

Protect forest, land rights: CM at tribes council meeting

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Kolkata: Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday convened a meeting of the West Bengal Tribes Advisory Council, and directed that forest and land rights of the indigenous people be protected at every cost. Among others, the meeting was also attended by BJP MLA Manoj Tigga.

Banerjee said the council was expected to convene every six months and this was the first meeting of her new government. The last one was held in March 2020 after which the pandemic stalled further meetings.

“Our government started the council in 2013. The budget saw a six-fold increase. We are trying to support the tribal population in every possible way. The government has started pension schemes such as Jai Bangla, Jai Johar and Lakshmir Bhandar,” she said, adding that the Scheduled Tribe (ST) population in Bengal was around 5.8%.

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The CM further said: “We have decided to set up 500 tribal schools with Ol Chiki as the medium of communication, besides 200 Rajbanshi, 100 English and two Kamtapur schools. We will also set up Kurmi, Hindi, Gorkha, Nepali, Sadgiri, Kurmali, Lepcha and Urdu schools once the syllabuses are finalised.”

Some council members alleged forgery of ST certificates by non-tribals to bag jobs. Banerjee directed cancellation of such documents, if any, after a proper probe.

