

PCB gets tough with illegal construction on Aravali.

The Haryana State Pollution Control Board (PCB) is all set to take action against people who have carried out constructions on the Aravali hills in Gurgaon in violation of the environmental norms.

Also, the board today submitted an affidavit to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which is located in the national capital, on the issue, as directed by it. Besides, it will take the cases to a local environment court.

The cases relate to the constructions on the hills in violation of the "Arvali clearance" notification which was issued by the Union Environment Ministry on May 7, 1992. The notification was at the behest of the Supreme Court. In effect, no construction could be made on the hills after the notification.

The NGT had taken suo-motto notice on the violations of the notification in Gurgaon and Alwar district in Rajasthan. It had directed the state government and the Pollution Control Board to take action and submit an affidavit to it on the issue.

Subsequently, the board identified as many as 556 constructions, including farmhouses and commercial structures, which ran afoul the law. They are spread in several villages, including Rozka Gujjar, Rai Sinha, Bhondsi, Damdama and Ghamdoj.

The prosecution has already been launched in 380 of the cases. An official of the board said the remaining cases would be taken to the court shortly. In some of the cases, the documents concerned were still being verified.

About 50 of the accused had moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court challenging the authorities' decision to prosecute them. They, however, lost and the cases are being considered by the environment court.

A good number of farmhouses and commercial structures have sprung up on the hills over the years. The popular Punjabi folk singer, Mikka Singh, also owns a farmhouse carved out on the hills in Rozka Gujjar village.