



Bannerghatta National Park: ESZ Restoration

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News Context: The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has recommended restoring the **Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ)** around Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) to its original **2016 extent (268.9 sq. km)**, reversing a 2020 notification that had slashed it by nearly 100 sq. km.

- **The Conflict:** The 2020 reduction was criticized for favoring mining and real estate interests. The CEC noted that the smaller buffer failed to protect "scientifically identified elephant corridors."
- **Significance of BNP:** Located just 22 km from Bengaluru, it is the city's primary "green lung" and a vital terminal point for the **Eastern and Western Ghats** elephant migratory path.
- **Buffer Functionality:** Restoring the ESZ acts as a "shock absorber" for the park, regulating activities like stone quarrying and heavy construction that cause noise pollution and disrupt wildlife behavior.
- **Wholistic Insight:** This case highlights the tension between **Urban Expansion** and **Conservation**. The CEC recommendation emphasizes that "Ecologically Sensitive" does not mean "No Development," but rather "Regulated Development" to ensure the survival of the Anekal elephant corridor.