

# RAJYA SABHA CLEARS WILDLIFE BILL, MINISTER PROMISES TO PROTECT ELEPHANTS

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Union Minister for Environment Bhupender Yadav speaks in the Rajya Sabha on December 8, 2022. | Photo Credit: PTI

Rajya Sabha passed the [Wildlife \(Protection\) Amendment Bill, 2022](#) on Thursday. Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav assured that elephants will be protected and conserved according to the provisions of the Act.

The Bill, which had undergone scrutiny of a parliamentary panel, seeks to conserve and protect wildlife through better management of protected areas and rationalise schedules which list out species under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. [Lok Sabha had cleared the legislation in August](#) during the Monsoon Session.

The Bill seeks better management of protected areas and provides for certain permitted activities like grazing or movement of livestock and bona fide use of drinking and household water by local communities.

Meanwhile, Sushmita Dev of Trinamool Congress said the amendment has given huge discretion for the transportation of live elephants and expressed concern on protecting the animal. She said the amendment contravenes Section 27 of the Act.

Congress member Jairam Ramesh opposed the Bill in its current form. He said the Minister has accepted recommendations of the Standing Committee but deviated from an important suggestion. "The elephant is a national heritage animal for India. The Standing Committee accepted the religious significance of the elephant, but the Minister has also included the words 'any other purpose'. What are these words supposed to stand for?" Mr. Ramesh asked.

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