

**Minutes of meeting relating to issues of Fishermen and Forest Department in Sundarban areas on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec, 2017 in the court chamber of District Magistrate, South 24 Pgs, Alipore**

Sl No.	Name	Designation	Signature	Contact No
1	Sri Y.Ratnakar Rao,IAS	D.M,South 24 Pgs	Sd/-	9434770000
2	Sri Deb Kumar Nandan	A.D.M,ZP, South 24 Pgs	Sd/-	9836818555
3	Manabrendra Halder	K. Z.P.	Sd/-	9836625714
4	Aditi Chaudhury	S.D.O Canning	Sd/-	9434743009
5	Milan Das	DMF	Sd/-	9800266265
6	Prodip Chatterjee	DMF	Sd/-	9874432773
7	Gobindo Das	Sundarban Matsyajibi	Sd/-	9732630140
8	Habulal Kayal	S.S.F.F.W.U.	Sd/-	9933088234
9	Jaykrishna Halder	Secretary, W.B.V.F.A	Sd/	9732795510
10	Prajapati Khalna	WBUFA	Sd/	8967816775
11	Sarama Das	Karmadhyska, Panchyat Samity Namkhana	Sd/	9775607757
12	Tripti Saha	DFO/24 Pgs, Div	Sd/	9051978172
13	Ajay Kumar Das	DFD/STR	Sd/	9434176535
14	Dr. Tapas Paria	ADF/South 24 Pgs.	Sd/-	9051058174
15	Surajit Kumar Bag	ADF, Marine, D/H	Sd/-	9474505218
16	Bijan Maity	Secy. K.F.W.A.	Sd/-	9733907966

**The District Magistrate, South 24 Pgs, Alipore presides over the meeting and initiation.**

**The District Magistrate, South 24 Pgs, Alipore asked the fishermen concern to inform the house the actual problem so far faced by the fishermen relating to conflict in regards to fishing activity in the riverine belt of Sundarban areas, with the forest Deptt. The fishermen association raised some issues on specific points, and seeks favourable justice from the Government for the best interest of the fishermen concern.**

In view of the undertaking of fishing operation in the riverine belt in buffer zone of Sundarban areas, The ADF,Marine,Diamond Harbour highlighted before the house that, in accordance with the merchant shipping Act,1958,all types of fishing boats irrespective of whether they are mechanised or non-mechanised or estuarine areas in the various rivers,creeks,streams and canals in the Sundarban areas with valid registration under the M.S.Act,1958 for mechanised boats and under the West Bengal marine fishing regulation act,1993 for non mechanised boats in terms of Fisheries Deptt's order No. 2784-Fish/C/V/8T-2/04 Dt.29.12.2010 are eligible for fishing operation. So there is no any obstruction for conducting fishing operation in the riverine or estuarine in the Sundarban areas.

The flowing are the point raised by the Fishermen Association :-

1. Fishers had been fishing in all the rivers and creeks of Sundarban till the imposition of Tiger Reserve (STR) in 1973.

2. STR was made of a total area of 2585 sq km.out of which Core area 1330 sq km and rest was buffer.
3. Fishing and all other livelihood activities were banned in the core area and only 923 BLCs were issued in STR. While in the reserve forest areas outside STR 3,700 BLCs were issued.
4. The numbers of Boat Licence Certificate (BLC)s has been grossly inadequate for more than 2 lakh fishers in Sundarban area. Large majority of fishers had to fish without BLCs.
5. The Sundarban Tiger Reserve(STR) had no legal basis as no forest act in vogue at that time had any provision for establishing tiger reserves.
6. Forest Department notified Sundarban Tiger Reserve(STR) in 2007 under the Wild Life Protection Amendment Act , 2006 (WLPAA).
7. But the Forest Department violated the conditions prescribed in the said Act for making tiger reserves. Most important of which was not to take any consent of the people to be affected by the making of Sundarban Tiger reserves.
8. In that notification the Forest Department increased the core area of STR from 1330sq. km to 1,700 sq. kms. without caring for the consent of the affected fishers.
9. The forest department further created the West Sundarban Wildlife Sanctuary of 500 sq. kms. Area and stopped fishing in that area without taking any consent of the affected fishers.
10. The Forest Department staff confiscates boats, nets, permits and BLCs of fishers without giving any seizure memo. They physically assault and abuse fishers. They impose heavy fines on fishers without showing any reasonable ground.
11. While the fishing ban period is of 61 days in the marine sector in terms of the fisheries Deptt notification no. 824-Fish/C-V/1P-21/2015 DT 11.04.2017 effecting from 15<sup>th</sup> April to 14<sup>th</sup> June( both days inclusive), the forest department imposes a ban on fishing for 90 days ( from April to June) in Sundarban- which create confusing.
12. The forest department had issued an order by making membership of JFMC mandatory for getting BLC. This is an unjust and illegal order.
13. As per Forest Right Act, 2006 ( FRA) the right to protect forest resources rests with the fishers and other forest dependent people of Sundarban.
14. Identification of fishers and issuance of fishing license should rest to the Fisheries Department, and not to the forest department.
15. In 2003, approx 10,000 fishers were forcibly evicted from Jambudwip by the forest department. Later the state government pledged to provide 100 hectares of land in Jambudwip for fish drying activities. But since there no action was taken in this regard.
16. The fishermen association raised the issue of implementation of Forest Dwellers Act – 2006 in this District.

**In a nutshell the demand of fishers are:**

- A. Right to fish in all the rivers and creeks of Sundarban;
- B. Abrogation of the condition of JFMC membership for getting BLC.
- C. Immediate stoppage of tortures and harassments by the forest staff.
- D. The ban period of fishing as specified in the fisheries Deptt's notification in 61 days should be same for the Forest Department also.
- E. Implementation of Forest Dwellers Act, 2006 in the District.

The District Magistrate, South 24 Pargans, Alipore assured the Fishermen Associations that the problems raised by them were noted and appropriate action will be taken to resolved the problems.

As there is no other agenda to discuss, the meeting ended with vote of thanks to and from the chair.



**District Magistrate  
South 24 Parganas**