

Madhya Pradesh government announces indefinite ban on sand mining in Narmada river

Shivraj Chouhan also announced that the government has decided a crackdown against illegal mining in all other rivers in the state and also ban on use of machines for mining in rivers in the state



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Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan (File | PTI)

By Express News Service

BHOPAL: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced on Monday, a blanket ban on sand mining in river Narmada – considered the lifeline of the central Indian state.

“We have decided to ban sand mining in river Narmada till a committee of experts submits its report on scientific mining in the river,” said Chouhan while addressing a hurriedly convened press conference in state capital Bhopal.

“The committee which will recommend the state government measures for scientific mining will be headed by MP’s minister for mineral resources, commerce and industry Rajendra Shukla. It will work along with experts from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-Kharagpur) in developing a blueprint for scientific mining in river Narmada. Till the time the committee submits its report, sand mining will be banned in the river,” said Chouhan.

While maintaining that the period for which the sand mining will be banned in river Narmada cannot be specified now, Chouhan said, “The committee might take four months or even six months to come out with its suggestions for scientific mining in river Narmada. Only after the report of the committee is submitted to the government, will a decision on lifting the ban on sand mining in the river, will be taken,” the CM added.

He said, “Our government is committed to striking balance between mining and development, but will not allow compromising of river Narmada’s health and also biodiversity wealth inherent in the river due to mining. The committee will guide the government in suggesting how scientific sand mining in the river can be done without compromising the river’s flow and its biodiversity.” The state government’s decision to ban sand mining in river Naramda for the time being, came just a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the comprehensive action plan to conserve river Narmada at the river’s origin, Amarkantak in Anuppur district of MP on May 15.

The Narmada which originates from Amarkantak (Anuppur) travels over 1000 km in 16 districts of MP before entering Gujarat.

The state government has accorded top priority to Narmada river conservation, accentuated by the five month long Narmada Seva Yatra (an ambitious project of the CM) which was organised between December 11, 2016 to May 15, 2017.

On May 3, 2017, the MP Assembly had passed a resolution granting status of living entity with legal rights to river Narmada. The government plans to bring a legislation in the next session of Assembly for a comprehensive law for conservation of the river. At the May 3 special session of Assembly and thereafter also, the opposition Congress has been demanding a blanket ban on mining in river Narmada and its

tributaries, besides seeking a crackdown against illegal mining in other rivers of the state. The Congress leaders, including leader of opposition in state Assembly Ajay Singh have been accusing the state government of being soft on illegal mining in rivers.



On Monday, the CM, encouraging the alternatives to sand, announced the government will promote stone crushing for which the manufacturers will be rendered incentive of zero royalty in the first three years.

Chouhan also announced that the government has decided a crackdown against illegal mining in all other rivers in the state and also ban on use of machines for mining in rivers in the state. “We’re banning use of machines such as Pokland machines and other equipment with immediate effect. The government will notify this decision later in the day. All district collectors in the state have been empowered to confiscate machinery, vehicles and equipment employed in illegal mining in the river, which will be departure from past practice of just imposing monetary penalty on vehicles and equipment seized in illegal mining in rivers,” said Chouhan.

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