

The Tribune- 24- February-2024

# Farming to be allowed in Pong Dam area soon: CM

Says call on declaring it eco-sensitive zone only after seeking MLAs' opinion



## BUDGET SESSION

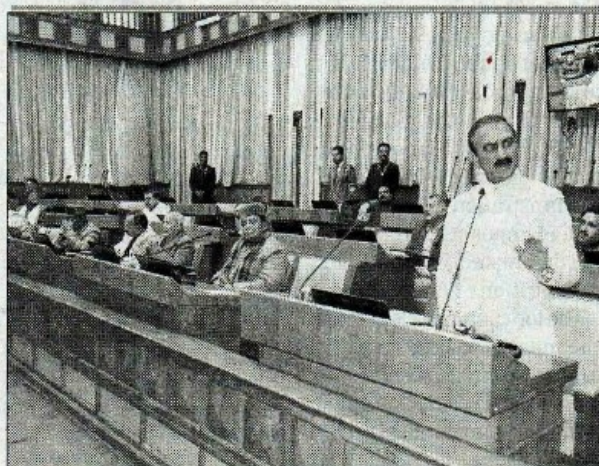
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 23

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu today assured that the issue of declaration of the Pong Dam as an eco-sensitive zone will be finalised only after seeking the opinion of all MLAs whose constituencies fall under this zone.

"First the process of pre-determination of the wildlife sanctuaries will be done and then the notification for declaring it as an eco-sensitive zone will be issued. The guidelines of the Centre are very strict and we are ascertaining the decline in various bird species and then we will take a call on it," said Sukhu while replying to a query by Dehra MLA Hoshiyar Singh. He said from this year, agriculture would be allowed in the area falling under Pong Dam.

Agriculture Minister Chander Kumar pointed out that the notification of the eco-sensitive zone was issued without



The CM addresses the House in Shimla on Friday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

## WILL HELP ATTRACT MORE MIGRATORY BIRDS

- Fatehpur MLA Bhawani Pathania said allowing agriculture in the area would help attract more migratory birds as villagers have not been allowed to undertake agriculture in this area
- Dehra MLA Hoshiyar Singh pointed out that the number of migratory birds had come down from 1.10 lakh to 83,555 in 2023-24 in the Pong Dam area

public consultation and inviting objections. "It has become mandatory to obtain permission for construction of houses and the rules for the Wetland Ramsar area are being enforced," the minister said. He said the notification must be withdrawn.

Fatehpur MLA Bhawani Pathania said allowing agriculture in the area will help attract more migratory birds as villagers have not been

allowed to undertake agriculture in this area. Jaswan MLA Bikram Singh also urged the CM that it must be ensured that the people do not face any problem due to this as almost six Assembly segments would get affected by this.

Sukhu said the Tourism Department had been authorised to issue permits for boating in the Pong Dam very soon. Hoshiyar Singh pointed out that the number

of migratory birds had come down from 1.10 lakh to 83,555 in 2023-24. Replying to a query by Sulah MLA Vipin Parmar, Industries Minister Harshwardhan Chauhan said 6.75 lakh water connections had been provided under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM). "We have sought additional Rs 2,000 crore from the Centre to complete work on the 900 schemes in which work is incomplete," he said.

Chauhan said since connections had been given on the basis of an Aadhaar card in the name of the head of the family, many people have been left out. He said the Jal Shakti Department had been asked to identify all such left-out people so they can be provided a new connection subject to availability of funds from the Centre.

Chauhan said 1,163 schemes at an estimated cost of Rs 2470.21 crore were sanctioned for Himachal under the JJM in the last three years. He added that Rs 2257.50 crore had been spent and work is still underway on 610 schemes. "Almost 90 per cent work was undertaken during the BJP regime but I admit that this problem is being faced in every Assembly segment as many households have been left out," the minister said.



The Pioneer- 24- February-2024

# Water scarcity key issue of Latur, elected representatives must work on it: Gadkari

**PTI ■ CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR**

**W**ater scarcity is a major problem in Latur and elected representatives must take all efforts to come up with a solution, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Friday.

He was speaking at an event in Ahmedpur for inauguration and launching of nine projects in Dharashiv and Latur districts.

These comprise six highway projects costing Rs 3,946 crore in Latur and three costing Rs 122 crore in Dharashiv. "Water scarcity is a key problem of Latur. Elected representatives must take up issues related to it on priority. While

coming here, I saw a river that had gone completely dry. If embankments or small weirs were made with empty fertiliser bags, it would have supplied water all day to nearby wells," he pointed out.

Latur is known for its soybean cultivation and good roads will help farmers take the produce to markets easily, he said. The projects that were inaugurated include the four laning of Chakur-Ausa and Chakur-Loha sections.

The length of the national highway in Latur was 124 kilometres till 2014, while it was now 510 kilometres, he said.