



RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Finance  
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance  
Member of Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps  
Co-Chairman, District Development Coordination & Monitoring Committee, Bengaluru Urban District

July 13, 2018

Dear *Dr. Hanishvardhanji*

**Sub: Attempts by vested interests to reduce the area of Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ) around National Parks**

I am writing to you with reference to your response to my letter dated December 01, 2017, wherein you stated that you are waiting for fresh draft proposals from the government of Karnataka regarding the area of Eco-Sensitive zones around Bannerghatta National Park and other Wildlife sanctuaries.

As you may be aware, owing to pressure from citizens and experts, the Mining and Geology Department in Karnataka has shut down numerous illegal mining/quarrying units around the periphery of Bannerghatta National Park. The effect of these closures has been tremendous, where within weeks of the closure, wildlife has been sighted in and around mining zones.

These closures have given activists hope that the natural eco-system around the national park can be restored. However, it has come to my attention that the state Government will be re-issuing draft notification vis-à-vis Eco-Sensitive Zones around the National Park in the State, including Bannerghatta National Park. I urge you to ensure that any attempts to reduce the area of ESZ below 268.96 sq. km as prescribed in the MoEF & CC's notification published in June 15, 2016 is discouraged.

Bannerghatta National Park for example has a crucial multi-faceted role to play given its proximity to Bengaluru city and as a crucial wildlife corridor connecting wildlife sanctuaries



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in the Nilgiri biosphere reserve in the Western Ghats. Being close to Bengaluru, the National Park is vital in maintaining the ecological balance and sustainability of Bengaluru city and has reduced the heat island effect, pollution levels and overall quality of life for the city's inhabitants.

Hence, given the importance of Eco-Sensitive Zones to both ecological balance and sustainability for all life, including us humans, I urge your immediate intervention to prevent the dilution of the notification on Eco-Sensitive Zones.

Yours sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

**Dr. Harsh Vardhan**

Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Indira Parvayaran Bhawan

JorBagh, New Delhi – 110 003

Encl:

1. My letter to you dated December 01, 2017
2. Your DO letter dated December 22, 2017



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1<sup>st</sup> December, 2017

Dear *Harshvardhan ji*

Sub: Request your intervention to protect of Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around Bannerghatta National Park

I am writing to you in continuation of the representation made to Hon'ble Prime Minister and yourself by the Bannerghatta Nature Conservation Trust. This is about the efforts being made by vested interests to shrink the Eco Sensitive Zone around Bannerghatta National Park from 268.96 sq.km as per the final draft notification from the MoEF in June 2016 to 181.57 sq.km, in violation of Supreme Court Order.

I request you to kindly ensure at the earliest, the notification of the ESZ without any dilution to the draft notification for the entire 268.96 sq.kms. Many vested interests are actively pushing for the dilution which must be prevented as they will be ecologically detrimental to the already fragile ecosystem.

Yours sincerely,

*Rajeev*

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

*Warm personal regards!*

Dr Harsh Vardhan

Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
Indira ParvayaranBhawan  
JorBagh, New Delhi-110003

CC:

Principal Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, Government of India, New Delhi

Encl:

1. Petition by *Bannerghatta Nature Conservation Trust* to Hon'ble Prime Minister
2. Acknowledgement by PMO, ID No.:PMOPG/D/2-17/0542547 Dated 20/11/2017



# **BANNERGHATTA NATURE CONSERVATION TRUST ®**

11-11-2017

To

**Sri NarendraModi,**  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

Respected NarendraModiji,

## **Bengaluru: Eco-plunder, Criminal Malfeasance and Official Collusion**

This letter is being addressed to you after efforts were made over several years through the official machinery to stop the ecological plunder of the only extensive green belt in the vicinity of Bengaluru and they did not yield the desired results. Since the situation is getting more desperate each day we request you to please intervene personally; there would be no way of reversing the harm being done.

The Bannerghatta National Park is close to Bengaluru, one of India's fastest growing cities and it is a unique region of biological and ecological importance. It is the prime habitat for several species of mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds including the endangered Asian Elephant, Indian Gaur, Sambar Deer, Spotted Deer, Leopard, Wild Dog and even the Tiger. As a terminal point on the northern side of Mysore Elephant Reserve, it is the movement path for Asian Elephants that migrate from the adjacent Cauvery wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka and Krishnagiri and Hosur Forest Division of Tamilnadu. It is the crucial watershed for streams such as AntaragangeHolé, RayatmalaHolé, Amuthihalla, MuthyalaMaduhalla, Shankaranahalla, Bantanahalla, AaneMaduvinahalla, Byaladakerehalla, Maavinahalla and rivers (Arkavathi, Suvamamukhi, Muthyalamadavu hole, Rayathmala hole, Hebbalahalla and Antharagange, which joins Cauvery river). Considering its proximity to Bengaluru, its importance as a green belt close to the city cannot be underemphasized since it moderates the city's climate, makes it liveable and therefore a sought after investment hub as well. Unfortunately, several vested interests which are after short-term gain are plundering this green area through illegal mining and tree felling, which could spell doom for the city in the long run.

The recommendation of the Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) to increase safety zones (eco-sensitive zones) around wildlife sanctuaries and national parks from 100 meters to 2 km from the park's boundary is a key issue here. The note, prepared by CEC member secretary M K Jiwrajka, and submitted to the SC, has categorized Protected Areas (PAs) in four groups and the safety zone to be notified thereon. It suggests that parks above 500 sq km will be under Category-A and its safety zone will be 2 km from boundary. Similarly, for Category-B (between 200 sq km & 500 sq km) the safety zone may be 1km

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from boundary. Such distances for PAs in Category-C (between 100 sq km and 200 sq km) and Category-D (upto 100 sq km) may be kept at just 500 metres and 100 metres respectively. Given the fact that the Bannerghata National Park is contiguous with other protected areas the safety zone should be 2 km. Despite this granite mining is continuing unabated well within the safe zone. This is happening blatantly although the High Court has already passed orders with reference to safe zones around the National Park which are being flouted. Unless the orders are respected the Government could be open to action for contempt of court.

We have been pursuing through every channel possible to stop the quarrying in villages of Ragihalli, Shivanahalli and other areas in and around the National Park within the specified radius of 2km. After all our efforts we have come to learn that permission for quarrying has been officially granted by Department of Mines and Geology against an application (attached) which states falsely (vide clause 21) that there is no wild life sanctuary or eco-sensitive area nearby. This has become the reason for the Department of Mines and Geology to declare that the quarrying is legal. As it stands, it is only the defining of safe zones in accordance with the court judgement which can ease the problem by putting an end to the quarrying and the plunder around Bannerghatta but this is still pending.

To highlight our case and the urgency of the matter we are more than willing to provide supporting documentary evidence but hesitate to take more of your time. We request you to kindly intercede in the matter with the Green Tribunal since only that can check the plunder continuing unabated. Generations of Indians will benefit from a timely intervention at this critical stage.

Yours faithfully

Vishnu Narain, Siddharth Goenka



Status as on 25 Nov 2017

Registration Number : PMOPG/D/2017/0542547  
Name Of Complainant : Shri VISHNU NARAIN SIDDHARTH GOENKA  
Date of Receipt : 17 Nov 2017  
Received by : Prime Ministers Office  
Forwarded to : Mines VI  
Officer name : Shri P.S. Mundharikar  
Officer Designation : Section Officer  
Contact Address : 101 D Wing, Shastri Bhavan,  
Ministry of Mines  
New Delhi 110001  
Contact Number : 23384070  
e-mail : mines@nic.in  
Grievance Description : RMS A COPY HAS BEEN SENT TO M/O ENV AND FOREST.  
Date of Action : 20 Nov 2017



डॉ. हर्ष वर्धन

Dr. Harsh Vardhan



भारत सरकार  
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्री  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST &  
CLIMATE CHANGE

D.O. No. 1/19/2017-ESZ

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2017

Dear Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar ji,

Please refer to your letter dated 01<sup>st</sup> December, 2017 regarding declaration of Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around the Bannerghatta National Park in Karnataka.

The Validity of the earlier published Draft Notification has expired and my Ministry has sought fresh proposal from Government of Karnataka in order to republish the draft notification. Your concerns are being forwarded to the State Government for consideration while submitting the proposal.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Dr. Harsh Vardhan)

Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar  
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha),  
211, North Avenue,  
New Delhi-110 001.