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Bannerghatta National Park win: First stone crusher exits

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Firm awaits the ministry's order on eco-sensitive zone Environmentalists welcome decision.



Mining activity going on near Bannerghatta National Park

Bengaluru: In what could be the biggest win of the environmentalists against the mining lobby at Bannerghatta National Park (BNP), one of the stone quarry owners operating at the park, Kushal Stone Crushers agreed to abide by the eco-sensitive law



once it is finalised by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MOEF), raising hopes that other quarries would follow suit.

The Shivanahalli village based company has said in the open declaration, "We respect the law and will abide by the regulation of the MOEF that is pertaining to the vicinity of the area. We will however require time because the company is liable for all the loans that will be due, which was given on the basis of the documents submitted by the respective departments."

The forest department last week had said that a new proposal to the MOEF regarding eco-sensitive will be sent. "Till a new law comes to place, we will abide by the Safe Zone regulation of 1991 passed specifically for the BNP in 1991. This prohibits the mining activities within 1 km of the park. The earlier draft lapsed," said, Mr C Jayaram, Additional Chief Principal Conservator of Forest, BNP.

The forest officials had denied that mining was being conducted in the eco-sensitive areas, despite the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) reports that proved otherwise. The satellite images released by the IISc published on March 23 in DC proved that stone quarrying in the eco-sensitive buffer region had been continuing.

Tree doctor, Mr Vijay Nishanth was elated at the recent developments and said, "This is a huge relief. However, I will still reiterate my question - how did the mines and geology department give permission to carry out mining activities near the forest area." According to a forest official, the land on which mining is taking place falls under the revenue department and the permission to carry out mining in the area was given for a 20 year period.

On Wednesday, retired Justice MF Saldanha had written a letter to the chief minister requesting him to intervene and stop the mining since the ramifications on ecology and the habitats of the surrounding village are huge.

