

UP giving final shape to its M-Sand policy

Artificial Sand To Be Made From Waste Stones

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Lucknow: The M-Sand policy is being given the final shape in UP. The artificial sand to be used in place of river sand (morrum) will be manufactured through overburden, rejects and waste boulders and stones lying in quarries or mines.

The need to introduce artificially manufactured sand is being felt as the demand for river sand is expected to double up in the next five years, officials said. Presently, dredging in the river basins where mining activity is allowed in the state generates about three crore cubic metre of minor minerals annually. However, the demand in the construction business for sand (baalu) and river sand is estimated to be in the range of 7.5-8 crore cubic metre in a year.

The promotion of M-Sand in the real estate sector

is warranted to protect damage to the natural resources and discourage incessant dredging in the river basins, officials said. The mining department is presently dealing with the objections and suggestions submitted by the stakeholders in the industry over its draft of the M-Sand policy.

The department is considering commanding royalty

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at the rate of Rs 50 per cubic metre on M-Sand compared to Rs 150 that is charged for allowing excavation of a cubic metre of river sand.

The state government has already assured industry status for entrepreneurs who would produce the artificial sand and they would get the same benefits and incentives that are offered to MSME unit owners.

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh among se-

veral other states have already started promoting artificial sand, officials said. Home to majority of the stone crushers in UP, entrepreneurs from Kabrai sub-division in Mahoba have sought some changes in the M-Sand policy being proposed for the state. "Some conditions mentioned in the draft policy related to the procedure to be followed for masonry mortars and abrasion resistance are being deliberated with the stakeholders. We are examining what changes could be made while ensuring protection of the environment and minimising pollution," said a senior officer.

M-Sand offers superior flexural strength and allows minimal permeability of water since unlike river sand it is devoid of silt, clay, dust and shells that are excavated along with sand from the river beds by earth movers.