GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1014

ANSWERED ON 05.02.2026

ARSENIC CONTAMINATION IN GROUNDWATER IN ASSAM

1014. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware of reports of arsenic contamination in groundwater in parts of Assam including rural areas of Bokakhat and the Kuruwabahi region of Golaghat district posing serious risks to public health and agriculture;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the extent of arsenic contamination detected in drinking and irrigation water sources in the said areas and the diseases reported to be linked to such contamination;

(c) whether the Government has assessed the impact of arsenic-contaminated groundwater on soil quality and Rabi crop productivity and if so, the details thereof;

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to provide arsenic-free drinking and irrigation water including the use of surface water bodies such as ponds, reservoirs and rivers; and

(e) whether any time-bound mitigation plan exists for soil restoration, alternative irrigation and farmer support in arsenic-affected areas of Assam and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY**)**

(a) & (b) The Central Ground Water Board **(**CGWB) under this Ministry, generates groundwater quality data at a regional scale across the country including Assam, as a part of its groundwater quality monitoring programme and scientific studies conducted based on the approved Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The ground water quality data of CGWB for Assam indicates that the ground water in the state remains largely potable. However, localized occurrence of certain contaminants, including heavy metals like Arsenic, beyond the limits prescribed for drinking water use has been reported in some isolated pockets.

Though consumption of ground water for drinking purpose having Arsenic above the permissible limits over a sustained period of time may cause adverse health effects, further detailed studies are required to establish clear linkage of Arsenic contamination in ground water with diseases in Assam.

(c) Arsenic contamination is known to be largely geogenic in nature, that is to say that the contamination originates from the soil and rock matrix itself, which can leach into ground water and subsequently can enter food chain.

(d) & (e) 'Water' is a state subject and the responsibility of ground water management, including taking initiatives for improving ground water quality and mitigate the contamination issue, lies primarily with the

state governments. The Central Government complements the efforts of the States by providing technical support and financial assistance through its various schemes and projects.

i. The Union government's efforts towards handling ground water quality issues are mainly channelized through Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, being implemented by this Ministry in partnership with states, for providing potable tap water to every rural household of the country. Following measures have been taken under JJM to facilitate action on water quality aspects at state level:-

- Safe drinking water has been one of the key priorities under the JJM since its inception. Under JJM, Bureau of Indian Standards' BIS:10500 standards have been adopted as prescribed norms for quality of tap water service delivery.
- The "Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Framework" was devised and disseminated to states in October 2021.
- To facilitate implementation of the above said Framework, around 2870 water quality testing laboratories have been set up in the country. 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.

ii. CGWB has been conducting aquifer studies under National Aquifer Mapping Programme (NAQUIM), in which special attention is given to the aspect of ground water quality including contamination by toxic substances such as Arsenic in ground water. The study reports along with mitigation measures are disseminated to the State and District administrations for suitable field interventions. Further, CGWB has developed the innovative cement sealing technology for tapping deeper Arsenic free aquifers and has so far successfully constructed 525 Arsenic safe exploratory wells in the country and is also providing technical assistance to state departments for taking up similar constructions.

iii. Parallelly, the Government has been taking several steps in States/UTs for developing/rejuvenating water bodies, artificial recharge to ground water and rainwater harvesting through progemmes like Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA), Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB), Mission Amrit Sarovar etc., which apart from augmenting the existing water sources of drinking and irrigation, also create new and safe sources.

iv. Additionally, the government is promoting conjunctive use of Ground water and Surface water and further supporting several dam/water body desiltation programmes, canal development and extension projects, inter-linking of rivers etc. to augment the supply and coverage of surface water to cater to various agricultural and domestic needs of the country, including Assam.

v. Moreover, under National Project on Soil Health & Fertility Scheme, the Soil Health Cards (SHCs) are being used to monitor and improve soil health.

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