PRESS RELEASE- CLARIFICATION ON SASSOON DOCK ISSUES

In light of recent media reports alleging proposed eviction of fish traders from godowns at Sassoon Dock by Mumbai Port Authority (MbPA), it is necessary to clarify the facts and dispel misinformation being circulated in the public domain.

1. About Sassoon Dock

Sassoon Dock, owned by the Mumbai Port Authority, is one of the oldest fishing harbours in India, built around 1875. It remains a major fish landing and marketing centre catering to both domestic and export markets. Unlike most other ports, Sassoon Dock and New Ferry Wharf (Bhaucha Dhakka) are accessible to the general public.

The Old Sassoon Dock spans approximately 5 Hectares(Ha). Of this, about 2 Ha (40%) is allotted to various tenants/lessees—currently around 74 occupying. All of these tenancies are expired. The allotted spaces are used for fish storage, processing units, ice factories, fishing gear shops, provision stores, and eateries. The old Sassoon Dock remains open for fishermen. However, in addition MbPA has developed new infrastructure for fishermen.

2. Infrastructure Support by MbPA

- MbPA has developed and maintained key infrastructure for the fishing community, including Fish landing berths, boat holding areas, and bunkering facilities, Fish auction halls, internal roads, footpaths and parking areas, Public utilities such as urinals, fish waste collection points, and a fish waste processing plant.
- Additionally, MbPA executed the project of New Sassoon Fish Harbour (3.7 Hectares) to accommodate growing trade and reduce congestion at the old dock. A modernization project worth ₹100 Crore is currently underway under Government of India & State Government schemes.
- Recent and ongoing improvements works include Repairs & Reconstruction of auction sheds (₹80 lakh), Quay wall repairs (₹50 lakh) and annual solid waste management (₹1 Crore per year).
- Electricity bill is borne by MbPA and also the security is given by MbPA.
- At Bhaucha Dhakka, MbPA is constructing a new fish jetty for fishermen and terminal for fishermen with an approach trestle, at an estimated cost of ₹137 Crore.

3. Community Support

MbPA has permitted free-of-cost use of its building space at the old Sassoon Dock to provide amenities such as restrooms and crèches for fisherfolk. To promote cultural engagement, MbPA has also hosted art festivals and exhibitions at the Dock, transforming the historic site into a vibrant public and tourist space, which gave Sassoon Dock a global recognition.

4. Fishing Operations

Approximately 1100 fishing boats registered at Sassoon Dock and New Sassoon Fish Harbour. MbPA facilitates these operations and collects monthly license fees as per the approved Scale of Rates. Ancillary licenses are issued for fish-related activities.

5. Compliance and Legal Proceedings

- All allottees are required to adhere to the terms of letting, including timely payment of rent. In cases of default, MbPA initiates eviction proceedings as per law. The ongoing controversy pertains to Rent Roll (RR) No. 1773 (approx. 2,720 sq.m.), where tenants have committed multiple violations such as Unauthorized constructions, unauthorised & illegal change of use, subletting & huge outstanding dues. Eviction proceedings were initiated in 1999, and a final eviction order was passed in 2009. The order was upheld by all appellate courts, including the Hon'ble Supreme Court, which in 2014 granted six months to vacate. The lessee/occupants have failed to comply with the ruling to date.
- Though meetings were held in 2014 with all stake holders and it was envisaged to clear MbPA dues, MbPA has not received any payments inspite of follow-up. There are only about 36 unauthorized illegal occupants in the RR No. 1773 premises. Against the orders of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, some of these occupants, for personal agendas, are spreading misinformation claiming the eviction affects 25,000 people—this is factually incorrect and misleading.
- Except the above mentioned small shed, fish related activities will continue as it is in Sassoon Dock. This shed will also realloted for fish related activities through transparent process of tendering.

6. MbPA's Commitment

Contrary to the false narrative, MbPA has no intention of shutting down fishing activities or displacing legitimate occupants for any redevelopment. MbPA is committed to supporting the fishing industry, and a 50% rental concession has been extended to all fish-related tenancies, making the current rates significantly lower than the State Government Ready Reckoner rates of the area.

7. MbPA with Fishing Community

The recent media reports are misinformed, exaggerated, and factually inaccurate. Mumbai Port Authority remains fully committed to supporting the fishing community while ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks. All actions taken by MbPA are strictly in accordance with legal procedures and court directives.