

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of Standing Committee of the State Board for Wildlife held at the Chamber of Chairman & Hon'ble Minister for Forests on 18/01/2021.

The meeting commenced at 2.30 p.m with the Hon'ble Minister for Forests in the Chair and the following members in attendance-

1. Shri.K.Rajan, MLA, Kerala Legislative Assembly.
2. Shri. C.K. Saseendran, MLA, Kerala Legislative Assembly.
3. Shri. Rajesh Kumar Sinha IAS, Principal Secretary, Forests & Wildlife Department, Govt, of Kerala (online).
4. Shri.P.K. Kesavan IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF.
5. Shri. Surendra Kumar IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (WL) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Kerala.
- 6.Prof.E.Kunhikrishnan,Retired Professor

The Member Secretary of Standing Committee of State Board for Wildlife and Chief Wildlife Warden welcomed the members and detailed about the agenda. The Member Secretary informed that this is the 2nd meeting of the Standing Committee of State Board for Wildlife, under the provisions of Section 7 (2) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

The Member Secretary stated that there is only one agenda item to be considered.

With the permission of the Chair, Member Secretary took up the Agenda item for quarrying proposal by M/s. Adani Vizhinjam Port Pvt. Ltd. This quarry is proposed in

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Aryanad Village of Nedumangad Taluk, which is 5.12 km from the nearest Protected Area, i.e., Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary. The Chief Wildlife Warden proposed that this project can be recommended to National Board for Wildlife with a condition that the project proponents pay Rs.10.00 lakh (Rupees Ten Lakh only) for mitigation of human-wildlife conflict. In Kerala, human-animal conflict is on increase and the wild animals are straying out of forests very frequently, sometimes even up to 10-15 km from forest area. The existence of quarries in these areas is going to only aggravate the already worsening human-wildlife conflict. In these circumstances, the Member Secretary proposed that wildlife clearance can be recommended with condition that the quarry should contribute Rs. 10.00 lakh which will be used for mitigation of human-wildlife conflict. This fund can be utilized for strengthening Rapid Response Teams in terms of better infrastructure including new customized RRT vehicles and establishing veterinary units for better care of wild animals captured in the conflict.

Prof. E.Kunhikrishnan, was of the opinion that ESZ is the subject matter of Forest Department alone and Forest Department is the only agency, who can keep the sanctity of the zone. By allowing quarrying 5.12 km from the Protected Area while the ESZ is 10 kms will sent a wrong message and the proposal should be rejected.

Principal Secretary, Forests & Wildlife Department pointed out that this proposal is pending for the last one and half years for want of wildlife clearance and now we are only recommending this proposal to National Board for Wildlife. The final call can be made by National Board for Wildlife.

The Chair has opined that there is no need to restrict the quarrying activities beyond 1 km from the Protected Area because the draft proposals for ESZs are prepared limiting the ESZ to 1 km from the Protected Area wherever ESZ falls in habitations. In the first meeting of Standing Committee held on 02.12.2020, we recommended 13 out of 14 quarrying proposals and some of them only at 1.2 km from Protected Area. So based on first meeting criteria, this proposal can be recommended. Hence it is desirable to approve the recommendation of Chief Wildlife

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Warden.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF explained that in the last meeting, we recommended 13 quarries which are operating since years and this is a new proposal for starting a quarry. If the Committee agrees, this may also be recommended to National Board for Wildlife.

Shri.Rajan, MLA and Shri.C.K. Saseendran, MLA agreed for the recommendation of the above proposal to National Board for Wildlife with conditions discussed above. As this proposal is meant for Vizhinjam Port which is a dream project of Kerala, both agreed with the Chair.

Decision 1

After the above discussion, the Chair decided to recommend for wildlife clearance of the proposal of quarrying in ESZ of Protected Area (Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary) to National Board for Wildlife subject to the condition that Rs.10.00 Lakh contribution of quarry owner to wildlife conflict mitigation taking into account the size of the quarries, the distance of the quarries from the Protected Area boundary and conservation importance of Protected Area.

Decision 2

The Chair informed the Committee that in the next meeting, a criteria has to be evolved for considering the proposal by the Committee based on existing laws. For that the two member team consisting of Chief Wildlife Warden and Prof. E. Kunhikrishnan is also constituted.

The Chair concluded the session by briefing the

decisions and Member Secretary thanked all the members.

The meeting came to end at 3.30 p.m

