

Threats for Aravallis

Why in news?

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A study found that deforestation of the Aravalli range leads to the expansion of the Thar Desert towards Delhi and Haryana.

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What is the present state of Aravalli range?

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- Recent study spotted about a dozen well-marked gaps in the Aravallis where the forest cover has almost totally vanished.

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- The protective belt is now facing disintegration due to felling of trees to make room for urbanisation and mining projects.

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- The area under human settlements on these hills has expanded from 247 sq km in 1980 to 638 sq km in 2016.

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- Industries, which were almost non-existent in 1980, now occupy about 46 sq km.

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What are the actions taken for conservation of Aravallis?

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- The National Conservation Zone (NCZ), as defined in the Delhi NCR Regional Plan 2021, covers the entire Aravalli range.

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- It includes its forests, water bodies and groundwater recharge areas.

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- In this zone, construction is allowed only on 0.5 per cent of the area and that too only for regional parks and sanctuaries.

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- Construction for commercial, residential, tourism and real estate purposes is strictly barred.

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What are the concerns with conservation policies?

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- The stakeholder states shows indecisiveness towards stopping or reversing the damage being done to the range.

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- Haryana state government raises a dispute over demarcation of Aravalli range in its state, citing the notification issued by the environment ministry.

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- It is done with the clear intention of restricting remedial action to stretches in Gurugram alone.

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- The stand is hard to justify since rejuvenation action is needed in the whole of the Aravallis.

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- Haryana's non-cooperation in respecting the NCZ can prove costly for it as well as its neighbours.

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What are the impacts of degrading Aravallis?

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- Loss of vegetative cover will lead to the natural drifting of Thar Desert towards the northwest.

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- Increased desertification of the National Capital Region (NCR) and its adjoining areas can lead to more environmental hazards.

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- These include more dust in the air, greater unpredictability of climate, meagre recharging of groundwater, and drying up of several natural water bodies.

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- The area under perennial water courses in this region has contracted by

nearly one-third and that under seasonal water flows by an even more alarming 97 per cent.

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- Groundwater resources of urban hub of Gurugram are under severe strain.

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Quick Recap

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Aravalli Range

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- It is a range of mountains running in North West direction between Delhi and Palanpur in Gujarat.

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- It constitutes a vital corridor between Asola Bhatti Sanctuary in Delhi and Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan.

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- The 700km long range and its thick forest cover protects National Capital Region and fertile plains of India from effects of Desert.

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Source: Business Standard

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