

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3438

ANSWERED ON 23.03.2026

**SERIOUS HEALTH CRISIS DUE TO THE ALARMING LEVEL OF CONTAMINATIONS IN
GROUNDWATER**

3438. # SHRI SANJAY YADAV:

Will the Minister of **Jal Shakti** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the study of the State of Bihar Economic Survey Report (2024-2025), according to which the presence of Arsenic in 4,709 wards, Fluoride in 3,789 wards and Iron in 21,799 wards of the State has been recorded, which poses a serious threat to public health;
- (b) whether groundwater pollution is increasing the risk of serious diseases and adversely affecting soil fertility and food security; and
- (c) the time-bound action plan developed to ensure a continuous supply of chemical-free purified drinking water in the affected districts of the State and to provide a permanent solution to this severe problem?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

- (a) The Government has taken note of the findings on ground water contamination published in Bihar Economic Survey Report (2024–2025) based on the study conducted by Bihar Govt.
- (b) Consumption of drinking water having Arsenic, Fluoride or heavy metals above the permissible limits over a sustained period of time is known to cause several adverse health effects. As per the information provided by M/o Health & Family Welfare, long-term consumption of water contaminated with Arsenic, Fluoride and heavy metals like Iron may lead to various health issues like skin lesions, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, developmental effects in children, skeletal and/ or dental fluorosis, kidney diseases etc. Further, some of the contaminants may enter top soil layer affecting crop growth.
- (c) Water is a State subject and the responsibility of taking initiatives to mitigate ground water contamination and to provide safe drinking water to citizens lies primarily with the State governments. However, to complement the efforts of the state governments, several steps have been taken by the Central Government to address these issues in the country, including in Bihar. Some of the important ones are mentioned below:-

- i. In addition to the State Governments, the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti is involved in regular monitoring of ground water quality across the country, including in Bihar. The ground water quality data generated by CGWB is regularly disseminated through Annual Reports, Half-yearly Bulletins and Fortnightly Alerts for quick action by the stakeholders.

- ii. CGWB has also developed an innovative cement sealing technology for tapping deeper Arsenic free aquifers in the Arsenic affected areas and has so far successfully constructed 40 Arsenic safe exploratory wells in Bihar and is also providing technical assistance to state departments for taking up similar constructions.
- iii. Under the National Aquifer Mapping Programme (NAQUIM) of CGWB, while taking up aquifer studies, special attention is being given to the aspect of ground water quality including contamination by toxic substances such as Arsenic, Fluoride, heavy metals etc.
- iv. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, being implemented by this Ministry in partnership with states, marks an important milestone for providing contamination free potable tap water to every rural household of the country in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis. As per data available on Dashboard 15.82 Cr rural households in the country have been provided with Functional Tap Water connection as compared to 3.23 Cr rural households with tap connection in 2019. Following measures have been taken under JJM to facilitate action on water quality aspects at state level, including in Bihar :-
 - Under the JJM, Bureau of Indian Standards’ BIS:10500 standards have been adopted as prescribed norms for quality of tap water service delivery.
 - While allocating the funds to States/ UTs, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants.
 - Around 2870 water quality testing laboratories have been set up in the country, with 123 in Bihar. Besides this, five persons, preferably women are identified and trained from every village for testing the water samples through Field Test Kits (FTKs).
 - States/ UTs have also been advised to install community water purification plants (CWPPs) as an interim measure, especially in quality affected habitations, to provide potable drinking water to every household.
- v. Further, the Government of Bihar has informed that through the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Bihar, a time-bound action plan has been prepared and being implemented to ensure the supply of safe and chemical-free drinking water in arsenic, fluoride and iron-affected districts of the State.

Under this plan, piped water supply schemes with appropriate treatment facilities are being implemented on priority in affected areas under the ‘Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal’ scheme to provide safe and potable drinking water to all households. In addition, Arsenic Removal Plants (ARP), Fluoride Removal Plants (FRP) and Iron Removal Plants (IRP) have been installed in contaminated habitations and unsafe hand pumps are being identified and replaced with safe sources.

Regular water quality monitoring and surveillance is also being carried out through State, District and Sub-division level laboratories and community-based testing using Field Test Kits (FTKs) to ensure a continuous supply of safe drinking water.
- vi. The ground water pollution also owes its origin to contamination of surface water sources for which various efforts have been made in the country like installing Sewage Treatment Plants, Effluent Treatment Plants and better system of sewage networks etc. Under National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the Government has initiated several steps for improving the water quality along the river Ganga and its tributaries, which also covers the area of Bihar.
