



DAKSHINBANGA MATSYAJIBI FORUM (DMF)

Trade Union Regn. No.20474/92. Affiliated to National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF)

Head Office: 20/4, Sil Lane, Kolkata - 70015. Phone & FAX: 033-23283989 e-mail: dmfwestbengal@gmail.com

January 22, 2019

To
The Director,
Sundarban Biosphere Reserve (SBR),
West Bengal.

Sub: Complaint Regarding Application for new Boat License Certificates (BLCs)

Sir,

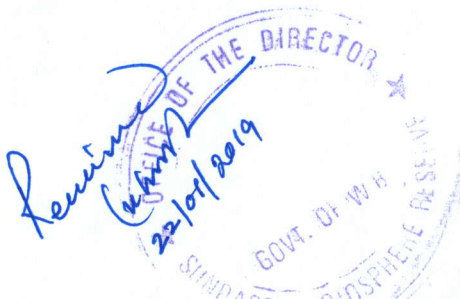
We have come to know that very recently applications have been sought for by the Department of Forest for issuance of new BLCs in favour of fishers for fishing in the buffer area of Sundarban Tiger Reserve (STR).

It is a well known fact that –

1. Fishing is a livelihood option for fisher people and as such thousands of people fish in the waters of STR with or without BLCs.
2. Because of the arbitrary, inadequate and illogical issuance of BLCs in the STR by the Department of Forest many genuine fishers have been deprived of their right to fish in the waters of STR and BLCs are being rented at a rate of Rs. 40,000/ to Rs.50,000/ per season.

We are constrained to state that –

- A. Very little and inadequate time has been provided for submission of application, thus depriving scores of genuine fishers from their right to apply for new BLCs. In Sundarban fishers go for multi-day fishing, as such it is impossible for all the indigent fishers to apply if at least 1 month time is not given for application.
- B. It is not being possible for many genuine fishers to get the Panchayat Certificate because of political favouritism and demand of money through agents. The situation has come to such a level that genuine fishers who are approaching the Panchayat even with copies of fishing permits issued in their favour by STR, are not being given the required certificates. Many non-fishers are getting such certificates because of their political clout and/or money power.





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As such there is not only gross violation of natural justice in denial of the opportunity to apply for new BLCs to thousands of genuine fishers, but also it is almost certain that the issuance of BLCs to non-fishers will add to the black-marketeering in BLCs.

In this situation we request you to –

1. Immediately extend the period of application for new BLCs at least by one month;
2. Scrap the condition of fisher certificate by Panchayats as a condition of application for new BLCs;
3. Accept with priority the applications of fishers who have been issued permits for fishing by the STR; and
4. Recognise membership certificates of registered fishers' union or association as evidence of genuine fisher.

In anticipation of an early response from your end.

Yours sincerely,

Gobinda Das
President,
Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF).

Milan Das
General Secretary,
Dakshinbanga Matsyajibi Forum (DMF).