

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

(d) whether the move would bring in much needed additional revenue which can be used for the welfare of the endangered species?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) No, Sir. However, there is a provision for establishment of tiger safari under clause 16.21 of National Tiger Conservation Authority (Normative Standards for Tourism activities and Project Tiger) Guidelines, 2012, which states that the tiger safari may be established in the buffer areas of tiger reserves which experience immense tourist influx in the core/critical tiger habitat for viewing tiger.

(b) Yes, Sir. The third countrywide assessment of the status of tigers, co-predators and their prey has been released in January, 2015. The findings indicate a countrywide 30% increase in tiger numbers in 2014 with an estimated number of 2226 (range 1945-2491) as compared to 2010 estimation [1706 (1520-1909 tigers)]. The details of tiger estimation pertaining to tiger landscapes in the country, for the years 2010 and 2014 are given in Statement (*See below*).

(c) No, Sir. However, the National Tiger Conservation Authority has formulated guidelines in this regard.

(d) The objective of establishing tiger safari is not to generate revenue rather it is to reduce tourist influx in the core/critical tiger habitats of tiger reserves.

Statement

*Details of tiger estimation pertaining to tiger landscapes in the country,
for the years 2010 and 2014*

State	Tiger Population		Increase/ Decrease/ Stable
	2010	2014	
1	2	3	4
Shivalik-Gangetic Plain Landscape Complex			
Uttarakhand	227 (199-256)	340	Increase
Uttar Pradesh	118 (113-124)	117	Stable
Bihar	8 (-)	28	Increase
Shivalik Gangetic	353 (320-388)	485 (427-543)	Increase
Central Indian Landscape Complex and Eastern Ghats Landscape Complex			

1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana)	72 (65-79)	68	Stable
Chhattisgarh	26 (24-27)	46	Increase
Madhya Pradesh	257 (213-301)	308	Increase
Maharashtra	169 (155-183)	190	Increase
Odisha	32 (20-44)	28	Stable
Rajasthan	36 (35-37)	45	Increase
Jharkhand	10 (6-14)	3+	Decrease*
Central India	601 (518-685)	688 (596-780)	Increase
Western Ghats Landscape Complex			
Karnataka	300 (280-320)	406	Increase
Kerala	71 (67-75)	136	Increase
Tamil Nadu	163 (153-173)	229	Increase
Goa	-	5	Increase
Western Ghats	534 (500-568)	776 (685-861)	Increase
North Eastern Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains			
Assam	143 (113-173)	167	Increase
Arunachal Pradesh	-	28♣	Increase
Mizoram	5	3+	Stable
North West Bengal	-	3	**
North East Hills, and Brahmaputra	148 (118-178)	201 (174-212)	Increase
Sunderbans	70 (64-90)	76 (92-96)	Stable
TOTAL	1706 (1520-1909)	2226 (1945-2491)	Increase

+ From scat DNA.

♣ From camera trap data and scat DNA.

* Much of the tiger occupied areas could not be surveyed owing to naxal problem.

** Tiger estimation was not done in the year 2010.