

**Title:** Request the Government to tackle the arsenic water contamination in West Bengal and provide adequate funds to solve the problem.

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (ULUBERIA): Sir, the problem of getting safe drinking water is almost universal in India. Thousands of village areas are not getting safe drinking water but I want to draw the attention of the House to one specific problem.

In West Bengal, in nine districts, the underground water is contaminated with arsenic. It is nobody's creation; it is a natural problem. The Desert Development Fund is used where there are deserts. If an anti-salinity scheme is there in a specific area, it is utilised. So, the Central Government should have a specific plan for specific problems. Arsenic contamination in water is a specific problem in nine out of the seventeen districts of West Bengal. About four crore people are affected as it is creating incurable diseases. Thousands of people are being crippled when they consume the arsenic contaminated water. It is a very serious and a specific problem of West Bengal. So, like the Desert Development Programme for desert areas, there should be a specific programme for this specific problem in West Bengal. My request to the Government is that it should not be mingled with other programmes. A specific scheme should be evolved. Earlier, the Central Government would give funds but the Ministry of Rural Development has stopped giving funds for cleaning the water. This is a very serious problem and I request the Government to take a serious stand. A scheme to tackle the arsenic problem should be formulated by the Government and funds should be provided to solve this problem.

SHRI TARIT BARAN TOPDAR (BARRACKPORE): My only submission is that the Government should not discontinue the projects that deal with this problem of arsenic contamination in water.