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IISc Students Campaign for Western Ghats

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BENGALURU: Around 500 students of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) here have launched a campaign to save the Western Ghats.

They have demanded that the Centre hold wider consultations on the draft notification of the High-Level Working Group (HLWG), also known as the Kasturirangan Committee report, which reduces the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) in the Western Ghats to 37 per cent.

In a letter to Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar, the students have demanded that the draft notification, along with the HLWG and other reports, be widely circulated in an unbiased manner among communities living in the Ghats in their respective languages. The notification should also be discussed at the grassroots level and subject to decisions taken by the gram sabhas. The report of the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP), headed by ecologist Madhav Gadgil, had recommended designating the entire Western Ghats as ESA, the letter stated.

The draft notification issued by the Environment Ministry on September 4, was p

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The students have s

online, a majority of people who live deep in the forests do not have access to the internet. "Moreover, the draft refers to the HLWG report while the holistic WGEEP report has not been taken into account. The WGEEP was not properly circulated among the local communities," letter stated. "You have the capacity to set things right. Even if the government decides to move forward with the HLWG report, we request you to include the salient progressive features from the WGEEP report as well," the students said.

Approved 300 ESZs: Javadekar Chamarajnar: Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said he had approved 300 proposals for eco-sensitive zones around protected areas in the interest of conservation of forest and wildlife. He added the remaining proposals will be cleared before March 31 next year.

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