e. **Flood Management Programme (FMP):** A total of 17 schemes from West Bengal have been included under FMP of Ministry of Water Resources. So far, a total amount of Rs. 697.73 crore has been released as Central Assistance to these schemes under FMP. Further, there is no scheme in Ministry of Water Resources for providing Central Assistance for harnessing hydel power potential of the State.

New water use policy

1994. SHRI SHADI LAL BATRA:
SHRI RAGHUNANDAN SHARMA:
Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to formulate a new policy to ensure rational use of water in all respects in the country and if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government proposes to introduce a water regulation and pricing mechanism and if so, the details thereof along with the time-frame fixed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) The National Water Resources Council in its meeting held on 28th December, 2012 adopted the National Water Policy, 2012 wherein several recommendations have been made for development and efficient management of water resources in the country. The Salient Features of the National Water Policy, 2012 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) The National Water Policy (2012) contains recommendations for setting up of an independent Statutory Water Regulatory Authority by each State to fix and regulate the water tariff system. The Water Regulatory Authority as recommended by the National Water Policy, 2012 is envisaged as an independent statutory body to be set up by the States themselves.

Statement

Salient features of National Water Policy (2012)

1. Emphasis on the need for a national water framework law, comprehensive legislation for optimum development of inter-State rivers and river valleys.

2. Water, after meeting the pre-emptive needs for safe drinking water and sanitation, achieving food security, supporting poor people dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and high priority allocation for minimum eco-

system needs, be treated as economic good so as to promote its conservation and efficient use.

3. Ecological needs of the river should be determined recognizing that river flows are characterized by low or no flows, small floods (freshets), large floods and flow variability and should accommodate development needs. A portion of river flows should be kept aside to meet ecological needs ensuring that the proportional low and high flow releases correspond in time closely to the natural flow regime.

4. Adaptation strategies in view of climate change for designing and management of water resources structures and review of acceptability criteria has been emphasized.

5. A system to evolve benchmarks for water uses for different purposes, *i.e.*, water footprints, and water auditing be developed to ensure efficient use of water. Project financing has been suggested as a tool to incentivize efficient & economic use of water.

6. Setting up of Water Regulatory Authority has been recommended. Incentivization of recycle and re-use has been recommended.

7. Water Users Associations should be given statutory powers to collect and retain a portion of water charges, manage the volumetric quantum of water allotted to them and maintain the distribution system in their jurisdiction.

8. Removal of large disparity in stipulations for water supply in urban areas and in rural areas has been recommended.

9. Water resources projects and services should be managed with community participation. Wherever the State Governments or local governing bodies so decide, the private sector can be encouraged to become a service provider in public private partnership model to meet agreed terms of service delivery, including penalties for failure.

10. Adequate grants to the States to update technology, design practices, planning and management practices, preparation of annual water balances and accounts for the site and basin, preparation of hydrologic balances for water systems, and benchmarking and performance evaluation etc.