

## Centre looking at mandatory drinking water standards

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Minister Paswan moots Clean Water Mission for nationwide access to safe drinking water

The government is exploring whether it can make the standards for drinking water mandatory across the country.

The idea was mooted at a time samples of water supplied by Delhi Jal Board, collected by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) from 11 locations in the capital, failed to meet required standards on 42 different parameters like pH levels, odour, metal content, total dissolved solids (TDS).

Though a decision has not been taken yet, the topic came up for discussion at a meeting of officials from BIS, Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Ministry of Jal Shakti, and chaired by Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs Ram Vilas Paswan.

Many who participated in the meeting were of the opinion the standards should be made mandatory to make them mandatory.

Addressing media after the meeting, Paswan said that there was a need to launch a *Swachh Pani Abhiyan* (Clean water mission), in similar lines as the *Swachh Bharat* Mission. Having access to safe drinking water should be given is top priority as it affects people's lives.

Paswan said it was the responsibility of DJB to provide clean drinking water to all residents of Delhi and people are facing numerous issues due to this.

The Minister also directed BIS officials to collect samples from other State capitals and compile the results by November. The BIS officials said they have commenced the process of collecting samples for the same.

Paswan said that BIS has been asked to write letters to all States, including Delhi, and also to concerned officials from various Ministries to create a consensus among them regarding making the standards mandatory. "This is an important matter that touches the lives of all citizens, especially children, who are most vulnerable," he said. He also called upon the media to make a people's movement out of this initiative.

The NDA government has already announced it would provide piped drinking water to all households by 2024.