

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3566
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.08.2026

Impact Assessment of Diversion of Mhadei River

3566. SHRI CAPTAIN VIRIATO FERNANDES:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has undertaken or commissioned any independent environmental, ecological or cumulative impact assessment of proposed diversion of Mhadei River and if so, the details and findings thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has examined concerns raised by environmental experts, scientific institutions and civil society regarding likely impact of the proposed diversion on forests, biodiversity, river ecology, groundwater, estuarine salinity, drinking water availability in Goa, and risk of deforestation, desertification and ecological degradation in the Khanapur and Belagavi regions of Karnataka and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has assessed likely impact of the proposed diversion on the Mandovi river basin, including saline ingress, freshwater aquifers and drinking water security in Goa; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the mitigation measures, safeguards and monitoring mechanisms proposed or directed by the Government before permitting any diversion of Mhadei River?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) River diversion projects involving hydroelectric power generation and/or major or medium irrigation components require prior Environmental Clearance (EC) under Item 1(c) of the Schedule to the Environment (Impact Assessment) Notification, 2006, as amended. The Notification provides a detailed procedure for appraisal and assessment of anticipated environmental impacts viz. loss of biodiversity, impact on river ecosystem, impacts on forests, environmental flows, groundwater and water quality, associated with the river valley projects. Study of the aforesaid and other related factors in the context of specific/individual project forms the basis for preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)/Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

The Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) comprising domain area experts, after detailed examination and deliberations on various environmental and social aspects of the project including possible environmental impacts of river valley and hydro-electric projects on the biodiversity, river ecology, groundwater, estuarine salinity, risk of deforestation, desertification, downstream water availability etc. in the river basin, recommend the project for grant of Environmental Clearance (EC) by suggesting suitable mitigation measures to minimize the environmental and social impacts associated with the project. It is only after such detailed study and analysis that environmental clearances are issued subject to compliance of necessary environmental safeguards and general and specific conditions by the Project Proponent before undertaking construction of the project.

As per the procedure prescribed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), the concerned State Government is required to identify and furnish the details of river basins where a Cumulative Impact Assessment and Carrying Capacity Study (CIA&CCS) is required to be undertaken. The findings of such studies are taken into consideration by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC), wherever applicable, during the environmental appraisal of River Valley and Hydroelectric Projects for the grant of Environmental Clearance (EC) within the concerned river basin. In case such projects involve Inter-State rivers, clearance from Central Water Commission/ Inter-State River Water Dispute Tribunal is also required. No proposal or details in this regard have been submitted by the concerned State Government for the Mhadei/Mandovi river basin. Further, no proposal seeking Environmental Clearance for any river diversion project involving the Mhadei/Mandovi river is presently under consideration in the Ministry.
