

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1980
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.12.2017

Arsenic in Water

1980. SHRI AJAY MISRA TENI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the level of arsenic in water has reached hazardous levels due to discharge of industrial waste and the ashes from coal based power plants into prominent rivers of the country including Ganga and Yamuna;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted a study regarding the likely effects on the human health due to increased levels of arsenic in water and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether arsenic also causes adverse effects on the human brain, nervous system and foetus development; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the measures being taken by the Government to check the rising levels of arsenic in river water?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) to (e) As per information received from the Central Pollution Control Board which monitors the water quality of rivers Ganga and Yamuna, surface water of the two rivers does not indicate the presence of arsenic. The studies carried out by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) in respect of ground water quality monitoring indicate that groundwater is contaminated with arsenic in parts of 153 districts in 21 States and UTs. Long-term exposure to arsenic in drinking water may cause several health implications.

Remedial measures undertaken in arsenic contaminated areas include sharing of ground water quality analysis data by the CGWB with concerned State agencies for awareness and necessary action; exploratory drilling for tapping contamination free aquifers in the affected areas; National Aquifer Mapping Programme in the XIIth plan including construction of tubewells for tapping arsenic safe deeper aquifers in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal; control of industrial pollution under the provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution), Act, 1974; river action plans for interception, diversion and treatment of sewage; establishment of continuous water quality monitoring systems; directions to the SPCBs under Section 18(1)(b) of the Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to direct concerned agencies in the State/UT to develop infrastructure for sewage treatment; consent management for compliance of standards by SPCBs/PCCs to improve water quality of the rivers with respect to industrial effluents; directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 regarding treatment and utilization of sewage for restoration of water quality of rivers.
