

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2824
ANSWERED ON 15.12.2021

ILLEGAL MINING OF MAJOR AND MINOR MINERALS

2824. SHRI RAJU BISTA:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of cases pertaining to illegal mining of major and minor minerals especially sand mining reported in the districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong;
- (b) whether the Government has taken measures to check illegal mining of sand and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has held any discussions with the State Government of West Bengal with regard to illegal sand mining and if so, the details and the outcome thereof; and
- (d) the details of the steps taken/being taken by the Government to check the damage to the environment from illegal mining of sand from the river beds?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d): 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 (both major and minor minerals) and for the purposes connected therewith. Hence, control of illegal mining comes under the legislative and administrative domain of the State Governments.

Ministry of Mines has also prepared a 'Sand Mining Framework' in consultation with Mining Departments of the States incorporating best practices amongst States and suggestions based on the objectives of sustainability, availability, affordability and transparency in sand mining. The 'Sand Mining Framework' was circulated to all the States for necessary action. Moreover, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has issued Sustainable Sand Management Guidelines, 2016 and Enforcement & Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining, 2020 for effective enforcement of regulatory provision and their monitoring in respect of sand mining from its commencement to final end-use by the consumers.
