

# Bottled water? You could be drinking sex hormone

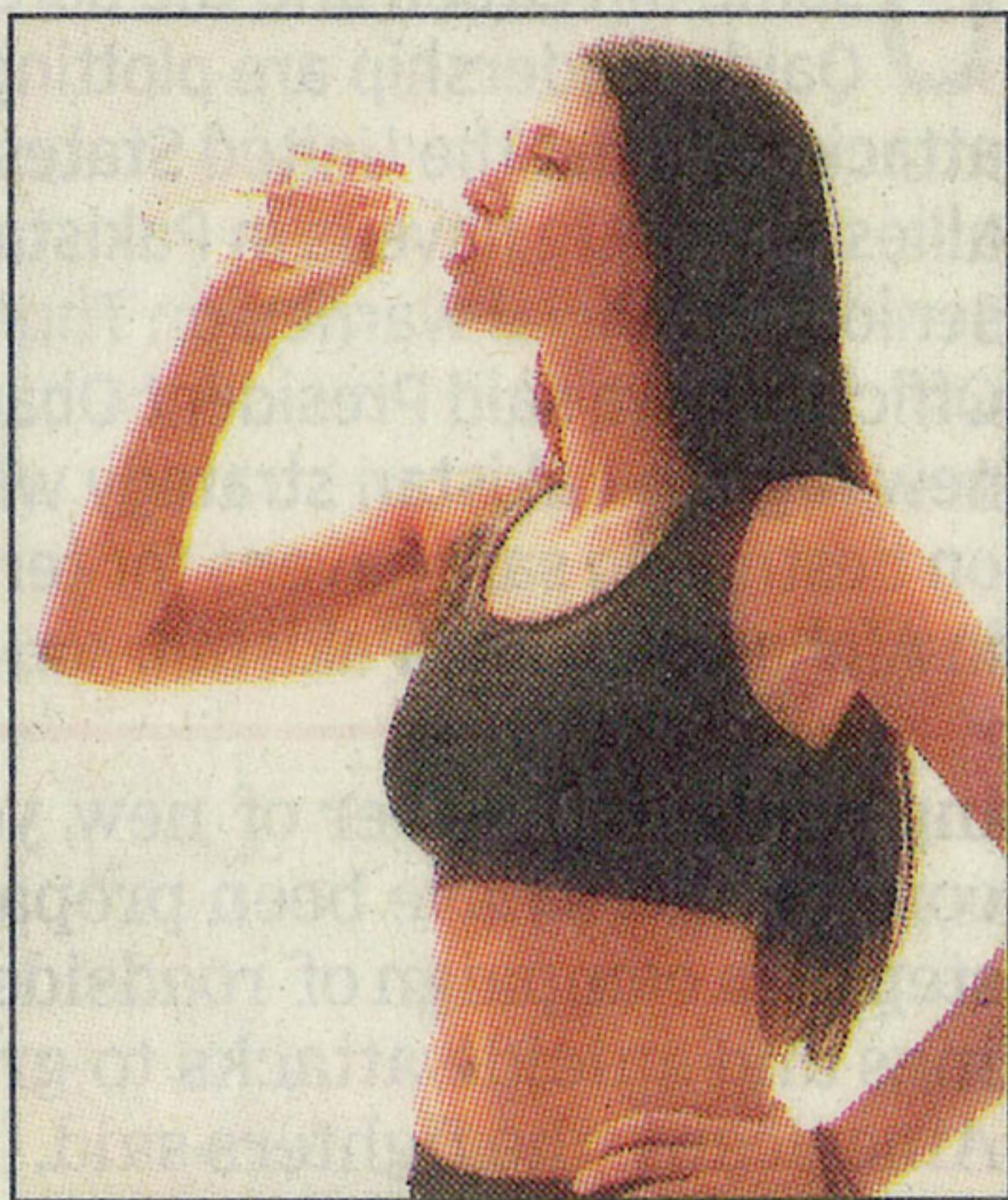
**London:** Drinking mineral water from a plastic bottle may mean you are also drinking a sex hormone that affects your reproductive system. Researchers have found evidence of chemicals containing the female sex hormone estrogen leaching out of the packaging into the water.

Estrogen is the main female sex hormone, and taking it unwittingly may interfere with the reproductive process. Besides interfering with the reproductive process, estrogens may reduce the flow of breast milk.

Martin Wagner and Jorg Oehlmann from Goethe University, in Frankfurt, analysed 20 brands of mineral water available in Germany — nine bottled in glass, nine bottled in plastic and two bottled in composite packaging (paperboard boxes coated with an inner plastic film).

They took samples from the bottles and tested them for the presence of estrogen-containing chemicals. They then carried out a reproduction test with the New Zealand mud snail to determine the source and potency of the hormones.

The researchers found that these chemicals are potent in living organisms and are causing an increased development



**TOXIC GULP:** Plastic bottles are found to have chemicals that contain estrogenic compounds, which can impair reproduction and reduce flow of breast milk

of embryos in the snails.

They detected estrogen contamination in 60% of the samples (12 of the 20 brands) analysed. Mineral waters in glass bottles had less estrogen than waters in plastic bottles. Specifically, 33% of all mineral waters bottled in glass compared with 78% of waters in plastic bottles showed significant hormonal activity.

By breeding the New Zealand mud snail in both plastic and glass water bottles, the researchers found more than double the number of embryos in plastic bottles compared with glass bottles. IANS