

## Haryana govt panel suggests redefining Aravallis, will shrink protected area

13 September 2021



A state-level committee led by Haryana Principal Secretary (Town and Country Planning) A K Singh had met on August 9 “for ground-truthing of NCZ in Haryana Sub-Region of National Capital Region”.

Insisting that revenue records only identify ‘*Gair Mumkin Pahar* (uncultivable hilly areas)’ and make no mention of ‘Aravalli’, a high-level committee of the Haryana government has asked officials to identify the areas under Aravalli on the basis of a 1992 notification of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), which only covers the areas of the old Gurgaon district (currently Gurgaon and Nuh).

Environmentalists say that by that definition, the provision of the National Conservation Zone (NCZ), which places restrictions on construction activity, will not be applicable to Aravalli areas in Faridabad.

A state-level committee led by Haryana Principal Secretary (Town and Country Planning) A K Singh had met on August 9 “for ground-truthing of NCZ in Haryana Sub-Region of National Capital Region”.

[The Indian Express](#) has learnt that at the meeting, some of the districts, while identifying areas under NCZ, considered areas recorded as ‘*Gair Mumkin Pahar*’ in revenue records as Aravalli. The Faridabad District Level Sub Committee (DLSC) proposed 9,357 hectares, Mahendragarh 22,607 hectares and Palwal 3,369 hectares as NCZ.

While asking districts to review their recommendations keeping in view the 1992 notification by the Union Environment Ministry, the committee said, “It was observed that the MoEF&CC, being the only legally competent authority, has rightly, in its wisdom issued notification (in 1992)... for the then Gurgaon and Alwar districts only. Moreover, in case, the said Ministry at any stage considers it appropriate to include other districts also under Aravalli notification, then the same may be done by said authority...”

A member of the committee, however, claimed that “its observations are not final yet”. “As many as 2-3 more meetings will take place on the issue,” the member told The Indian Express Sunday.

Environmentalists have strongly objected to the committee’s findings, saying it will only open up the region for construction activity. The Aravallis are spread across seven districts — Gurugram, Mewat, Faridabad, Palwal, Mahendragarh, Rewari and Bhiwani.

“If there are no Aravallis outside Gurgaon, were the orders of the Supreme Court for protection of Aravallis in 2002, 2004 and 2009 implemented in Faridabad by mistake?” wondered Chetan Agarwal, an environmentalist.

Another environmentalist who spoke on condition of anonymity said, “As of now, construction can be allowed only in half per cent of an area (0.5 acre in a 100-acre area) in the Aravallis but if these areas are brought out of the purview of the NCZ, there will be no such restrictions.”

Terming as “faulty” the method of demarcation of Aravallis on the basis of revenue records, R P Balwan, a former IFS officer, said, “Revenue record pertains to cultivation of land and doesn’t mention physical features. When no cultivation took place in the Aravallis ever, how will it find mention in revenue records? How can they deny the existence of the highest hill of Aravallis, Doshi Hill (Mahendragarh), on the basis of such a record?”

Source:<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/haryana-govt-panel-suggests-redefining-aravallis-will-shrink-protected-area-7504757/>