

## **Ministry of Environment and Forests**

*Subject: Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2011*

After a eighteen-month long process, the CRZ Notification, 2011 is being formally notified and published today. This replaces the CRZ Notification, 1991. In addition, for the very first time an Island Protection Zone Notification, 2011 is being notified and published covering Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

Both these new Notifications reconcile three objectives: (i) protection of livelihoods of traditional fisherfolk communities; (ii) preservation of coastal ecology; and (iii) promotion of economic activity that have necessarily to be located in coastal regions.

Apart from codifying the 25 amendments that were made to CRZ Notification, 1991 between 1991-2009, the CRZ Notification, 2011 has several new features.

- It has special provisions for Goa, Kerala, Greater Mumbai and critically vulnerable coastal areas (CVCAs) like Sunderban Mangrove Area, Chilka and Bhitarkanika (Orissa), Gulf of Khambhat and Gulf of Kutchh (Gujarat), Malwan (Maharashtra), Karwar and Kundapur (Karnataka), Vembanad (Kerala), Coringa, East Godavari and Krishna Delta (Andhra Pradesh), Gulf of Mannar (Tamil Nadu).
- Clear procedures for obtaining CRZ approval with time-lines have been stipulated along with post-clearance monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
- Water area upto 12 nautical miles in the sea and the entire water area of a tidal water body such as creek, river, estuary, etc would now be included in the CRZ areas, without imposing any restrictions of fishing activities.
- The concept of a Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP), to be prepared with the fullest involvement and participation of local communities, has been introduced.
- The concept of a hazard line to be demarcated over the next five years has been introduced to protect life and property of local communities and infrastructure along coastal areas.

- Measures have been put in place to combat pollution in coastal areas/coastal waters.
- The shorelines would be mapped through time-series satellite images with no foreshore development being permissible in high-eroding areas.
- The “no development zone” is being reduced from 200 metres from the high-tide line to 100 metres only to meet increased demands of housing of fishing and other traditional coastal communities.

Over the past 18 months, I have had public consultations on the new CRZ Notification in Goa, Mumbai, Kochi, Chennai and Puri. In addition, I have had five rounds of discussions with fishermen associations from across the country. The recommendations of an expert committee comprising of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Sunita Narain, Dr. Shailesh Nayak and Shri J.M. Mauskar submitted to the MoE&F in July 2010 have also been incorporated. This new CRZ Notification has been in the public domain in draft form since September 2010 and I have received a large number of suggestions that have been given due consideration.

I wish to state categorically that, barring cases of fishermen families, violations of CRZ Notification, 1991 will **not** be condoned or regularised with CRZ Notification, 2011 coming into force. Directions are being issued early next week by the MoE&F under Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986 to all State/UT Coastal Zone Management Authorities to (i) identify all such violations within a period of four months from today using latest appropriate maps, satellite imagery and information technology; and (ii) initiate necessary action in accordance with the Environment Protection Act, 1986 within a period of four months thereafter. Details of all such violations and action taken will be listed on the website of the CZMA concerned as well of the MoE&F. *Action already initiated in the cases where violations have been established will continue unimpeded.*

An important recommendation of the expert committee headed by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan is that Government should enact a law to protect the traditional rights and interests of fishermen and coastal communities. This law would be somewhat along the lines of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Fishermen associations have supported this recommendation. The MoE&F has already prepared such a draft law in this regard and put it in the public domain for comments and suggestions.

There has been a demand from fishermen associations that instead of having a Notification under Environment Protection Act, 1986, Government should enact a coastal zone regulation law to be passed by Parliament. A Notification does provide considerable flexibility to the Executive but I do acknowledge and appreciate that a law passed by Parliament will enhance public confidence and trust that amendments are introduced after adequate debate and discussion. I have reassured the fishermen associations that I am personally in favour of such a move and that I will attempt to take it forward.

In the end, I would like to reiterate why the CRZ Notification is so important. India has a long coastline of 7,500km, ranging from Gujarat to West Bengal, and two island archipelagos. Our coastal ecosystems provide protection from natural disasters such as floods and tsunamis to the 250 million people who live in our coastal areas. Coastal waters provide a source of primary livelihood to 7 million households. Our marine ecosystems are a treasure trove of biodiversity, which we are only beginning to discover and catalogue. Thus our coastline is both a precious natural resource and an important economic asset, and we need a robust progressive framework to regulate our coast.

The CRZ Notification, 2011 demonstrates that the MoE&F is conscious of and alive to the need to bring about modifications in laws and regulations to ensure a demonstrably better balance between the equally urgent imperatives of faster economic growth and deeper environmental conservation.



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