

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 19.11.2009
ANSWERED ON
DAM ON YARLONG TSANGPO RIVER .

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SHRI R.C. SINGH

Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether his Ministry is aware that China is constructing dam on Yarlong Tsangpo river which become Brahmaputra when it enters into India;
- (b) by when it came to be known that China is constructing dam on Brahmaputra;
- (c) the action it has proposed to take with the help of External Affairs Ministry and through diplomatic channels to stop illegal construction of such dam;
- (d) in what manner India is coordinating with Bangladesh since it is also affected with the construction of dam; and
- (e) what the Joint Mechanism Group was doing when China had already begun construction of dam for all these years?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES

(SHRI VINCENT H. PALA)

(a) to (c) There have been media reports for a long time now, regarding China undertaking projects to divert waters of the Brahmaputra River and construct a dam on it. Government has taken up this issue with the Chinese side at the highest level. The spokesman of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has denied such reports saying that China has no such project of diversion of water from the Yarlung Zangbo (Brahmaputra). On 15th October, 2009, Indian express published an article about construction of dam on Yarlung Zangbo in Tibet Autonomous Region. In response to it, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson said on 20th October, 2009 “as far as I know the reports of Indian media are inconsistent with facts”. Further on 5th November, 2009 the Chinese Foreign Ministry Official Spokesperson added “China is a responsible country which never does things to undermine other country’s interest.” The Ministry of External Affairs is looking into the said newspaper report to ascertain whether there are recent developments that suggest any change in position conveyed to MEA by the Government of China. According to the available information no dam is being constructed on the Brahmaputra River. Construction of damming/ power generation activities is being done on tributaries of Brahmaputra river. After media report (Indian Express dated 15/10/2009) regarding the construction of dam on River Brahmaputra at Zangmu, the area was examined by specialized Government agency in India. However, it could not be confirmed whether some of the activities in the vicinity of the reported area are associated with diversion of water or construction of dam by China.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) There is no treaty/ agreement with China regarding sharing of waters of trans border rivers. However, as agreed in the joint declaration during the visit of Hon’ble President of China in November 2006 an Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) between India and China has been constituted to discuss interaction and cooperation on the provision of flood season hydrological data, emergency management and other issues regarding trans-border Rivers as agreed between them. Three meetings of ELM between India and China have been held so far in month of September 2007, April 2008 and April 2009. During these meetings the issues related to hydrological data sharing and emergency management were broadly discussed. In the second meeting, a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for provision of hydrological information (rainfall, water level, discharge and other relevant information) in respect of 3 stations in Tibet (namely, Nugesha, Yangcun and Nuxia) in flood season by China to India, was drafted and agreed between the two sides. This MoU with a validity of five years was subsequently signed with China on 05.06.08 during the visit of Hon’ble External Affairs Minister of India to Beijing.