

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2437
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.12.2023

Environmental Degradation due to Illegal Mining

2437. SHRIMATI HARSIMRAT KAUR BADAL:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the ravaging of river basins by illegal mining mafia in the country specially in the State of Punjab;
- (b) whether the Government proposes any action against the erring State and State officials in this regard;
- (c) the details of illegal mining spots in the country where mining activities are carried and causing environmental degradation and hazards; and
- (d) the steps taken/to be taken by the Government to review and protect the illegal mining spots in the country?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) Section 23C of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation Act) Act (MMDR Act) 1957, empowers the State Governments to frame rules to prevent illegal mining and the State Governments may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make such 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.

The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has issued the Enforcement & Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining in 2020, supplemental to Sustainable Sand Management Guidelines, 2016, to regulate the Sand Mining in the Country from its identification to its final end-use by the consumers and the general public and to control the instance of illegal mining through IT-enabled services and latest technologies for surveillance of the Sand mining at each step. This document serves as a guideline for collection of critical information including the water level and other environmental parameters for enforcement of the regulatory provision(s) and it also highlights the essential infrastructural requirements necessary for effective monitoring for Sustainable Sand Mining and to control illegal mining.

Further, MoEF & CC has taken several steps to ensure adherence to the environmental safeguards due to 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. Baseline data generation forms a vital part of the Environment Impact Assessment studies for the projects scheduled in the EIA Notification 2006. This study helps in evaluation and prediction of impacts on the various environmental attributes in the study /project area by using scientifically developed & widely accepted environmental impact methodology which covers air quality, water, noise, land environment, ecology, biodiversity and socio-economic parameters.
