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14.17 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377 *

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Today, we have got two discussions under Rule 193. Therefore, I request that the Matters under Rule 377 may be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

Title: Need to place a curb on removal of sand from the Amravathi river bed in Erode district of Palani Parliamentary Constituency, Tamil Nadu. – Laid.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): In my Palani Constituency Vellakoil, Mulanur and Darapuram unions which come under Erode district, are served by river Amravathi. There are 30 small and big integrated drinking water schemes in the Amravathi river. The Amravathi river serves thousands of acres of agricultural land for irrigation facilities.

Of late, huge quantities of sand is being taken from the riverbed by contractors. In fact, the Chennai High Court set up a Committee to go into the question of removing of sand in the riverbeds and a Committee was constituted. Based on the Committee's report Government of Tamil Nadu decided to quarry the sand by P.W.D. and sell to others. Certain norms were fixed for quarrying the sand. Particularly not to quarry for 50 meters from the riverbed and not to quarry more than 1 meter depth. Despite the clear orders of the High Court and also the directive of the Government, the private operators are having a free hand in removing the sand. They have already removed large quantities without following the norms. If huge quantities of sand are allowed to be removed, it will have a telling effect on the soil erosion which would in the long run affect not only agricultural operations but also ground water level of the areas concerned.

Therefore, I urge upon the Ministry of Environment and Forest to intervene in the matter urgently and issue necessary directions to the effect that sand from

the Amravathi riverbed should not be removed against the orders of the High Court and directions of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

* Treated as laid on the table.