

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1667

ANSWERED ON 03.08.2026

PRESENCE OF ARSENIC, FLUORIDE, AND IRON IN THE WATER OF BIHAR

1667 # 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) indicating the presence of arsenic in 4,709 wards, fluoride in 3,789 wards and iron in 21,799 wards of the State that pose a serious threat to public health;
- (b) whether the risk of diseases is increasing due to groundwater pollution and whether this is also having an adverse impact on soil fertility and food security; and
- (c) whether time-bound action plan has been formulated to ensure a continuous supply of chemical-free pure drinking water to the general public in the affected districts of Bihar and to provide a permanent solution?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) The Government has taken note of the findings on groundwater contamination published in the Bihar Economic Survey Report (2024–2025) based on the study conducted by the Government of Bihar.

(b) Long-term consumption of drinking water containing Arsenic, Fluoride or other contaminants above the permissible limits specified in BIS:10500 is known to cause adverse health effects. As per the information provided by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, prolonged consumption of water contaminated with Arsenic, Fluoride and Iron may lead to various health issues such as skin lesions, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, developmental effects in children, skeletal and/or dental fluorosis and kidney diseases. Further, certain contaminants may adversely affect soil quality and crop growth depending upon their concentration and persistence.

(c) Water is a State subject and the responsibility for mitigating groundwater contamination and providing safe drinking water to the public primarily rests with the respective State Governments. However, to complement the efforts of the State Governments, the Government of India has taken several measures including in the State of Bihar as under:

- i. Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, being implemented by this Ministry in partnership with the States/UTs, aims to provide every rural household with potable tap water of prescribed quality, in adequate quantity, on a regular and long-term basis. Drinking water being a State subject, planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of drinking water supply schemes including

those under JJM, are the responsibility of the respective State Governments/UT Administrations, while the Government of India supplements their efforts through financial assistance, policy guidance and technical support. Under JJM, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):10500 has been adopted as the benchmark for the quality of drinking water supplied through piped water supply schemes. States/UTs have been advised to implement schemes based on safe and sustainable drinking water sources and wherever required, to install Community Water Purification Plants (CWPPs) in quality-affected habitations. The Ministry has also issued guidelines on drinking water treatment technologies and water quality monitoring to support States/UTs in ensuring the supply of safe drinking water.

- ii. The Government of Bihar has informed that, through the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), a time-bound action plan has been prepared and is 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 (ARPs), Fluoride Removal Plants (FRPs) and Iron Removal Plants (IRPs) have been installed in contaminated habitations and unsafe hand pumps are being identified and replaced with safe sources. Regular water quality monitoring and surveillance are also being carried out through State, District and Sub-divisional laboratories as well as community-based testing using Field Test Kits (FTKs) to help ensure a continuous supply of safe drinking water.
- iii. Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) regularly monitors groundwater quality across the country including Bihar, through its groundwater quality monitoring programme. The groundwater quality data generated by CGWB are disseminated through the Annual Ground Water Quality Report, Half-yearly Ground Water Quality Bulletins and Fortnightly Ground Water Quality Alerts (GWQAs) for facilitating timely action by the concerned stakeholders.
- iv. CGWB has developed an innovative cement sealing technology for tapping deeper Arsenic-safe aquifers in Arsenic-affected areas. Using this technology, 40 Arsenic-safe exploratory wells have been successfully constructed in Bihar. CGWB is also providing technical assistance to the State Government for construction of similar wells.
- v. Under the National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme (NAQUIM), CGWB carries out aquifer mapping and prepares groundwater management plans with special emphasis on groundwater quality including contamination due to Arsenic, Fluoride, Iron and other contaminants.
