

Regarding safeguarding of Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka

SHRI YADUVEER WADIYAR (MYSORE): Thank you very much, Madam, for allowing me to bring an issue of national importance to the attention of this august House. It concerns our Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

Madam, in 2009, the Karnataka Government implemented a night ban over NH-766 which runs through Chamarajanagar district in Karnataka and connects to Wayanad in Kerala. Despite this progressive policy which was put into place to ensure that wildlife collisions are at a minimum, and also that the illegal activity that happens during the night time is also at a minimum, the Kerala Government has repeatedly sought to lift this ban. Time and again, they have approached the Karnataka Government. The sitting Chief Minister, who was also the Chief Minister in his previous term, had denied the lifting of the night ban twice. Despite this, recently an affidavit was submitted to the Supreme Court which advocated for an elevated road on an alternative route and keeping NH-766 only for local community use and emergency vehicles. The senior leaders within the Congress have exerted pressure on the Karnataka Government to reconsider lifting the ban and also take back the affidavit that was filed in the Supreme Court.

Madam, such interference in Karnataka's affairs, which undermines the State's efforts to protect its natural heritage for the benefit of a few political figures is deeply condemnable. I respectfully urge you to direct through this House the Ministry concerned to take a firm stance regarding safeguarding our tiger reserves and ensuring that they are not compromised for the political interests of a select few. Thank you.