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Ban on grazing in forests meant to keep off cattle from neighbouring states, says Khandre

The minister's statement came following opposition from farmers groups to his direction issued for a blanket ban on grazing in all the forests.

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Bengaluru: Days after directing forest officers to explore the legal provisions to ban cattle grazing in all the notified forests in Karnataka, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre on Thursday said an exception will be made for adivasis and forest dwellers to continue grazing in such areas.

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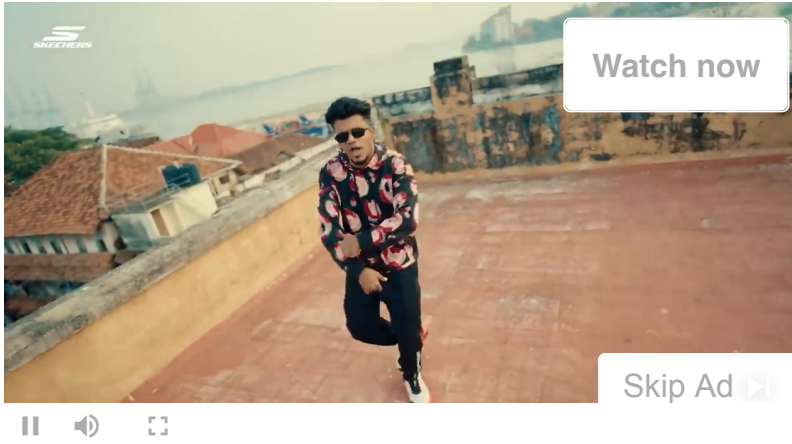


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The minister's statement came following opposition from farmers groups to his direction issued on Tuesday for a blanket ban on grazing in all the forests.

"The minister has sought to clarify that the instruction was aimed at putting an end to thousands of cattle from the neighbouring states grazing in the forests," the statement said.

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The clarification noted that as per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, unauthorised entry of humans and cattle grazing were not allowed. However, in some forests of the state, farmers have been grazing cattle for years.

"We will bring awareness among the people living near forests. Opportunities will be created for them to have cow breeds which produce more milk and to grow fodder on their own lands," the statement added.

The statement said allowing all the cattle to graze in forest areas would be unsustainable. This would leave no fodder for the herbivores in the forests. In addition, the wild animals face increased risk of contracting the diseases that afflict the domestic cattle.

Referring to the death of the five tigers in Male Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary after the animals were poisoned by three individuals in revenge for killing of their cows, the minister had said that such negative interactions should be avoided.

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