

Afforestation project Green Wall launched to revive the Aravallis

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The project, conceptualised on the lines of the African Green Wall programme, was inaugurated by Union minister for environment, forest and climate change Bhupender Yadav in village Tikli, located 13km from Gurugram.

The Haryana government on Saturday launched an extensive afforestation and plantation project called the “Green Wall” in 75 villages to revive the Aravallis that is under threat from rampant mining, dumping of waste and encroachments.



Union minister for environment, forest and climate change Bhupender Yadav launches the afforestation project in Tikli village near Gurugram on Saturday. (HT Photo)

The project, conceptualised on the lines of the African Green Wall programme, was inaugurated by Union minister for environment, forest and climate change Bhupender Yadav in village Tikli, located 13km from Gurugram.

The African Great Green Wall was an initiative launched in Sahel, the region bordering Africa's Sahara Desert, to increase the amount of arable land.

Yadav said about 35,000 hectares in Haryana, including 18,000 hectares in Gurugram, will be part of the project to revive the Aravallis that stand as the only barrier stopping the expansion of desert land towards north-west India.

State forest department officials said they will earmark 18,000 hectares in Gurugram, 5,000 hectares in Faridabad, 1,000 hectares in Bhiwani, 6,000 hectares in Mahendergarh and 5,000 hectares in Rewari for the project.

Yadav also unveiled the national action plan to combat desertification and land degradation through forestry interventions as well as an FAQ [frequently asked questions] on agroforestry published by Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education.

The Union minister said the Green Wall project will not only increase the green cover and biodiversity of the Aravallis through afforestation, reforestation and restoration of water bodies, but also improve soil fertility, water availability and climate resilience of the region.

“The project will benefit the local communities by providing them with employment opportunities, income and ecosystem services. The Haryana forest department and other stakeholders have done commendable work in implementing the project,” Yadav said, reiterating the government’s commitment to achieve the national goal of creating an additional 2.5 billion tonnes of carbon sink by 2030.

A carbon sink is anything that absorbs more carbon (dioxide) from the atmosphere than it releases – for example, plants, the ocean and soil.

Forest officials said the plantation will be taken up in five villages each in Nuh, Gurugram, Rewari, Narnaul and Faridabad districts. The department is gearing up to facilitate action plans for implementation of the project, they added

Gurugram deputy commissioner Nishant Kumar Yadav said to promote greenery and water conservation in the Aravalli ranges, in collaboration with the Haryana government, the Centre has started the Aravalli Green Wall Project, as part of ongoing activities on World Forestry Day (March 21).

“It will help in stopping desertification of the area. It will act as a shield to Aravalli flora and fauna. The project will include plantation of indigenous plants in the foothills of Aravallis. Local citizens will be roped in to take ownership of these plantations. We will also rejuvenate ponds in the foothills under the Amrit Sarovar scheme, to supplement the plantation,” he said.

Yadav said chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar’s plan to develop Jungle Safari and a Green Corridor in Aravalli will attract tourists to the district. “We all should contribute to the collective effort to protect the Aravallis. Under this project, social, religious, educational and other institutions of Gurugram and nearby districts will work together for the development of Aravallis,” he said.

Haryana forest minister Kanwar Pal Gurjar emphasised the importance of afforestation and restoration of degraded forests to mitigate the effects of climate change. “With the passage of time, we paid attention to economic development but got distracted from our duties towards nature. On important occasions in life, we must plant saplings and take care of them afterwards. Apart from promoting greenery, this project will also increase the level of open air and groundwater,” he said.

Vaishali Chandra Rana, a city-based environmentalist, said the government should first protect the Aravallis; the buffer zone comes later.

“Also they need to notify all Aravallis and its foothills as forest. That would be the first step in creating the Green Wall that the government is proposing,” she said.

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