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## Tripura party fights for tribal rights

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**Agartala, Oct. 11:**The newly-formed Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) has said it would fight for tribal rights and oppose the amendment to the Forest Right Act proposed by the Left Front government.

In a recent official communication to the Centre, party president Narendra Debbarma said, "The original Act has given forest rights to tribal people and other traditional forest dwellers who have been living continuously in forest areas for 75 years. But the state government wants the right to be given to other forest dwellers or non-tribals with 1971 as the cut-off date. This is totally unacceptable as the proposed amendment will lead to the swamping of forest land by non-tribals who settled in Tripura since 1971".

He also asserted that the IPFT would launch an agitation against this and on three other issues related to tribal interests.

"We have already met chief secretary Sudhir Sharma and submitted a memorandum wherein we have recorded our opposition to the proposed amendment, besides raising the demand for delimitation of all 28 ADC constituencies before the election in March next year, setting up of counting centres of ballots in ADC areas and appointment to all vacant posts reserved for scheduled tribes," Narendra said last evening.

He added that non-fulfilment of the demands would force his party to agitate for tribal rights.

The launching of the IPFT yesterday as a new regional party has come as a surprise to mainstream parties like the Congress and the CPM, though the leadership of both refused comment.

