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Cabinet okays sand policy

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Ranchi, Aug. 11: Jharkhand cabinet today gave its nod to a two-tier sand management system in the hope that it would put an end to illegalities surrounding it, the new policy drawing inspiration from the Telangana model.

Titled Jharkhand State Sand Mining Policy 2017, the cabinet paved the way for its roll out after a formal notification.

As per the policy, sand ghats would be divided into two categories—small and large. Small ghats were the ones that were to be used exclusively for local panchayats. These would be manned and controlled by them, but commercial use of the sand would not be allowed.

The large ghats would be under Jharkhand State Mineral Development Corporation (JSMDC), which would be the nodal agency to sell sand for any kind of business, either private or government.

Mines commissioner Aboobacker Siddique explained the new system.

“The first category of ghats are those on first or sec-

ond order rivers and streams that are geographically and ecologically wise. This will be fully owned by panchayats. They can't sell, we will be giving them full powers. They can form a committee for monitoring,” he said.

“The second category sand ghats will be under JSMDC which will own bigger ghats and have legal rights to sell. We told them to start online booking for the sake of transparency. They can sublet lifting of sand, but selling will only be through JSMDC,” he said, adding that they found the Telangana model to be the best among the 12 policies they studied.

The cabinet also decided to: upgrade Mango Notified Area Committee (MNAC) in East Singhbhum to a municipal corporation and Jugsalai municipal body to a nagar parishad, finalise guidelines for disbursement of incentives for various industrial and start-ups, approved Rs 5,180 crore for various electricity transmission projects across the state, revise license fees of cinema halls, form separate directorates for art & culture and sports.