

In a firm move against the sand mafia and illegal sand mining groups, the YSR Congress Party government led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh unveiled a new policy related to sand under which a consumer can book sand from home. The Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation has been vested with the authority of supplying sand at reasonable price to consumers from banks and reaches of major rivers like the Krishna, Godavari, Tungabhadra, Vamsadhara and Pennar. The corporation will supply sand to those who have made online booking anywhere in Andhra Pradesh on its website's sand portal.

Sand along the banks of small rivers and streams has been made accessible to local villagers for free. Minor rivers would be under the control and supervision of district authorities and sand by their banks would be available at no cost to local villagers. For government work, sand would be made available at a nominal cost. However only towns and villages under the mandal concerned would be provided with sand from the local minor rivers or streams. The local district authorities would ensure that sand is not ferried beyond the mandal concerned.

District collectors have been made responsible for the supervision of excavation of sand and relevant permissions under the policy. APMDC will store the sand in stockyards to be supplied to consumers after agreements and permissions from district collectors.

There are more than 395 major sand reaches in Andhra Pradesh and district collectors have been directed to ensure that all necessary permissions—environmental, mining plan—among others, are duly obtained. The corporation will follow reverse tendering process for complete transparency.

The Corporation's website also tells consumers about the nearest stockyard along with availability. This will also minimise costs of transport. Keeping in mind diesel prices, corporation officials will determine transport costs as well with a provision to book supply of sand on the portal.

Desilted sand would be made available to irrigation projects and such sand would be utilised by the water resources department. The department will also take necessary steps to ensure that sand is not misused.

In Patta lands, APMDC will give necessary permissions to farmers through agreements, while in tribal areas local tribals will enjoy rights over sand reaches there under their respective societies. Required permissions and regulations will be drawn up and given by district collectors from time to time under the new policy.