

UNICEF to tap state on arsenic

Mohana Dam
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UNICEF MIGHT buy filters made in West Bengal to help mitigate the problem of arsenic in drinking water at the global level. The West Bengal Engineering College has started work on building filters in 2001.

UNICEF has already held talks with health engineers and district magistrates. The UN body is also impressed with the work the state has put in to clean up water tainted by arsenic. West Bengal is among the few states to have discovered the means to tone down the prevalence of arsenic in the districts.

"In 2005, around 3.3 million people were at risk in West Ben-



gal. One in hundred million people might be affected. However, since then two million have been given an alternative source of drinking water," said Ross Nickson, project officer, water quality UNICEF

Togola Soungalo, programme officer of UNICEF's water, environment and sanitation department, has already made a trip to Bihar and plans to visit the state.

"The arsenic problem has been there for long. The time has come to eradicate it. The high concentration of arsenic in drinking water leads to innumerable health problems including skin diseases."

Soungalo added, "In West Bengal everyone is aware of the dangers of arsenic. We have plans to borrow their expertise."

Soungalo has plans to take a tour around the different areas of the state which includes North 24-Parganas and Chakda block in Nadia.

mohana.dam@gmail.com