

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 236
ANSWERED ON 02/02/2026**

**CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER, GOVERNANCE FAILURES, AND
ACCOUNTABILITY IN URBAN INDIA**

236. SHRI SANJAY RAUT:

Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken note of the Indore incident where deaths and serious illnesses were reported due to contaminated drinking water;
- (b) whether Government acknowledges that such incidents reflect governance and infrastructure failures rather than climate change alone;
- (c) whether ageing and leaking water pipelines running close to sewage lines continue to contaminate drinking water in several cities;
- (d) whether there is a single authority accountable for drinking water safety; and
- (e) the number of officials held responsible in Indore case and whether a time-bound overhaul of urban water distribution systems is proposed to prevent recurrence?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
(SHRI TOKHAN SAHU)**

(a) to (d): The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has taken note of the Indore incident. Water is a State subject. Government of India supplements the efforts of the States through schematic interventions/ advisories. It provides financial and technical support to the States through various schemes/ Missions such as Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and AMRUT 2.0 for approved infrastructure projects aimed at improving urban services, including water supply and sewerage systems. Under this Mission, the State/ UTs are empowered to select, appraise, prioritise and implement the projects as per their local requirements including augmentation/ rehabilitation of infrastructure as per Mission guidelines. The State Governments are responsible for monitoring, enforcement and corrective action for drinking water safety. The operation, maintenance and replacement of old deteriorated pipelines is the responsibility of ULBs/ parastatals.

The Ministry has published Manual on Water Supply and Treatment Systems (Drink from Tap) in March 2024 (<https://mohua.gov.in/publication/manual-on-water-supply-and-treatment-systems---drink-from-tap---march-2024.php>), for reference by the States/ ULBs for designing and implementation of the water supply projects. The manual has a Chapter on “Drinking water quality monitoring and surveillance”, which outlines the standard procedures for various components of drinking water quality monitoring and surveillance and sanitary surveillance (inspection) activities to be undertaken by Urban Water Service Providers.

Under AMRUT 2.0, cities have prepared City Water Balance Plans (CWBP), which include as-is assessment of water supply systems which help cities/ ULBs to identify vulnerabilities such as redundancy, protected alignments, surge control and strengthening of old networks and prioritise system-strengthening measures which includes strengthening water supply networks. Further, to strengthen maintenance systems, digital monitoring, energy efficiency and emergency preparedness, AMRUT promotes the adoption of smart elements/ Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) based operations. Capacity building of engineers and utility staff is also undertaken under this Mission.

The State Government has informed immediately upon receiving information on 28.12.2025 regarding incidents of vomiting and diarrhoea in Bhagirath Pura, Indore, the Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) along with the Health Department and Public Health Engineering Department initiated a joint and prompt response. First and foremost, all sick patients were attended to and the ones who were serious, were hospitalized in super-speciality Medical College and Private hospital of repute. Not so sick were attended to by Health and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) workers with door-to-door survey and distribution of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) packets and Chlorine tablets for Water disinfection. Water Supply through pipelines and borewells were completely stopped and water tankers were forced into service. Samples were taken from multiple supply points at user end to ascertain the type of contamination and sent to NABL accredited labs. Immediate remedial action like identifications of leakages, possibility of inter mixing of contaminated water was taken up and repair works started. The area has old pipelines dating 1997 and some of it is damaged, so municipal administration identified the old stretches of pipeline and included in AMRUT 2.0

The State Government has provided ex-gratia financial assistance to the families of the deceased as per prevailing State norms. ₹40 lakh compensation was given to the deceased from Bhagirath Pura. Medical treatment to affected persons was provided free of cost in Government/ Private hospitals. In Bhagirath Pura, 35,421 households surveyed by health officials in which 1,64,942 people were screened. 454 patients were admitted to hospital out of which 441 have been discharged. AIIMS Bhopal experts visited Indore on 03.01.2026 and shared protocol regarding the treatment during meetings and 24X7 medical facility has been ensured by the State.

The State Government has also informed that Standard Operating Procedures are issued to Urban Local Bodies to avoid contamination of water. About 14,181 leakages were detected till date out of which 12,634 leakages have been repaired. Out of 3,298 Over Head Tanks in the State, 3,109 have been cleaned. Similarly, out of 21,215 tubewells, 179 were found polluted and 86 tubewells were closed for use. Regular testing of quality of water is ensured. 656 water samples were found fail out of 80,976 samples, while action was taken at 588 points where pollution was detected. Issues of contamination of water were resolved through 2,821 ***Jal Sunwai***.

A Statewide Clean Water Campaign “***Swacch Jal Abhiyaan***” has been launched from January 10, 2026 with the objective of ensuring the quality of drinking water supplied to citizens in urban and rural areas of the State, building public trust in the water supply system, and realizing the vision of water-secure cities and villages. The campaign's theme is Water Security, Water Conservation, Water Awareness i.e. “***Jal Suraksha, Jal Sanrakshan, Jal Sunwai***”.

(e): The State Government has informed that disciplinary action has been taken against the officers responsible for lapses in discharge of duties in connection with the Bhagirathpura incident. The Commissioner, IMC was transferred and Additional Commissioner & in-charge of Drinking Water Supply was transferred. Subsequently, the Executive Engineer (Narmada), has been placed under suspension on 02.01.2026 for serious lapse in discharge of duties related to the incident. Further, on 30.12.2025, the Assistant Engineer, Zone No. 04, and Zonal Officer, Zone No. 04, Ward No. 11, were placed under suspension for carelessness, negligence and disobedience of orders of senior officers and departmental inquiries have been initiated against them. Muster Sub-Engineer, Zone No. 04, Ward No. 11, has been relieved from duty (terminated), his remuneration was stopped and his employment ID was permanently locked.

As informed by the State, under AMRUT, three drinking water supply schemes worth ₹541 crore and two Sewerage schemes worth ₹278 crore were implemented for Indore City. Further, there are 2 Water supply schemes worth ₹1142 crore and 4 Sewerage schemes worth ₹534 crore have been sanctioned under AMRUT 2.0. Two water Supply schemes worth ₹1121.54 crore are implemented by IMC.

The Indore Municipal Corporation has tendered four packages of the water supply projects for Indore City under AMRUT 2.0, out of which execution of Package-1 has commenced and the remaining three packages are at the approval stage. The project covers the complete water supply chain and includes comprehensive overhauling, augmentation and modernization of the existing water supply system, encompassing source development, treatment, conveyance, storage and citywide distribution. All packages include system integration, commissioning and long-term operation and maintenance to ensure a safe, reliable and sustainable drinking water supply for the urban area.
