

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:96
ANSWERED ON:16.08.2012
CONTAMINATION OF DRINKING WATER
Lagadapati Shri Rajagopal;Panda Shri Prabodh

Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a recent study conducted by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar and BARC has found traces of Uranium and other radio-active, heavy metals in the drinking/ underground water in Punjab;
- (b) if so, the details thereof: and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to deal with the problem?

Answer

MINISTER OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (c): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred in reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 96 to be answered on 16/8/2012

(a): Yes, Sir.

(b): As per information available, in the year 2009, Gurunanak Dev University analyzed for Uranium in nearly 100 ground water samples of 22 villages in Bhatinda district in Punjab and found traces of Uranium. Subsequently, the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation, Government of Punjab has so far sent 2,000 drinking water samples from deep public tubewells and hand pumps to BARC, Mumbai for analysis of Uranium. Of these, reports for 1,686 water samples have been received, of which 261 samples show uranium concentration above the permissible limits of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). District-wise details of water samples sent to BARC for uranium testing and results obtained thereof are given at Annexure-1.

Out of 981 water samples sent to Punjab Bio-Technology Incubator (PBTI), Mohali for testing of heavy metals, as per available information, reports of 976 water samples have been received, of which 188 water samples show heavy metals concentrations in excess of permissible limits. District-wise details of water samples sent to PBTI for heavy metals testing and results obtained thereof are given at Annexure-2.

(c): The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India has taken following steps:

- (i) Release of additional funds of Rs 3.80 crore to Punjab for testing Uranium and heavy metals in drinking water sources in the affected districts in the State.
- (ii) An Expert Team constituted by the Government of Punjab comprising of senior officials from Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Science & Technology and Government of Punjab held detailed discussions on 24 July 2012 and shortlisted suitable technologies for field trials/ R&D.
- (iii) Assisting the Government of Punjab to set up an Advanced Testing laboratory for Uranium and Heavy metals in SAS Nagar, Mohali for intensive monitoring.