



WAYANAD ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Reg.No:WYD/CA/25/2013

Reg. Office SBP V/56 Sreeragam Moolankavu PO ,Mysore Road ,Sulthan Bathery. Wayanad. 673592

PRESIDEN
C.M PAULOSE

SECRETARY
K. GOPAKUMAR

TREASURER
C. FAISAL

To
District Collector
Wayanad.

31-Jan-2013

Sir,

One Adv. L. Sreenivasa Babu had filed a writ petition numbered as WP 17498/2009, before the honorable Karnataka High Court to ban the night traffic through NH 212 and NH 67 in stretch of 19 and 13 Km respectively in the portion of said highways passing through Bandipur National Park . In the said case the Karnataka forest department had made a suggestion before the hon'ble. Karnataka High Court that there is an alternative road leading to Wayanad from Mysore via Hunsur-Gonikkuppa-Kutta-Mananthavady. It was suggested that this road starting from Mysore would touch NH 212 at Kalpatta. It was further pointed out that, even though this road is lengthier by 60 KM than the existing route, for the sake of protecting wild life in Bandipur forests, diversion of night traffic through this road is desirable and this road doesn't pass through forests. The hon'ble Karnataka High court accepted this proposal and pronounced the final verdict on 09-03-2010. By that judgment the hon'ble. Karnataka High court banned the night traffic of motor vehicles between 9pm and 6 am in the 20 kms and 12 kms stretches respectively in NH 212 and NH 67 in the Bandipur national park area. The hon'ble Karnataka high court observed that the night traffic in these roads is fatal to the wild animals crossing the roads. The Hon'bl. Karnataka High court also observed that the light and sound penetrating to the deep forests from the speeding vehicles are affecting the behavior of the wild animals and their free movements within the habitat. The Hon'bl. Karnataka High court observed that the traffic would be diverted to the alternative road from Mysore Via Hunsur, Gonikkuppa, Kutta Mananthavady is there which joins with Kozhikode-Mysore National Highway at Kalpatta . What prompted the Karnataka forest department to suggest this road as an alternative is there is no forest portion in this road in the Karnataka state.

It is true that the alternative Mysore-Hunsur-Gonikkuppa-Kutta road doesn't pass through forest area in Karnataka state.

But when enter Kerala in between Tholpetty and Kattikulam this road crosses through Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary at a length of 19 kms. This area is the Core/Critical habitat of the Tholpetty range of Wayanad wild life sanctuary. The road passing through this section is a narrow one unfit for heavy vehicle movement. After the diversion of night traffic to this road around 1300 to 1500 motor vehicles are passing through this road during night time. The wild animal density of this area is multifold than the Bandipur national park area through where NH 212 and NH 67 passes. Tholpetty range of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary is the habitat of endangered Tigers. Recently it is found that the largest number of Tigers in India reside in this area. Two Elephant passages are also in this area. The Tholpetty range is well known for its rich bio-diversity and various species of wild animals including Tigers, Elephants, Bison, Deer, Sambar Deer, Spotted Deer, rare kind of Snakes etc... Pakshipathalam Bird Sanctuary is also located in Tholpetty Range. After the diversion of night traffic to this road now It is a common sight that wild animals which were used to move freely through their habitat in this area are stranded along the roadside as not to freely move around or even cross the road due to heavy traffic during night time.

The wild animals in this area were not accomsted with the Menes of vehicles before. The all in a sudden heavy vehicle movement through the Core/Critical area of the habitat and the Menes caused by the light and sound penetrating deep in to the forest has affected the behavior of the wild animals dearly. This situation forces the wild animals to run away from their habitat and enter in to the farms and fields of neighboring villages. All in a sudden the man -wild animal conflict, cattle lifting, and destruction of crops by wild animals have increased in neighboring Thirunelly, Thrissilery, Tholpetty, Kattikulam villages of Mananthavady thaluk. Even Tigers were forced to run out of forests which ultimately lead to the caging of a Tiger from Thirunelly and releasing near Sulthan Bathery which later ended in gunning down of the national animal by the forest department itself. All these untoward incidents arose after the diversion of the heavy night traffic though the Kattikulam- Kutta- Tholpetty road of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary shows that there is a direct link in the change of animal behavior and diverted night traffic. The ultimate result of Karnataka high court order is that security of the wild animals in Karnataka has been ensured at the cost of the wild animals in Kerala. But the government of Kerala is not at all bothered about the safety of the wild animals and it's wild life sanctuaries as evident from its act of not making the hon'ble Karnataka High court known that the proposed alternative Kutta- Gonikkuppa- Mananthavady road is passing through the Wayanad

Wildlife Sanctuary and the same problems in Bandipur area more or less persist in this area.

Even though the Kerala Government has preferred an appeal before the hon'ble Supreme Court against judgment of hon'ble Karnataka high court, the important fact that proposed alternative road is passing through Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary was not at all focused. There were chief ministerial talks on two occasions between Kerala and Karnataka Chief Ministers with regards night traffic ban in NH 212. But then also the Kerala government didn't pointed out to the Karnataka government that the same issue of disturbance of wildlife has been shifted to and persisting in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala, after the night traffic ban in NH212.

The sudden diversion of night traffic and the development of Kutta-Gonikkuppa road have pleased a real estate lobby who has made investment along this road side. It is at their instance the alternative road proposal was made before the hon'ble. Karnataka High Court and the fact that said road is also passing through the Wayanad wildlife sanctuary was suppressed . It is astonishing why the Kerala forest department and concerned officials are not revealing and complaining of the serious repercussions of the heavy diverted night traffic in the Kattikulam-Tholpetty- Kutta Road passing through the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.

So you are here by requested to take immediate steps to close the 19 km stretch of road between Kattikulam-Tholpetty in the Mananthavady –Kutta- Gonikkuppa road which passes through Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, between 7 pm and 6 am.

Yours Faithfully

C M Paulose

President

Wayanad Environmental Forum

Chullingal (H)

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Copy To:

1. Minister for Forests & Environment, Kerala State
2. Chief Secretary, Kerala State.
3. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Wildlife, Kerala State.
4. Wildlife Warden, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.