

Title: Need to give environmental clearance for declaring Sundarban rivers as national highways. – Laid.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (JOYNAGAR) : Sundarbans in West Bengal is the largest delta in Asia with an all-season river stretch of 222 km. However, these remained unutilized so far. These rivers can be used for navigation. There was a proposal for declaring Haldia-Raimangal stretch of rivers (91 km) as National Waterways. The proposal has already been cleared but it is awaiting for clearance by the Environment and Forest Ministry.

Sundarbans is one of the most industrially-backward and poverty-stricken area of our country. If the perennial rivers of Sundarbans are utilized for navigation, it would provide employment opportunities to the local people including fishermen. This would also help in socio-economic conditions of the area.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to take early steps for declaring Sundarban rivers as national Highways.