Ban on sand mining in the river beds

849. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that river beds of almost all the rivers have become shallow due to ban on sand mining, resulting in frequent floods across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to chalk out a sustainable policy for sand mining, in order to clear sand from shallow river beds across the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) to (c) The Government has not banned river bed sand mining in the country. However, the sand mining from river bed is prohibited in eco-sensitive zones notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Protected Areas notified under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, areas as notified under Aravalli notification dated 07.05.1972 and rivers as identified in Western Ghats based on the report of High Level Working Group. The Ministry has formulated Guidelines on sustainable sand mining management which, *inter-alia*, emphasize on monitoring plans to evaluate the long-term effect of the mining activities both upstream and downstream of sand extraction sites and streamlining the process of impact assessment, environment management plan and environment clearance in cluster situation.

Setting up of tiger safaries by NTCA

850. SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has decided to set up tiger safaries adjoining all its major tiger reserves;

(b) whether it is a fact that today India is home to 70 per cent of the world's wild tigers and there are around 2,226 tigers in 48 Tiger reserves in the country and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether NTCA has also decided to develop a standing operating procedure that would guide the reserves on setting up such safaries and if so, the details thereof; and