

NGT rap on police academy in Aravalis

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Gurgaon: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Haryana chief secretary to take appropriate remedial action within three months to rectify illegal construction in the Aravalis for the development of a police training centre in Bhondsi. The tribunal also directed that legal action be taken against the officers involved and told the government to ensure that such 'illegalities' are not repeated.

A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel passed the order on Wednesday after hearing a plea filed by Manesar resident Ram Avatar Yadav. The petition claimed unauthorised construction was carried out for the Bhondsi police training centre on land notified under the Aravali plantation area as 'banjar kadeem' (old fallow land) and 'gair mumkin pahar' (uncultivable land).

According to the Supreme Court, 'gair mumkin pahar' and 'banjar kadeem' land are deemed forests, where no construction activities can take place.

The NGT order stated, "As already noted earlier, there is blatant violation of law in using forest land for non-forest purposes without requisite prior clearance. No state governed by rule of law ought to shut its eyes to such patent illegalities. The stand of the principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF), head of forest force, is patently against law, which he is supposed to know."

The order further said, "Accordingly, we direct the chief secretary, Haryana to take further appropriate remedial action in accordance with law within three months, including meaningful legal action against the erring officers and ensuring that such illegalities are not repeated."

The development comes after the bench reviewed the report submitted by the PCCF on May 23, which acknowledged that construction was being carried out on the forest land without requisite approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in violation of the judgment of the Supreme Court in the T N Godavarman vs Union of India case (2006).

Welcoming the order, petitioner Ram Avatar Yadav said, “The police training centre is spread across 400 acres. Construction has taken place in 49 acres of land notified under the Aravali plantation area as ‘banjar kadeem’ and ‘gair mumkin pahar’, where such activities are not allowed. The construction has also destroyed Kadarapur natural stormwater drain, which is again an environmental violation.”

The area has an abundant presence of wildlife, which is getting disturbed because of human intervention, he added.