

Title: Need to take measures to check arsenic contamination in the country, particularly in West Bengal.

SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHARY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): I would like to draw the attention of this House to the appalling situation in West Bengal which has come up, thanks to arsenic contamination. My State, West Bengal in general and the district Murshidabad in particular have been severely affected by the contamination. This arsenic monster has already taken a toll of many lives and thousands are destined for the same fate. As we know the human body can consume arsenic to the level of 0.5 mg of arsenic per ltr. While in many places it is found that arsenic level has been sought up to .80 mg./ltr. which is considered more than lethal. No geographical information system has come into the force. Detection of spot sources is not being conducted as much as required. People do not know whether the water they are consuming is free from contamination or not. In my district, Murshidabad, alone ten lakhs of people have been affected. No rehabilitation measure for these poor victims have yet been taken.

As directed by the Calcutta High Court, Director of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has submitted its report and steps have been suggested for eight districts. I must say that the Government should treat it as a national problem because other States are also reported to have been affected by arsenic contamination.