

**Steps to protect Bannerghatta National Park**

2772. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state :

(a) details of steps taken by Government to stop the abuse of the National Park considering the importance of Bannerghatta National Park to the biodiversity and Citizens of Bengaluru and other parts of Karnataka;

(b) the reasons for reducing the area of Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around Bannerghatta National Park to 169.84 sq. km. in the draft notification dated 30.10.2018, from 268.96 sq. kms., as proposed in the previous draft notification dated 15.06.2016; and

(c) details of steps taken by Government to stop illegal mining and quarrying and disruptions to the Elephant Corridors around Bannerghatta National Park?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA): (a) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 regulates activities within Protected Areas, including Bannerghatta National Park and provides stringent penalties for offences committed under the Act. In addition, the State/Union Territory Governments are empowered under the Act for protection and management of Protected Areas.

(b) The notification for declaration of eco-sensitive zones around National Parks and Sanctuaries are issued by the Ministry based on the proposal submitted by the respective State/Union Territory Governments and also after considering the comments received from the public.

(c) The Government considers proposals for mining activities outside National Parks/Sanctuaries in accordance with Environment Clearance based on Environment Impact Assessment Notification as per Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and Forest Clearance wherever applicable under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, subject to the terms and conditions during appraisal.

As part of Environmental Clearance, the proposals located within notified eco-sensitive zones or 10 km. of boundary of Wildlife Sanctuaries or National Parks are also referred to Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife.

In addition, the activities in the eco-sensitive zones are monitored by a Monitoring Committee, chaired by the District Collector as the chairman and the DCF of the concerned National Park/Sanctuary as the Member Secretary.