

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3275
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.08.2025

Unchecked illegal sand mining along the Yamuna river

3275. SHRI RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA

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

- (a) whether Government is aware of reports regarding widespread illegal and unregulated sand mining along the banks and bed of the Yamuna river, and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the impact of illegal sand mining on the Yamuna Action Plan (YAP), particularly with respect to pollution control, flow regulation and river rejuvenation; and
- (c) the details of action taken including the number of FIRs lodged, persons arrested, and convictions made in connection with violations under the YAP?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (c) Sand is a minor mineral under Section 3(e) of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957. Section 15 of the MMDR Act, 1957, empowers the State Governments to make rules for regulating the grant of minor mineral concessions.

The definition of illegal mining is provided in Mineral Concession rules 2016 notified under MMDR Act, 1957 by Ministry of Mines. Section 23C of MMDR Act, 1957 empowers the State Governments to frame rules to prevent illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals and for purposes connected therewith.

The MMDR Act, 1957 was amended through the MMDR Amendment Act, 2015, which came into effect from 12th January, 2015, wherein Section 30B and 30C read with section 21 and 23C, inter-alia, provides stringent punitive provisions for combating illegal mining. Illegal mining has been made punishable with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to five years and with fine, which may extend to five lakh rupees per hectare of the area. Provisions have been made for setting up of Special Courts for the purpose of providing speedy trial of offences relating to illegal mining.

The environmental damages caused by illegal sand mining includes riverbed degradation, loss of aquatic habitat, increased turbidity, water table depletion, soil erosion, flooding, damage to infrastructure, loss of fertile land, negative impact on local ecosystems decreased water quality and hazardous impact on ecological equilibrium of riverine regime. MoEF&CC has taken several steps to ensure adherence to environmental safeguards during

mining of minerals. These include, inter-alia, mandating the requirement of prior environmental clearance under the provisions of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended from time to time.

Ministry has also issued the Sustainable Sand Mining Guidelines, 2016 and Enforcement and Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining 2020 to put in place an appropriate regulatory regime for sustainable sand mining and adoption of environmentally friendly management practices. The Environmental Clearance is granted together with prescribed general and specific conditions.

The Government of India has been supplementing the efforts of the States for Rivers by providing financial assistance to different States i.e. Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh in a phased manner since 1993 under the Yamuna Action Plan (YAP). The pollution abatement work taken up under YAP relates to sewerage/interception and diversion of drains, sewage treatment plants (STPs), low cost creation of sanitation/community toilet complexes, electric/improved wood crematoria, etc which lead to the conservation of River Yamuna.

Under the Yamuna Action Plan Phase I & II, an expenditure of Rs. 1,514.70 crores have been incurred for the creation of a sewage treatment capacity of 483 MLD and rehabilitation of 328 MLD Sewerage Treatment Plants (STPs) in the States of Haryana & Delhi for the conservation of river Yamuna. Further, the Government of India/ National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has sanctioned a total of 33 projects costing Rs. 5,911 crores for 2,130 MLD STP to abate pollution load discharged in the River Yamuna.

State Government have taken various measures for prevention of illegal mining, illegal storage and illegal transportation including enforcement measures like seizure of vehicles, imposition of penalty, etc.
