

Punjab and Haryana High Court asks government to draw up mobility plan for cities like Gurgaon:

The Punjab and Haryana high court has directed government agencies in Haryana to work out a comprehensive mobility plan for cities, a shot in the arm for Gurgaon's Raahgiri Day movement that has pioneered the campaign for non-motorized transport in India.

In its order, a special bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ajay Tewari emphasized the urban mobility plan must be workable and must effectively "address the problems of newly-developed urban areas as well as the old townships and cities".

The bench agreed with P Raghvendra Rao, principal secretary, urban local bodies, Haryana, that there was urgent need for such a plan and directed the authorities concerned to hold a meeting under the chairmanship of the chief secretary in the coming weeks. The meeting, according to the order, is to be "attended by all principal secretaries and heads of departments", and is to be held "before the next date of hearing", which is in February next year.

This will be of particular significance to a city like Gurgaon, where an integrated mobility plan already exists, although the prescriptions made in this document are yet to be implemented. Analysts say a legal push is more likely to make Gurgaon's decision-makers act and take the necessary steps towards upgrading the non-motorized infrastructure here. "This was a special bench of the high court, with justices Surya Kant and Ajay Tewari, which deals with issues related to non-motorized transport. The bench directed both the states of Haryana and Punjab to form a committee under the chief secretaries and formulate a comprehensive mobility plan. The authorities were basically told to come out with a policy for the handling of non-motorized transport. This will have a special bearing on places like Gurgaon, where a plan already exists," said Navdeep Asija, an expert in sustainable transport who was present at the court on the day of hearing.

According to HUDA administrator Praveen Kumar, a part of the existing mobility plan – which is titled the 'Integrated Mobility Plan for Gurgaon-Manesar Urban Complex' – has already reached the implementation stage. "And the rest of it has been taken into the agenda. The implementation work is definitely going to happen. I haven't seen the latest order. But we've already had a detailed meeting under the chairmanship of the Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) head Bhure Lal about the integrated mobility plan for Gurgaon, and we have figured out the steps that we now have to take," Kumar told TOI.