

'SURFACE WATER TOP PRIORITY'

MANISH ANAND
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Jairam Ramesh

In a clear admission that the state governments have largely been spending funds under National Rural Drinking Water Programme for installation of hand pumps only, Union rural development

minister Jairam Ramesh said on Thursday that a shift will be made in the 12th five-year Plan towards giving priority to surface drinking water, while expressing concerns at the widespread contamination of water with arsenic, fluorosis and iron in eastern and Central parts of the country. The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal under which three per cent of the total NRDWP fund of ₹9,750 crores amounting to about ₹300 crores would be allocated to state government for water quality monitoring purposes.