

**Title:** Need to declare Haldia-Raimangal stretch in West Bengal as the Sunderban National Waterways.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (JOYNAGAR): Sir, the Sunderbans is renowned for its unique flora, fauna and tiger project. It is also the largest delta in Asia with an all season river stretch of 220 km. However, it continues to be one of the most industrially-backward and poverty-stricken areas of our country. I have raised this issue many times in this August House. However, the Central Government has not given adequate attention to it.

The Centre conferred the national waterways status on the river Godavari even though only 90 km of the river is navigable during the lean seasons. The Sunderbans rivers are all-season rivers and best suited for navigation.

The Centre has a proposal to declare as national waterways from Haldia to Raimangal which has a stretch of 191 km.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to expeditiously declare the Haldia-Raimangal stretch as the Sunderban National Waterways. This would not only help the local people in getting employment opportunities but the Centre would also be benefited out of increased tourist activities.