

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1790**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.03.2023

**Environmental clearance for Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project**

1790. SHRI P.WILSON:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the route/alignment approved by environmental clearance for Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project right from March, 1998; and
- (b) whether there are environmental reports relating to Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project and various alignments approved by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (c): Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report along with Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is a prime requirement for the grant of prior environmental clearance for the projects and/or activities listed in the Schedule of EIA Notification, 2006. Six alternative alignments were suggested based on several studies for the project. The environmental clearance for the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project (SSCP) was granted on 31.03.2005. The clearance was granted for alignment No 6.

The project was challenged in the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide SLP No. 20758/2005 (*O. Fernandes Vs. T.N.P.C.B.*) wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India suggested an alternative alignment without cutting Adam's Bridge / Ram Sethu. Accordingly, the Government did not implement the said alignment and intended to explore an alternative to the earlier alignment without affecting/ damaging the Adam's Bridge/ Ram Sethu.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change vide letter dated 17.08.2012 communicated that the Environment Clearance was granted to Alignment No. 6; and in case of change in the alignment of channel/ project proposal, fresh Environment Clearance would have to be sought from the MoEF&CC under the provisions of EIA Notification, 2006 and CRZ Notification, 2011.

No further work on the SSCP or exploring of new alignment has been undertaken by the Government. No proposal for grant of Environmental Clearance for the new alignment has been received in the Ministry.

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