availability to all the offices of CGWB including that of Kolkata. Procurement sanctions for new vehicles, scientific instruments and software, laptops for scientists etc. has been promptly given as per the requirement projected by CGWB. As such, no infrastructure deficiencies are being faced by CGWB scientists in Kolkata, and the availability of scientific equipment and vehicles is adequate to carry out field studies, as per the assigned mandate.

(d) CGWB regularly generates ground water quality data on a regional scale including West Bengal as part of its ground water quality monitoring program and various scientific studies. Based on such data, the Annual Groundwater Quality Report 2024 has been issued by the CGWB, which is based on the ground water sampling and analysis from 15,259 monitoring locations spread across the country, with 959 in West Bengal. The report indicates that the ground water in the state remains largely potable. However, localized occurrence of certain contaminants like Fluoride, Nitrate, Arsenic, Iron etc. beyond the limits prescribed for drinking water use has been reported in some isolated pockets. Details are provided in **Annexure.**

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ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (d) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *226 TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.08.2025 REGARDING "CGWB OPERATIONS IN WEST BENGAL"

Summary of ground water quality parameters for West Bengal as per 2024 report

Parameter (permissible limit)	No. of Samples analyzed	% of samples above Permissible limit	No. of Districts reporting samples above Permissible Limit in isolated pockets
EC (> 3000 µS/cm)	959	0.8	05
Fluoride (>1.5 mg/L)	959	0.73	03
Nitrate (> 45 mg/L)	959	8.65	18
Arsenic (> 10 ppb)	959	8.8	6
Iron (> 1 mg/L)	959	35.2	21

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