Uranium Contamination

Why in news?

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A study has found widespread uranium contamination in groundwater from aquifers in 16 Indian states.

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What are the findings?

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- The main source of Uranium is natural.
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- But human factors such as groundwater-table decline and nitrate pollution may exacerbate the problem.
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- Over-exploitation of groundwater for irrigation also have exacerbated the problem.
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- Many of India’s aquifers are composed of clay, silt and gravel carried down from the Himalayas by streams or uranium-rich granitic rocks.
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- When overpumping of these aquifers’ groundwater occurs and their water levels decline, it induces conditions that enhance uranium enrichment in the shallow groundwater that remains.
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- Nearly a third of all water wells tested in Rajasthan contained uranium levels that exceed the WHO safe drinking water standards.
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- It also identified aquifers contaminated with similarly high levels in 26 other districts in northwestern India and nine districts in southern or southeastern India.
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- So there is a need to revise current water-quality monitoring programmes in India and re-evaluate human health risks in areas of high uranium prevalence.
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Source: The Hindu

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