

(b) whether the experts have estimated the total project cost of river inter-linking a whopping Rs. 5,76,000 crores with a gestation period of 40 years; and

(c) whether the seminar recommended adoption of small/localised solutions closer to users rather than mega projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) The information for answering the question is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

#### **Disposal off publicly owned rivers**

1385. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in 'The Hindu' dated the 23rd January, 2003 captioned, "Rivers' and People's survival" is in the attention of the competent authority;

(b) if so, the details of the sale negotiation for disposal of publicly owned rivers/sand for the last two years, if any;

(c) the category-wise and State-wise details for the last three years;

(d) if so, the action taken to rectify if; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) Sand may be treated as major or minor mineral depending on the usage of the same. Rule 70 of the Mineral Concession Rules (MCR), 1960 defines the use of sand as major mineral. When used for

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purposes other than those mentioned under Rule 70 of MCR, 1960, sand is treated as minor mineral. For minor minerals, mineral concessions are granted by the concerned State Governments under their respective Minor Mineral Concession Rules (MMCRs). For major minerals, mineral concessions are granted by the concerned State Governments under the provisions of MCR, 1960 subject to the condition of submitting a mining plan duly approved by the competent authority under the provisions of 22(4A) of MCR, 1960 by the lease holder.

Mining leases for major minerals are granted under the Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and rules made there under and for minor minerals under the provisions of MMCRs of respective State Governments. Under the MMDR Act, 1957, Section 11 does not provide for auction of mineral concessions for major minerals. As such, the details of sale negotiation for disposal of publicly owned rivers/sand is maintained by the respective State Government.

#### **Underground water level in Delhi**

1386. SHRI P. PRABH AKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the underground water level in Delhi is fast depleting following an increasing demand and decreasing supply of water per day;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to augment the volume of supply so as to reduce the drawal of underground water to the minimum?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BUOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) to (c) As per observations made by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), ground water level is declining in different parts of NCT of Delhi. The Delhi Jal