



Aravali Safari Park

Why in News?

Recently, several retired [Indian Forest Service](#) officers from across the country submitted a representation to **the Prime Minister**, opposing the proposed 10,000-acre [Aravali Safari Park project](#) in parts of Gurugram and Nuh.

- They emphasized that any intervention in an [eco-sensitive zone](#) should prioritize "**conservation and restoration**" rather than destruction.

Key Points

- **Aravali Safari Park:**
 - This project will be **the largest such project in the world**. Currently the largest curated safari park outside Africa is in Sharjah, **which opened in February 2022**, with an area of about two thousand acres.
 - It aims to **boost [tourism](#) and employment opportunities** for the local people.
- **Ecological Concerns:**
 - The project would **increase vehicular traffic** and construction in an eco-sensitive zone, harming the environment.
 - They highlighted that [the Aravali hills](#) serve as **critical [water reserves](#)** for the water-scarce regions of Gurugram and Nuh.
 - The **proposed "underwater zone" in the park could [alter water levels](#)**, exacerbating water scarcity in an area already classified as "overexploited" by **the Central Ground Water Board**.
- **Legal and Environmental Restrictions:**
 - It is emphasized that the Safari Park falls under a "forest" category, where environmental **laws strictly prohibit [deforestation](#), land clearing, and construction**.
 - They cited multiple [Supreme Court](#) and [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) orders under [the Forest Conservation Act, 1980](#), that restrict such activities.
- **Impact on Haryana's Forest Cover and Sustainability:**
 - **Haryana has the lowest forest cover in India**, and the Aravali range serves as a crucial ecological buffer.
 - The officers warned that mining and human settlement in the area would disrupt environmental balance, violate [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), and threaten long-term ecological sustainability.

Eco Sensitive Zones

- The [National Wildlife Action Plan \(2002-2016\)](#) of the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** stipulated that state governments should declare land falling **within 10 km of the boundaries of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries** as eco-fragile zones or **Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)** under the **Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986**.
- While the **10-km rule is implemented as a general principle**, the extent of its application can vary. **Areas beyond 10 km can also be notified by the Union government as ESZs**, if they

hold larger ecologically important “**sensitive corridors**”.

Aravali Mountain Range



- The Aravallis of Northwestern India, one of the **oldest fold mountains of the world**, now form residual mountains with an **elevation of 300m. to 900m.**
- This range starts from Himmatnagar in Gujarat and extends up to Haryana, Rajasthan, and Delhi (about 720 km).
- The mountains are divided into **two main ranges - the Sambhar Sirohi Range and the Sambhar Khetri Range in Rajasthan**, where their extension is about 560 km.
- The hidden limb of the Aravallis that extends from Delhi to Haridwar creates a divide between the drainage of rivers of the Ganga and the Indus
- These are **fold mountains of which rocks are formed primarily of folded crust**, when two convergent plates move towards each other by the process called orogenic movement.
- The Aravallis date back to millions of years when a pre-Indian sub-continent collided with the mainland Eurasian Plate. Carbon dating has shown that copper and other metals mined in the **ranges date back to at least 5th century BC.**