

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-393
ANSWERED ON- 06/02/2025

WORLD'S LARGEST DAM ON THE BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER BY CHINA

393. SHRI RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether Government has taken cognisance of China's decision to construct world's largest dam, on the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, including its hydrological and ecological implications on Assam, Nagaland and Meghalaya due to unguided blockage or sudden discharge of large amounts of water;
- (b) whether China can undertake such a project unilaterally when Brahmaputra flows through India and Bangladesh, if so, Government's diplomatic stand on the same; and
- (c) whether Government has received/sought any assurances from China through bilateral agreements or Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) to prevent water-related hostilities or adverse impacts on India's Northeast region, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a to c) Government of India has taken note of China's announcement of a mega dam project approved on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Tsangpo (upper reaches of the Brahmaputra) River in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Government carefully monitors all developments relating to the Brahmaputra river, including plans by China to develop hydropower projects, and takes necessary measures to protect our interests, including preventive and corrective measures to safeguard life and livelihood of Indian citizens residing in downstream areas.

Various issues relating to trans-border rivers are discussed with China under the ambit of an institutionalized Expert Level Mechanism which was established in 2006, as well as through diplomatic channels. As a lower riparian state with considerable established user rights to the waters of the trans-border rivers, Government has consistently conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authorities, and has urged them to ensure that the interests of downstream states are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas. Following the recent announcement by China of the mega dam project, we have amplified our concerns and demarched them on 30 December 2024, including on the need for transparency and consultation with downstream countries.

The issue was also raised during the visit of Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri to Beijing for a meeting of the Foreign Secretary-Vice Foreign Minister mechanism between India and China. During the visit, India and China agreed to hold an early meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism to discuss resumption of provision of hydrological data and other cooperation pertaining to trans-border rivers. Government of India intends to remain engaged with China on the issue of trans-border rivers to safeguard our interests.
