

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2443
ANSWERED ON 21.12.2022

ILLEGAL SAND MINING

2443. DR. JAYANTA KUMAR ROY:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether illegal sand mining from riverbed is rampant in different rivers of district of Jalpaiguri, West Bengal and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether illegal sand mining is resulting in soil erosion and floods in the nearby locality for years and several tea gardens, agricultural fields and wild forests have been submerged during rainy season resulting in huge loss of land or property;

(c) if so, the remedial action taken thereon;

(d) the details of criteria for mining from these riverbeds and penalty for violating these guidelines under the extant rules; and

(e) the other steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF MINES, COAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

(a) to (e): Sand is a minor mineral under Section 3(e) of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act). Section 15 of the MMDR Act empowers the State Governments for making rules for regulating the grant of quarry leases, mining leases or other mineral concessions in respect of minor minerals and for purposes connected therewith. Hence, the regulation of minor minerals comes under the legislative and administrative domain of the State Governments.

Further, Section 23C of the MMDR Act empowers the State Governments to make rules for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals and for the purposes connected therewith. Hence, control of illegal mining comes under the legislative and administrative purview of the State Governments.

However, the Ministry of Mines has prepared a 'Sand Mining Framework' in consultation with Mining Departments of the States incorporating best practices amongst States with the objectives of sustainability, availability, affordability, and transparency in sand mining. The 'Sand Mining Framework' has been circulated to all the State Governments for necessary action. Moreover, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has issued Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines, 2016, which, inter-alia, addresses the issues relating to the regulation of sand mining.
