

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. 19**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.07.2025

**Impact of Illegal Sand Mining**

\*19. DR. KADIYAM KAVYA

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any study on the impact of illegal sand mining on the Godavari riverbank in erstwhile Warangal district of Telangana and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of the afforestation projects undertaken in the said district under the National Mission for a Green India;
- (c) the measures taken/being taken to protect the Pakhal Lake and Wildlife Sanctuary from encroachments and pollution; and
- (d) the funds allocated for promoting eco-tourism in Warangal's forest areas during the last year and the current year?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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**Statement Referred to in Reply to paras (a) to (d) Lok Sabha Starred Question No.\*19 due for reply on 21.07.2025 (Monday) regarding “Impact of Illegal Sand Mining” by Dr. Kadiyam Kavya**

**(a)** Sand is classified as a minor mineral under Section 3(e) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) [MMDR] Act, 1957. Illegal mining is defined in Mineral Concession Rules, 2016 notified under MMDR Act, 1957 by Ministry of Mines. In terms of section 15 and Section 23C of the MMDR Act, the power to regulate, monitor, and prevent illegal mining of minor minerals, including sand, rests with the respective State Governments. As per the information provided by the Telangana Pollution Control Board (TGPCB), no complaint regarding illegal sand mining on the Godavari river banks has been received by them. As per the information available in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, no specific study has been conducted on the impact of illegal sand mining on the Godavari river banks in the erstwhile Warangal district of Telangana.

The Central Government, through policy initiatives and technological interventions, supplements the efforts of State Governments in addressing the issues of illegal sand mining. The Ministry of Mines, has taken several steps to support State enforcement mechanisms, including the amendment of the MMDR Act in 2015 to introduce stringent punitive provisions, mandatory registration and reporting under Rule 45 of the Mineral Conservation and Development Rules (MCDR). Ministry of Mines has also developed the Mining Surveillance System (MSS) to check illegal mining activities around mining leases and to assist the State Governments to detect and curb illegal mining activities.

MoEFCC has issued Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines (SSMG), 2016 and Enforcement & Monitoring Guidelines for Sand Mining (EMGSM), 2020 for providing sustainable sand mining and for prevention of illegal sand mining through monitoring mechanism by respective State Governments. Procedures for replenishment study and preparation of district survey report have been provided in the SSMG, 2016 and EMGSM, 2020. These studies and reports can lead to systematic, scientific and environment friendly sand mining, if properly followed.

**(b)** National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the eight Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. It provides funding support to increase the forest/tree cover and improve quality of existing forest, based on the perspective plans submitted by the States in accordance with the guidelines of GIM. The state of Telangana has not submitted their Perspective Plan under GIM and is hence presently not participating in the Green India Mission. As per inputs received from the State Forest Department, Telangana, no afforestation projects have been undertaken in the Warangal region under the National Mission for a Green India.

**(c)** The MoEF&CC has notified the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017, for effective conservation and management of wetlands in the country. Under these Rules, the powers & functions for conservation and management of wetlands were delegated to the State/UT wetland authorities and the State Governments/UT Administrations.

MoEFCC has notified the Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary on 30.11.2016 which provides for certain prohibited activities within ESZ including commercial mining, polluting industries, major hydroelectric projects, production of hazardous substances, discharge of untreated effluents in natural water bodies or land area, etc.

Based on the inputs received from the State Forest Department, Telangana, the following measures are being taken for protection of Pakhal Lake and Wildlife Sanctuary from the encroachments and pollution:

- i. Retrieval of encroached areas
- ii. Prosecution of encroachment cases U/s 20 of Telangana Forest Act, 1967.
- iii. Planting in the encroachment retrieval areas.
- iv. Regular Perambulation to prevent encroachments of forest areas and Wildlife poaching activities
- v. Awareness programs conducted to control wildlife poaching and encroachments in Wildlife Sanctuary area.
- vi. Strict ban on plastic use at Eco-tourism area of Pakhal Lake

As per the information received from the Forest Department of Telangana, an amount of Rs. 274 lakhs has been allocated for eco-restoration works at Pakhal under the Harithanidhi scheme.

As informed by the TGPCB, Regional office, Warangal, water samples are being collected from Pakhal lake every month under National Water Monitoring Programme.

**(d)** The Ministry has issued guidelines on sustainable eco-tourism in forest and wildlife areas in 2021. The Ministry provides financial assistance to States /UTs under the centrally sponsored scheme "Development of Wildlife Habitats" for conservation and management of wildlife and development of its habitat, as per the Annual Plan of Operation received from States/UTs. The activities supported under the scheme includes eco-tourism. No funds have been allocated to the State of Telangana for ecotourism under the scheme during the last one year and current year.

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