

Aravalli Green Wall Project

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In news– The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, launched Aravalli Green Wall Project in Haryana.

About the Haryana project-

- In the initial phase, **75 water bodies will be rejuvenated under the project, starting with five waterbodies each in every district of Aravalli landscape** on March 25th.
- The project will also include **large-scale plantation drives** and conservation of water resources in the Aravalli region.
- **The project will cover degraded land in Gurgaon, Faridabad, Bhiwani, Mahendergarh and in Rewari districts of Haryana.**
- Voluntary organization, Society for Geoinformatics and Sustainable Development and NGO, IMGurgaon are being engaged to mobilize people for Shramdaan for revival of water bodies at Bandhwadi and Ghata Bundh respectively.

About Aravalli Green Wall Project-

- It is a major initiative to green 5 km buffer area around the Aravalli Hill Range in four states.
- It is **part of the Union Environment Ministry's vision to create green corridors** across the country to **combat land degradation and desertification.**
- The **project covers states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi** – where the Aravalli hills landscape span over 6 million hectares of land.
- The **project involves planting native species of trees and shrubs on scrubland, wasteland and degraded forest land**, along with rejuvenating and restoring surface water bodies such as ponds, lakes and streams.

- The project **also focuses on agroforestry and pasture development** to enhance the livelihoods of local communities.
- The project will be executed by various stakeholders such as central and state governments, forest departments, research institutes, civil society organisations, private sector entities and local communities. Adequate funding, technical skills, policy coordination and public awareness will be called upon to ensure the success of the project.
- This green wall will help in carbon sequestration and mitigating climate change to enhance the biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Aravalli range by planting native tree species in the Aravalli region, providing habitat for wildlife, improving water quality and quantity.

The Aravalli Green Wall Project has the following objectives:

- Improving the ecological health of the Aravalli range.
- To **prevent eastward expansion of Thar Desert** and to reduce land degradation by creating green barriers that will prevent soil erosion, desertification and dust storms.
- **Promote sustainable development and livelihood opportunities** by involving local communities in afforestation, agro-forestry and water conservation activities that will generate income, employment, food security and social benefits.
- **Contribute to India's commitments under various international conventions such as UNCCD** (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification), CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) and UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change).
- Enhancing India's image as a global leader in environmental protection and green development.

Similar initiatives-

- Africa's Great Green Wall was launched by the African Union a decade ago with the support of many partners including UNCCD, World Bank and the European Commission.
- So far, work on nearly 15% of the wall is under way.
- In COP14 of UNCCD held in India, a similar initiative called Peace Forest Initiative (PFI) to develop forests in conflict areas between South and North Korea including the demilitarized zone was announced.
- The PFI has been inspired from the Peace Park between Peru and Ecuador.

Further reading: <https://journalsofindia.com/aravalli-range/>