

Opposing new dams in upper basin of Ganga in Uttarakhand

843. SHRIMATI WANSUK SYIEM: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether contradicting the common stand of other concerned Ministries, the Ministry has made known its views to the Supreme Court, opposing any new dams in the upper basin of the Ganga in Uttarakhand;

(b) whether the Ministry has told the apex court that the three tributaries of Ganga—Alaknanda, Mandakini and Bhagirathi and the Ganga river from Dev Prayag downwards should remain in their current condition without further disruptions/interruptions or diversions; and

(c) what impact this stand could cause for more than 70 projects with 9,000 megawatt capacity already planned in the region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN):

(a) and (b) In May, 2016, the Ministry has filed an affidavit in Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of IA no. 6 of 2013 in Civil Appeal No. 6736 of 2013- Alaknanda Hydropower Co. Ltd. vs Anuj Joshi & Ors.

In the above affidavit, it has *inter-alia* been conveyed that to ensure the continuous flow of rivers in Upper Ganga basin (which include the rivers Alaknanda, Bhagirathi and Mandakini) from their source upto Gangasagar, these rivers should flow continuously without any interruption to maintain their ecological characteristics and as such there is a need for review of the projects in the larger public interest and commitment for the concept of sustainable development and precautionary principle.

(c) As the matter is *subjudice*, it may not be appropriate to comment at this stage on impact of affidavit on the hydropower projects.

Proposal to frame a law for misuse and wastage of water

844. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to frame a law for optimum use of water, conservation of rivers and underground water and to provide safe drinking water;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the fresh steps taken by Government to check misuse and wastage of water along with continuous recharging of water bodies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN):

(a) and (b) Water being a State subject, State Governments undertake several measures for water conservation, improved water management and water use efficiency, etc. Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments by way of support through various schemes/programmes and also by framing laws/rules/regulations/ guidelines etc. in this regard.

The National Water Policy (2012) has emphasized the need to evolve a National Water Framework Law as an umbrella statement of general principles governing the exercise of legislative/executive powers by the Centre, the States and the local governing bodies.

A Committee headed by Dr. Y.K. Alagh was constituted by this Ministry for Drafting National Water Framework Law on 3rd July, 2012. The Committee submitted its Report to the Government in May, 2013. The report was circulated among all States/ Union Territories and related Central Ministries and also placed on the website of this Ministry. The Draft National Water Framework Law prepared by the Committee proposes to establish a framework with governing principles for protection, conservation and regulation of waters and for matters connected and incidental thereto.

A Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mihir Shah has been constituted on 28.12.2015 to examine the provisions of the draft National Water Framework Law and suggest changes/modifications therein taking into account *inter-alia* the emerging challenges in the water sector, reuse of waste water after treatment, the likely impact of climate change on water resources, importance of river rejuvenation, water contamination issue etc. The Committee has submitted its draft report in May, 2016. The draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 prepared by the Committee has been circulated to all the State Governments/ UTs for inviting their comments thereon. It has also been placed on the website of this Ministry for obtaining comments from general public.

Further, this Ministry had circulated a Model Bill to regulate and control the development of ground water to all State/UTs in 1970. The Model Bill was re-circulated in 1992, 1996 and again in 2005 for adoption. So far, 15 States/UTs have adopted and implemented the ground water legislation on the lines of Model Bill.

(c) There is a special focus under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for water conservation and water harvesting structures to augment ground water. During the period 2014-16, a total of 6,87,561 water conservation and recharge structures have been completed. In addition, priority has been given for construction of farm ponds in the year 2016-17 to harvest rain water; the target for 2016-17 is to construct 8,82,325 farm ponds.

CGWB has taken up Aquifer Mapping and Management programme during XII Plan, under the scheme of Ground Water Management and Regulation. The Aquifer Mapping is aimed at delineating aquifer disposition and their characterization for preparation of aquifer/area specific ground water management plans, to involve the communities in the management of the groundwater. An area of 2.28 lakh sq.km has been mapped till March, 2016.

Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has issued advisory to States/ Union Territories and Ministry of Urban Development to take necessary measures for adopting rain water harvesting/ artificial recharge in all the Government buildings. 30 States/UTs have made rain water harvesting mandatory by enacting laws or by formulating rules and regulations or by including suitable provisions in Building bye-laws or through suitable Government Orders.

This Ministry has also launched 'Jal Kranti Abhiyan' (2015-16 to 2017-18) in order to consolidate water conservation and management in the Country through a holistic and integrated approach involving all stakeholders, making it a mass movement.

The Government of India has launched National Water Mission (NWM) under National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC) with the objective of conservation of water, minimizing wastage and ensuring its more equitable distribution both across and within States through integrated water resources development and management.

Assistance to DDP areas under AIBP

†845. SHRI RAM NARAIN DUDI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of districts in Rajasthan which have been identified as falling under the Desert Development Prone Programme (DDP);

(b) whether Government intends to provide 90 per cent assistance under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) to DDP areas like those under special category States; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.