

Media reports on the Public Consultations on CRZ held in Goa on 30 August, 2009

Post-1991 houses in CRZ areas have to go: Ramesh

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/NEWS/City/Goa/Post-1991-houses-in-CRZ-areas-have-to-go-Ramesh/articleshow/4952859.cms>

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PANAJI: Houses of traditional fishermen, toddy tappers and those existing before 1991 in CRZ areas of Goa will be protected from demolition, Union minister for environment and forests Jairam Ramesh said on Sunday.

Ramesh, however, said he had no solution for the houses belonging to others and for those that came up in CRZ areas after 1991. He also said the Centre would not protect commercial, hotel or industrial interests in CRZ areas.

After touring CRZ areas in Vasco, Agonda and Talpona, Ramesh held a public consultation with fishermen and other citizens along with chief minister Digambar Kamat and environment minister Aleixo Sequeira at Verna on Sunday afternoon.

Briefing the media after the consultation, Ramesh said he advised the state government to seek more time from the high court to conduct a detailed survey of CRZ areas in Goa to identify houses of traditional fishermen, toddy tappers and other structures prior to 1991.

He also said that the state government will tell the high court that the Central government is also contemplating changes to the CRZ notification to protect the weaker sections of society. "But I can give a categorical assurance that the Central government will not protect any five-star hotel or commercial property," Ramesh said.

When asked for the time frame of the detailed survey of CRZ areas in Goa, Ramesh said it will take a couple of months. Ramesh said that the coastal management zone (CMZ) notification has lapsed and now only the CRZ notification is operative. He said the government is treating Andaman and Nicobar and also Lakshwadeep separately as far as the CRZ regulations are concerned.

"We are told that Goa also has a strong case for being treated separately. There are peculiarities about Goa, but I cannot make any promises. We will look into the details," Ramesh said. The Union minister said that within the next three days, the ministry of environment and forests will notify the establishment of a state coastal zone management authority, which was not there for the last six months.

A state-level Environmental Impact Assessment authority will also be

notified and these will give the state governments more powers for clearances, Ramesh said. The Union minister was clearly sympathetic to the traditional inhabitants of the CRZ areas.

“We have to implement the CRZ regulations in a manner that protects the livelihood of people. This is also a human issue,” Ramesh said.

Jairam brings cheer to Goans
<http://oheraldo.in/pagedetails.asp?nid=26654&cid=10>

HERALD REPORTER

Jairam brings cheer to Goans
CRZ Act to be amended * Non-commercial coastal structures to stay
HERALD REPORTER
VASCO, AUG 30

Union Minister for Environment and Forest Jairam Ramesh on Sunday assured Goans of protecting all non-commercial coastal structures constructed prior to 1991 by amending relevant Act. Union Minister Jairam Ramesh declared this during public consultation meeting with fishermen and toddy tappers at the jam-packed Fr Agnel Auditorium at Verna on Sunday.

“The Government will shortly amend CRZ Act 1991 to safeguard livelihood of traditional fishermen and toddy tappers of Goa”, assured the Union minister.

“I assure that not a single structure of traditional fishermen and toddy tappers would be bulldozed, irrespective whether the structure was prior to 1991 or post 1991”, said Ramesh.

“The amendment is to safeguard the livelihoods of fishermen, toddy tappers and other people involved in similar business. However, we will not protect hotels and industries even if they are owned by MLAs and MPs”, added Ramesh.

However, the Union minister was specific that the amendment was for the interest of genuine traditional fishermen and toddy tappers and not for the people who claim to be fishermen and toddy tappers. He also stated that the controversial ‘Costal Management Zone Notification 2008’ lapsed on July 22, 2009 and now it is CRZ Act 1991. “The CMZ notification 2008 is now history”, said Ramesh.

“I directed the State Government to seek more time from the High Court so that the Union Ministry for Environment and Forest (MoEF) could complete its re-survey to know the status of about 8,500 houses, which are facing axe for CRZ violation”, added Ramesh.

“The re-survey will focus on traditional fishermen and toddy tappers and it will take some time. Though it is not an easy task, but let us initiate the process”, stated Ramesh.

“I am not certain, out of about 8,500 houses, how many houses will be demolished and how many will be protected”, he said.

The three-hour marathon discussion, where eminent personalities including Mathany Saldanha, scientist Dr Nadakumar Kamat, Roland Martins, Prof Ramesh Gawas and Prof Borker made suggestions and put forward the grievances of the people and exposed the illegalities in mining.

Saldanha demanded to safeguard the 8,500 houses and strict implementation of the Act. He also suggested various other points. Ramesh and his central team accepted the suggestions made by the speakers at the meeting. However, impressed with the study of Dr Nadakumar Kamat, the Union minister asked Chief Minister Kamat to take the responsibility of State Coastal Zone Management Authority (SCZMA), which will be formed shortly.

“Within a week, the MoEF will notify the SCZMA, as Goa was delayed for almost six months due to some technical reasons”, said Ramesh. He agreed to the suggestion made by the people of decentralization of SCZMA by appointing District Consultation Committee on CRZ for North and South Goa.

However, it was acid test for Ramesh to convince the people that his assurance would not remain merely as an assurance, as most the speakers alleged the Kamat Government made only assurances till date and failed to fulfill it.

“We have no faith in this Government, as it fooled the people often with false assurances”, said fisherman Sudakar Joshi. “I am committed to my assurance”, replied Ramesh.

The Union minister further said that similar to ‘Forest Rights Act’ passed by Parliament in 2006 to protect the interest of tribal community living in forest, Parliament would shortly legislate ‘Fishermen Protection Act’ to safeguard the interests of fishermen. “I am committed to bring this Act and even the prime minister is keen. By December, we might pass it”, added Ramesh.

Earlier, the union minister visited Kharewado jetty at Katem-Baina and met the fishermen community. He also visited the inhabitants at Agonda and Talpona in Canacona and interacted with the fishermen. At Vasco, the Union minister gave a patient hearing to the grievances of the local fishermen who raised various issue concerning CRZ, but most grievances were related to coal handling at the port and Khariwado fishing jetty.

At Canacona, after meeting the people, Ramesh also visited the beachfront and said the Government was studying the behavioural aspects of sand erosion which are threatening seacoasts throughout the nation.

Meanwhile, BJP delegation led by North Goa MP Shripad Naik and five MLAs submitted a memorandum to Union Minister Jairam Ramesh.

Traditional fishermen within CRZ will be protected: Ramesh

<http://www.samaylive.com/news/traditional-fishermen-within-crz-will-be-protected-ramesh/652514.html>

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Panaji, Aug 30 Union Minister for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh today said that houses of traditional fishermen, toddy tappers coming within coastal regulation zone (CRZ), that existed before 1991, will be protected.

The Central government, with the cooperation of state government, will undertake a survey of such houses and take the decision, he said.

The Union minister was speaking after interacting with fishermen at Khariwada Vasco, Agonda and Talpona areas, in presence of Chief Minister Digambar Kamat, Environment Minister Aleixo Sequeira, and Forest Minister Philip Nerry Rodrigues.

"We will list such houses and approach High court if required. The government will enact a law on the lines of tribal protection act giving protection to tribals in forests, and extend protection to fishermen in coastal areas," he said adding that primary work on the act has been started.

Meanwhile, Kamat said his government is honouring assurance given to people in coastal areas to save their houses from the CRZ Act.

Greens to raise CRZ row with Union minister
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/news/city/goa/Greens-to-raise-CRZ-row-with-Union-minister/articleshow/4950003.cms>

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PANAJI/MARGAO: Environmental activists will make a presentation before Union environment and forests minister Jairam Ramesh on Sunday to seek a solution to Goa's woes. The CRZ row and illegal mining are expected to dominate the proceedings. Addressing a press conference in Panaji

on Saturday, activist Ramesh Gauns said that Goa's draft mineral policy was scripted to suit the interests of mining companies. "A government reply during the assembly session states that out of the 336 mining concession leases, only 163 have been given environmental clearances," he said.

Gauns also said that the rivers Mandovi and Zuari, which have several loading points for iron ore, have been witnessing indiscriminate dumping of ore over the years. Gauns said that in Goa the tidal amplitude remains unchanged for over a distance of about 40 km from the mouth of the river and runs into the hinterlands of the state. "CRZ guidelines are applicable up to this distance and as per the notification, barges dumping ore into the rivers are violating environmental norms," he said.

Goa Federation of Mines Affected People (GOAMAP) convenor Sebastian Rodrigues demanded the cancellation of all environmental clearances. Meanwhile, in Margao, Goenchea Xetkarancha Ekvott (GXE) has called upon all Goans living along the coast and others to attend in large numbers the public consultation by Union minister of environment and forests to be held on Sunday at Agnelo Ashram, Verna, between 2pm and 6pm.

Stressing that this consultation is meant to gauge public opinion about the recommendations made in the Swaminathan Committee Report on CMZ 2008, whose suggestions will be considered by the union ministry before bringing in further amendments to strengthen the existing CRZ 1991, GXE secretary Paulo Fernandes has requested groups affected by CRZ to make written and oral representations to the minister stating their demands and views.