

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
SUO MOTU PETITION (CIVIL) NO. 10 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF :

**IN RE: DEFINITION OF ARAVALLI HILLS AND RANGES AND
ANCILLAR ISSUES.**

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Place: New Delhi

Dated .08.2026

Filed By:

Advocate for Respondent.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL ORIGINAL JURISDICTION
SUO MOTU WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) NO. 10 OF 2025

IN THE MATTER OF:

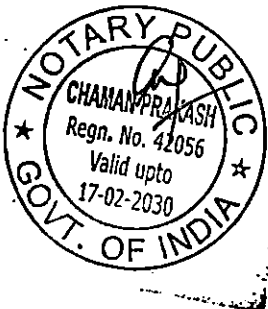
**IN RE: DEFINITION OF ARAVALLI HILLS AND RANGES AND
ANCILLAR ISSUES**

**COMPLIANCE OF THE ORDER DATED 25.05.2026 ON BEHALF OF
THE HIGH-POWERED COMMITTEE.**

I, Amit Anand, S/o Sh. Arun Kumar, aged about 42 years, presently posted as Deputy Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, having office at New Delhi, do hereby solemnly affirm and state as under:

1. That I am presently posted as Member Secretary of the High-Powered Committee (hereinafter referred to as "the HPC" of "the Committee") constituted by this Hon'ble Court vide order dated 25.05.2026 in the said matter and am well conversant with the facts and circumstances of the case, on the basis of official records maintained in the ordinary course, and am duly authorized to affirm the present compliance affidavit on behalf of the Committee.

31 AUG 2026



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Amit Anand".

2. That, the present compliance affidavit is filed in respectful compliance of the order of this Hon'ble Court dated 25.05.2026, Wherein the Hon'ble Court directed the HPC to submit its comprehensive report before 31.08.2026. A copy of the Hon'ble Court order dated 25.05.2026 is annexed as **Annexure-A**.

3. That, it is respectfully submitted that , in pursuance of the said order the Hon'ble Court was pleased to constitute the High-Powered Committee to undertake an independent and comprehensive examination of the issues concerning the definition, delineation, conservation and management of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges, comprising the following Members:

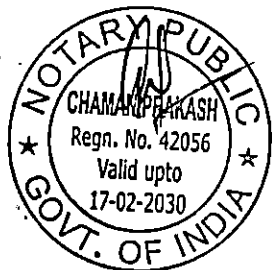
(a) Kanchan Devi, IFS, Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) – ex officio Chairperson;

(b) Dr. Subhash Ashutosh, Ex-Director General, Forest Survey of India – Member;

(c) Dr. Rajendra Kumar Sharma, Director (Retd.), Geological Survey of India – Member;

(d) Shri Brij Mohan Singh Rathore, Former Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC – Member;

31 AUG 2026



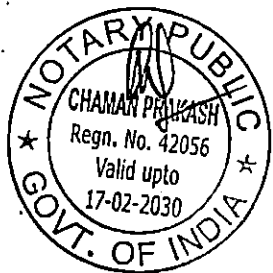
A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized loops and a final stroke.

(e) Prof. Ashok K. Bhatnagar, Former Professor and Head of Botany, Delhi University – Member,

along with Prof. (Dr.) Jagdish Krishnaswamy, Dean, School of Environment and Sustainability, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, and Prof. (Dr.) Laxmikant Sharma, Professor, Central University of Rajasthan, as Special Invitees, and the deponent as Member Secretary.

4. That, in compliance with the aforesaid order, the Compliance Report of the HPC titled “Compliance Report by High-Powered Committee” dated 31.08.2026 is annexed as **Annexure -B**. It is respectfully submitted that, pursuant to the mandate entrusted to it, the HPC engaged with concerned technical institutions and State agencies, sought relevant datasets and information, and invited representations and submissions from stakeholders pursuant to public notice dated 21.07.2026 (**Annexure-C**). The HPC further undertook geospatial and scientific analyses, including a comparative assessment of terrain/elevation-based delineation approaches using the Copernicus 30-metre Digital Elevation Model in the representative districts of Alwar, Ajmer and Udaipur, and carried out a Rapid Field Assessment of the Aravalli Landscape from 06.08.2026 to 11.08.2026. The HPC held 10 online/hybrid/in-person meetings and deliberated upon the

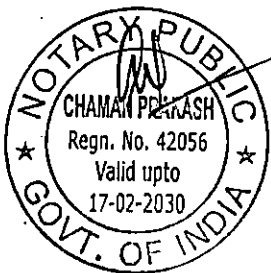
31 AUG 2026



Dr. [Signature]

approach, methodology, an emerging multidisciplinary Aravalli Ecosystem Landscape framework, and other findings, all as more fully set out in the said Report. The said Report further sets out the reasons necessitating additional time for completion of the Committee's mandate and, accordingly, prays for extension of time for submission of its comprehensive report by six months, up to 28.02.2027.

5. That, in view of the foregoing submissions, the deponent craves leave of this Hon'ble Court to rely upon the contents of the said comprehensive report as an integral part of this compliance Affidavit, as if the same were set out herein verbatim, and same may be read as part and parcel thereof.
6. It is most respectfully prayed that this Hon'ble Court may graciously be pleased to take the present Compliance Affidavit on record and pass such further order(s) as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstance of the present case.



31 AUG 2026

(अमित आनन्द / AMIT ANAND)
प्रधान वन महानिदेशक
Deputy Inspector General of Forests
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली India, New Delhi
DEPONENT

VERIFICATION

31 AUG 2026

Verified at New Delhi on this day of August, 2026 that
the contents of the foregoing compliance affidavit are true and correct to
my knowledge, no part of it is false and nothing material has been
concealed therefrom.

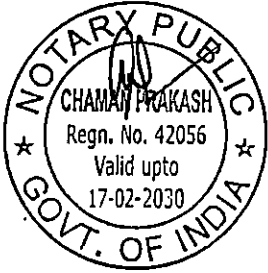
31 AUG 2026

(अमित आनन्द / AMIT ANAND)
उप वन महानिदेशक
Deputy Inspector General of Forests
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change
भारत सरकार, नई दिल्ली, India, New Delhi

DEPONENT

ATTESTED

CHAMAN PRAKASH, Advocate
NOTARY DELHI, Regn. No. 42056
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
COMPOUND, NEW DELHI
Mob. No. : 9999264732



NOTARIAL REGISTER
Page No. / Serial No. / Date

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I identified the document executed
who has signed by the deponent.

ANNEXURE - A

ITEM NO.25

COURT NO.1

SECTION PIL-W

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

SUO MOTO WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) No(s). 10/2025

IN RE: DEFINITION OF ARAVALLI HILLS AND RANGES AND ANCILLARY ISSUES

LD. ATTORNEY GENERAL OF INDIA, THE SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA AND MR. K. PARAMESHWAR, LD. SENIOR ADVOCATE AND AMICUS CURIAE TO ASSIST THIS COURT ALONG WITH THE CENTRAL EMPOWERED COMMITTEE CEC VIDE ORDER DATED 29.12.2025, MR. JAYCHEEMA, LD. AMICUS CURIAE - VIDE ORDER DATED 26.02.2026.

IA No. 57310/2026 - APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION, IA No. 63795/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS, IA No. 123763/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS, IA No. 20032/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS, IA No. 19957/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS, IA No. 81312/2026 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/ DIRECTIONS, IA No. 20206/2026 - CLARIFICATION/DIRECTION, IA No. 92194/2026 - CLARIFICATION/DIRECTION, IA No. 123764/2026 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T., IA No. 62472/2026 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T., IA No. 19640/2026 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION, IA No. 81310/2026 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION, IA No. 11734/2026 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION, IA No. 20892/2026 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION, IA No. 92110/2026 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION, IA No. 39829/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 63797/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 122577/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 20029/2026 - INTERVENTION/ IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 57309/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 92175/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 19892/2026 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT, IA No. 31492/2026 - MODIFICATION OF COURT ORDER, IA No. 39833/2026 - PERMISSION TO APPEAR AND ARGUE IN PERSON
IA No. 57308/2026 - PERMISSION TO FILE APPLICATION FOR DIRECTION

Date : 25-05-2026 This matter was called on for hearing today.

CORAM : HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIPUL M. PANCHOLI

Mr. Jatinder Jay Cheema, Amicus Curiae
Ms. Shreya Gulati, Adv.

For Petitioner(s) : By Courts Motion

Mr. Pritam Singh, Adv.
Mr. Umesh Kumar Shukla, Adv.

Mr. Pawan Kumar Saxena, Adv.
Mr. Charan Dass, Adv.

Mr. Ankit Bhatnagar, Adv.
Mr. Jasveer Rana, Adv.
Mr. Mohit Singh, Adv.
Mr. Sunil Kumar, Adv.

For Respondent(s) : Mr. Sanjay Parikh, Sr. Adv.
Ms. Maulshree Pathak, AOR
Ms. Kritika, Adv.

Mrs. Aishwarya Bhati, A.S.G.
Ms. Swati Ghildiyal, AOR
Mr. Nimesh Bhatt, Adv.

Mr. Vivek Sharma, AOR
Dr. Vijay Kumar Sharma, Adv.

Mr. B. K. Satija, A.A.G.
Mr. Rahul Khurana, Adv.
Mr. Samar Vijay Singh, AOR
Ms. Sabarni Som, Adv.
Mr. Aman Dev Sharma, Adv.
Mr. Gaj Singh, Adv.
Mr. Keshav Mittal, Adv.
Ms. Rekha, Adv.
Ms. Neeta Verma, Adv.
Ms. Reba Jena Mishra, Adv.

Mr. Binay Kumar, AOR
Ms. Dakshita Sharma, Adv.
Mr. Utkarsh Kumar Singh, Adv.
Mr. Sushant, Adv.

Mr. Dhananjaya Mishra, AOR

Ms. Tanya Aggarwal, Adv.
Ms. Ramya Aggarwal, Adv.
Mr. Karsh Sarosh Rebelo, Adv.
Mr. Aakarsh Mishra, Adv.
Ms. Vaishnavi Bhargava, Adv.
Mr. Akshat Khanna, Adv.
Mr. Aayushmaan Vatsyayana, AOR

Mr. Sadashiv, AOR
Mr. Devendra Kumar Gupta, Adv.
Mr. Sachin Agarwal, Adv.
Mr. Pranav Kumar Srivastava, Adv.
Ms. Vandana, Adv.
Ms. Mumtaz Javed Shaikh, Adv.
Ms. Neha Gupta, Adv.
Mr. Mohd Arafat Ahmad, Adv.
Mr. Mohd Shafat Ahamad, Adv.
Mr. Prashant Andrew Leo, Adv.

Mr. Gupta Subhash Ganesh, Adv.

Mr. Sanjay Upadhyay, Sr. Adv.

Ms. Mansi Bachani, Adv.

Mr. Shubham Upadhyay, AOR

Mr. Surya Gupta, Adv.

Mr. Anubhav Anand, Adv.

Mr. K.M. Nataraj, A.S.G.

Mr. Shiv Mangal Sharma, A.A.G.

Mr. Saurabh Rajpal, Adv.

Ms. Arushi Rathore, Adv.

Ms. Nidhi Jaswal, AOR

Mr. Mukul Rohtagi, Sr. Adv.

Mr. Atmaram Nadkarni, Sr. Adv.

Mr. Akhilesh Rajpurohit, Adv.

Mr. P. S. Sudheer, AOR

Mr. Rishi Maheshwari, Adv.

Ms. Anne Mathew, Adv.

Mr. Bharat Sood, Adv.

Mr. Jashan Vir Singh, Adv.

Intervenor-in-person, AOR

Mr. Tushar Mehta, Solicitor General

Mrs. Aishwarya Bhati, A.S.G.

Mr. Gurmeet Singh Makker, AOR

Ms. Shreya Jain, Adv.

Ms. Ruchi Kohli, Adv.

Ms. Shivika Mehra, Adv.

Ms. Shagun Thakur, Adv.

Mr. Nitin Pavuluri, Adv.

Mr. Rohan Gupta, Adv.

Ms. Mili Baxi, Adv.

Mr. Kapil Sibal, Sr. Adv.

Ms. Manisha Singh, Adv.

Mr. Geore Pothan Poothicote, Adv.

Mr. Danish Zubair Khan, AOR

Ms. Sumedha Ray, Adv.

Mr. Kanav Khatana, Adv.

Ms. Jyoti Singh, Adv.

Ms. Ojeswita Singh, Adv.

Mr. Prashant Bhushan, Adv.

Mr. Ritwick Dutta, Adv.

Ms. Srishti Agnihotri, AOR

Mr. D.p.singh, Adv.

Ms. Anchal Kanthed, Adv.

Ms. Anitha Shenoy, Sr. Adv.

Ms. Ayushma Awasthi, AOR
Ms. Sadhana Madhavan, Adv.
Ms. Kavana Rao, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following

O R D E R

1. In the present matter concerning the definition of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges, this Court, vide its successive orders dated 29.12.2025 and 26.02.2026, underscored the necessity of constituting a High-Powered Committee comprising domain experts for the purpose of undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the Report dated 03.10.2025. For context, the said Report had been submitted by a Committee constituted pursuant to the order of this Court dated 09.05.2024 and formed the basis for the issuance of extensive directions concerning the definition and demarcation of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges.
2. Accordingly, with a view to obtaining greater clarity and facilitating a more informed consideration of the issues involved, this Court, in its order dated 29.12.2025, made the following observations:

"9. We therefore deem it appropriate that prior to the implementation of the Committee's Report, or the execution of the directions contained in Paragraph 50 of this Court's judgment dated 20.11.2025, a fair, impartial, independent expert opinion must be obtained and considered, after associating all requisite stakeholders. Such a step is essential to resolve critical ambiguities and to provide definitive guidance on issues such as:

(i) Whether the definition of the 'Aravalli Hills and Ranges', restricted exclusively to the 500-meter area between two or more Aravalli Hills, creates a structural paradox wherein the geographical scope of protected territory is significantly narrowed.

(ii) Consequently, it should be determined whether this restrictive demarcation has inversely broadened the scope of 'non-Aravalli' areas, thereby facilitating the continuation of unregulated mining and other disruptive activities in terrains that are ecologically contiguous but technically excluded by this definition?

(iii) Whether the Aravalli Hills, characterized by an elevation of 100 meters and above, constitute a contiguous ecological formation even when the intervening distance exceeds the stipulated 500-meter threshold. Furthermore, in such instances, it must be clarified whether regulated mining would be permissible in these gaps. If so, what precise spatial parameters or lateral width would be utilized to define the extent of the 'Aravalli Range' to ensure that ecological continuity is not compromised?

(iv) Whether the widely publicized criticism asserting that only 1,048 hills out of 12,081 in Rajasthan meet the 100-meter elevation threshold, thereby stripping the remaining lower ranges of environmental protection, is factually and scientifically accurate. In the event this assessment correctly identifies a significant regulatory lacuna, it must be determined whether an exhaustive scientific and geological investigation is necessitated. Such an inquiry would involve the precise measurement of all hill and hillock elevations to facilitate a more nuanced and 'measured' assessment of the criteria required to maintain the structural and ecological integrity of the entire range.

(v) Whether there exist any supplementary issues or systemic vulnerabilities that may emerge during the course of these proceedings that necessitate this Court's intervention.

10. Accordingly, we propose to constitute a High-Powered Expert Committee comprising domain experts to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the Report submitted by the Committee. This study shall constitute an exhaustive and holistic examination of the questions formulated above, and amongst others, the following parameters:

(i) A definitive enumeration of the specific regions that fall within the scope of the recommended definition;

(ii) A detailed identification of the territories that would be excluded from protection under the proposed criteria;

(iii) An analysis of whether 'sustainable mining' or 'regulated mining' within the newly demarcated Aravalli areas, notwithstanding regulatory oversight, would result in any adverse ecological consequences;

(iv) An assessment of the areas no longer covered by the definition, specifically whether such exclusion risks their eventual erasure or degradation, thereby compromising the overall ecological integrity of the Aravalli range; and

(v) A multi-temporal evaluation of the short-term and long-term environmental impacts resulting from the implementation of the recommended definition and its associated directions."

3. Pursuant thereto, by our order dated 26.02.2026, we called upon the learned Amicus Curiae and the learned Senior Counsel/counsel appearing on behalf of the Union of India, the concerned States, and other stakeholders to place on record comprehensive notes, along with proposed questions that may require consideration in the course of these proceedings. We further requested the Ministry of

Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to suggest the names of domain experts for constituting the proposed High-Powered Committee.

4. In furtherance of the aforesaid exercise, suggestions regarding experts to be considered for inclusion in the proposed High Powered Committee were received from the learned *Amicus Curiae*, the Aravali Bachao Citizens Movement, Dr. R.P. Balwan, IFS (Retd.), People for Aravallis, and the Mining Engineers' Association of India. The MoEFCC, through a short affidavit filed on its behalf, stated that it had no objection to this Court considering the names suggested by the learned *Amicus Curiae* for the constitution of the proposed Committee. It was further submitted that the Ministry did not have any additional names to propose for inclusion in the Committee.
5. At this stage, it is imperative to reiterate the necessity of constituting the proposed High-Powered Committee. The objective underlying its constitution is to ensure that the issues arising from the parameters delineated in paragraphs 9 and 10 of our order dated 29.12.2025 are examined by subject-matter experts possessing the requisite technical knowledge and expertise, particularly in light of the fragile ecosystem and rich biodiversity of

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the Aravalli Hills and Ranges.

6. It must be emphasized that decisions of such far-reaching consequence ought not to be taken without the benefit of expert evaluation. The proposed Committee would be expected to objectively assess the implications of the measures contemplated and assist this Court in determining whether their implementation may give rise to ecological, environmental, or other consequences that may subsequently prove difficult, if not impossible, to reverse. Such an exercise is essential to ensure that any course of action adopted is informed, scientifically sound, and consistent with the principles of environmental protection and sustainable development.
7. It is important, and indeed imperative, that the proposed Committee comprise experts possessing diverse and multidisciplinary expertise across a broad spectrum of relevant fields. Such a composition is essential to ensure that every aspect bearing upon the issue is comprehensively examined, including, *inter alia*, the geological and soil characteristics of the region, its biodiversity, flora and fauna, mineral wealth and natural resources, as well as the scientific and accurate geo-mapping of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges.

8. A holistic assessment of these interconnected factors is thus indispensable for arriving at an informed and balanced determination. Above all, such an exercise is necessary to ensure that any decision ultimately taken does not inadvertently occasion further degradation of the Aravalli ecosystem and that appropriate measures are devised to safeguard these ancient mountain ranges and the ecological systems that they sustain.
9. Having considered the suggestions received from various stakeholders, we are of the view that the constitution of a five-member High Powered Committee is warranted. Accordingly, we direct that the Committee shall comprise the following individuals:
- a. Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) - *ex officio* Chairperson;
 - b. Dr. Subhash Ashutosh, Ex-Director General, Forest Survey of India - Member;
 - c. Dr. Rajendra Kumar Sharma, Director (Retd.), Geological Survey of India - Member;
 - d. Mr. Brij Mohan Singh Rathore, Former Joint Secretary, MoEFCC - Member;
 - e. Prof. Ashok K. Bhatnagar, Former Professor and Head of Botany at Delhi University - Member of the Committee;

10. Following shall be the Special Invitees, who shall also be associated from time to time by the Chairperson of the Committee:

- a. Professor Jagdish Krishnaswamy, Dean, School of Environment and Sustainability, Indian Institute for Human Settlements;
- b. Professor (Dr.) Laxmikant Sharma, Professor, Central University of Haryana.

11. In addition to the persons mentioned above, an officer of the rank of Director in the MoEFCC shall be nominated by the Government of India to serve as the Member Secretary. Further, the High-Powered Committee so constituted shall be at liberty to associate any other domain expert(s) as may be required for the effective discharge of its functions

12. We consider it necessary to clarify that the parameters delineated in paragraphs 9 and 10 of this Court's order dated 29.12.2025 are merely indicative and not exhaustive. They are intended to serve as broad guiding considerations and shall not be construed so as to confine or fetter the scope of the Committee's inquiry in any manner.

13. Should the High-Powered Committee, upon due consideration,

find it necessary to examine additional issues or factors bearing upon the subject matter of its mandate, it shall be at liberty to expand the scope of its assessment accordingly.

14. We are also conscious of the fact that the issues arising in the present proceedings have generated considerable interest amongst a wide range of stakeholders, including the States of NCT of Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, or any other such State(s); environmentalists; conservationists; not for profit organisations; mining lease holders; project proponents; villagers especially farmers; mine workers, and local communities whose livelihoods and well-being may be intrinsically linked to the ecosystem and biodiversity of the region.

15. It is, therefore, essential that the High-Powered Committee remains mindful of these varied and often competing considerations while undertaking its assessment, so as to ensure a comprehensive, balanced, and informed evaluation of the issues falling within its remit. Accordingly, we direct the High-Powered Committee to actively invite and consider suggestions from all relevant stakeholders. For this purpose, the Committee shall issue an appropriate public notice inviting representations,

suggestions, and inputs from interested persons and entities who may be affected by, or have a legitimate interest in, the issues under consideration.

16. The High-Powered Committee is directed to submit its comprehensive report before 31.08.2026.

17. Ordered accordingly. List on 07.09.2026.

Nitin Talreja
02/06/26

(NITIN TALREJA)
ASTT. REGISTRAR-cum-PS

2/6

ON LEAVE

(PREETHI DILEEP KUMAR)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR

Preethi Dileep Kumar

ANNEXURE - B

Compliance Report by High-Powered Committee

(constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide its Order dated 25.05.2026 in: In Suo Motu Writ Petition (Civil) No. 10 of 2025, In Re: Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges and Ancillary Issues)

1. Background and Context

The High Powered Committee was constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India to undertake an independent and comprehensive examination of the issues concerning the definition, delineation, conservation and management of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges, in the context of the issues identified by the Court in its orders dated 29.12.2025 and 25.05.2026. The Committee has been called upon to consider the varied and competing ecological, environmental, developmental and livelihood considerations associated with the Aravalli landscape, particularly in the light of fragile ecosystems and rich biodiversity of the Aravalli Hills and Ranges, and to assist the Hon'ble Court in arriving at an informed decision making in the matter.

The Committee commenced its work with a review of the issues referred to it, the earlier delineation approaches and the available multi-disciplinary scientific and geo-spatial evidence. It has since engaged with concerned technical institutions and State agencies, sought relevant datasets and information, invited representations and submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, initiated geospatial procedures and scientific analyses. The committee has also undertaken a Rapid Field Assessment of Aravalli Landscape from 6th August 2026 to 11th August 2026 involving field observations and interaction with stakeholders across representative parts of the landscape. The HPC conducted 10 online/hybrid/in person meetings and held deliberations on the approach, methodology and related aspects.

The work undertaken so far have evidenced the breadth, scientific complexity and wider implications of the issues requiring examination. It has also highlighted that the questions before the Committee cannot appropriately be addressed through a single terrain-based criterion or a single source of evidence. The Committee is therefore bringing together complementary streams of spatial, ecological, geological, hydrological, socio-economic and stakeholder evidence before arriving at its considered conclusions.

The work undertaken has further demonstrated that a scientifically robust assessment necessitates careful consideration of, inter alia, the terrain datasets, the resolution of the Digital Elevation Model [DEM], the spatial scale, the analytical parameters and the validation procedures employed in the delineation and assessment of the Aravalli landscape.

Furthermore, the scientific inputs received by the Committee present complementary perspectives on aspects including ecosystem health and sensitivity, land-use change, hydrological systems, biodiversity, mining induced vulnerability and landscape connectivity. These inputs warrant further detailed examination by the Committee.

2. Methodological Assessment and Validation

Scientific assessment of the principal delineation approaches has progressed through the development of geospatial procedures for examining the approach contained in the report of the Committee for Uniform Definition of Hills and Ranges of Aravalli dated 13.10.2025, alongside the earlier Forest Survey of India (FSI 2010) methodology. The geospatial assessment using common and comparable terrain datasets is presently in progress.

The exercise includes consideration of the Copernicus 30-metre DEM together with Survey of India contour information. The work has highlighted the need to distinguish between differences arising from the delineation criteria themselves and differences that may arise from the underlying terrain dataset, DEM resolution, spatial scale or processing parameters. The feasibility of the methodology for assessing the implications of terrain/elevation-based delineation for the coverage of Aravalli hills, forest cover and aquifers has been demonstrated in three sample districts—Alwar, Ajmer and Udaipur. The said methodology is to be extended to the wider Aravalli Hills and Ranges using the Copernicus 30-metre data and relevant thematic GIS layers, such as District Resource Maps (DRM) and other relevant social-ecological data. Selected representative or randomly selected sub-set of areas can be chosen for similar analyses using high resolution CARTODEM data.

A detailed analysis presented to the Committee compared elevation values from five DEM (30m) datasets i.e. SRTM, Copernicus, ALOS World 3D, NASADEM and ASTER with elevations at 481 differential GPS reference points. The analysis reported a high statistical correlation between the DEM-derived and reference elevations across the datasets, with Copernicus showing the highest reported coefficient of determination (R^2) among those examined.

While these results provide useful inputs to the ongoing assessment of terrain datasets, they require further methodological examination and validation by agencies of repute such as NRSC, ISRO, etc. The Committee considers such validation particularly important because estimates of area, number of hills and other terrain-derived parameters could have significant ecological, conservation, regulatory and socio-economic implications.

3. Multidisciplinary Scientific Assessment of the Aravalli Landscape and Emerging Ecosystem-based Framework

The work undertaken so far has reinforced that the issues before the Committee extend beyond technical delineation of individual landforms and its spatial implications, and require examination of the wider geological, geomorphological, hydrological, biogeographical, ecological, biodiversity, mineral-resource and socio-economic dimensions of the Aravalli landscape. Accordingly, the Committee is considering an emerging multidisciplinary tiered nested hierarchical ecosystem-based framework encompassing, inter alia, geological and geomorphological foundations, terrain and landforms, watersheds and hydrological systems, forests and biodiversity, ecological connectivity and ecosystem services to downstream areas, communities and human settlements among various other parameters to address the mandates assigned to the Committee.

An emerging Aravalli Ecosystem Landscape (AEL) framework is being considered, recognising that the Aravalli need to be understood through multiple interrelated dimensions rather than through any single physical or ecological parameter. Seen as an integrated spatial framework, the core hill system is considered together with other important ecological, hydrological, cultural and socio-economic landscape elements, including recorded forests, protected areas, sacred sites, Orans and traditional pastures, wetlands, critical catchments, groundwater recharge areas, areas of archaeological significance, and, where relevant, areas providing ecological connectivity with adjoining Vindhyan hill ecosystems. The framework seeks to integrate geological and geomorphological features with hydrological, ecological, biodiversity and human/livelihood systems. An illustrative analytical approach associated with this framework envisages the possibility of developing a composite index based on multiple relevant factors and their relative importance, which could potentially help identify areas with differing socio-ecological characteristics, inform differentiated approaches to conservation and management, and assess the adequacy of the existing regulatory framework in addressing such

areas. The framework will be subject to the review and feedback by the domain experts and concerned stakeholders.

The Committee has also synthesised available scientific literature relating to land-use and landscape change, ecosystem health and sensitivity, mining/stone quarrying and unregulated sand mining induced degradation of the drainage system and related topographic damage, hydrological systems and biodiversity in the Aravalli landscape. These analyses bring together a range of spatial and thematic indicators, including vegetation, terrestrial and fresh-water ecosystem condition, ecosystem services (provisioning, regulatory, supporting and cultural), terrain, climate, soil, hydrology, land use and other relevant parameters, and provide potentially valuable complementary evidence for understanding the condition, vulnerability, connectivity and ecological significance of different parts of the Aravalli landscape.

4. Stakeholder Consultation, Outreach and Field Validation

Stakeholder consultation has been an important component of the Committee's work. The Committee has received online representations and submissions and has undertaken interactions with stakeholders during the Aravalli Landscape Rapid Field Assessment from 6th to 11th August, 2026.

As on 26 August 2026, the Committee had received approximately 680 representations, through both electronic and physical submissions. These representations reflect a wide range of perspectives, including those of farmers and pastoralists, local communities, mining and mineral-sector stakeholders, residents, civil society organisations, institutions and statutory bodies. The issues raised by a large number of submissions are closely interlinked, covering mining for minerals, stone quarrying, stone crushing and sand mining and its impacts on water quality and hydrological systems, air quality and people's health, biodiversity, tribal and community interests and ecosystem conservation, mining economy and livelihoods, agriculture, land and settlements, need to learn from relevant best practices followed in Western Ghats and conservation prioritisation exercises, and why to define Aravalli, among others. Their meaningful consideration will require thorough review, further categorisation and cross-verification and, where necessary, seeking additional information and clarifications from the concerned State agencies.

The Rapid Field Assessment reinforced that the Aravalli constitutes, in large part, a connected landscape with interlinked ecological, hydrological, biodiversity and socio-cultural values. The field assessment also reinforced the observation that the Aravalli is expressed on the ground

through a network of small and large ridges and hill formations, which in many places exhibit continuity or close spatial relationships rather than occurring as wholly isolated landforms. At the same time, individual or isolated hills or hillocks may possess their own biodiversity, ecological, hydrological, aesthetic or cultural significance.

Further targeted stakeholder consultations and outreach, including with local communities, tribal groups, civil society organisations, State agencies, mineral-sector stakeholders, farmers and other groups whose livelihoods or interests are closely linked to the Aravalli landscape, will be required. Additional field assessments and validation in representative areas will also be undertaken where considered necessary. These further consultations and field assessments will enable the Committee to test and contextualise the findings emerging from the scientific and spatial analyses and to ensure that the eventual assessment reflects a diversity of stakeholders' perspectives and ground-level realities.

5. Integration, Cross-validation and Synthesis

The task before the Committee is not merely the completion of individual analytical activities. It is to integrate, cross-validate and independently assess the multiple streams of evidence emerging from:

- Geospatial analysis of the delineation approaches in entire Aravalli hills and ranges using Copernicus 30 m DEM with implications for coverage of hills and hill ranges, forest cover, aquifers and other relevant data such as district resource maps along with additional analyses in selected representative or randomly selected sub-set of sites for assessment using high-resolution CartoDEM;
- Morphometric and landscape-scale analysis;
- Geological and geomorphological information;
- Aquifer and watershed information;
- Biogeography, ecology, biodiversity evidence including wildlife corridors;
- Land-use and landscape-change analysis including urbanisation;
- Mining for minerals, stone quarrying, stone crushing and sand mining and land-degradation assessments;
- Expert and institutional inputs including commissioned studies on specific topics;
- Stakeholder representations; and

- Field observations and rapid landscape assessment.

The Committee needs to examine how these different forms of evidence relate to the specific questions and issues articulated in the Hon'ble Supreme Court's orders dated 29.12.2025 and 25.05.2026.

6. Need for Additional Time and Remaining Work

The Committee has, therefore, reached the view that additional time is necessary to complete the scientific process of geospatial assessment, sensitivity analysis, expert examination, field and stakeholder validation, and synthesis required for a comprehensive and defensible report in conformity with the mandate given by the Hon'ble Court.

The following inter-related components of work remain:

i) Further scientific and spatial assessment: Undertake further sensitivity analysis across the Aravalli Hills and Ranges using the available Copernicus 30-metre and, where considered necessary, higher-resolution CartoDEM data, together with relevant GIS layers relating to vegetation, biodiversity, aquifers and other thematic information, to assess their implications in relation to the questions and issues referred to the Committee by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

ii) Multidisciplinary assessment and emerging ecosystem-based framework: Further examine and develop the emerging ecosystem-based framework (Aravalli Ecosystem Landscape) by integrating relevant geological, geomorphological, hydrological, ecological, biodiversity, ecosystem services, cultural, climate-sensitivity, mineral-resource and socio-economic evidence, including landscape connectivity and the relationship between individual hills, ridge systems and wider ecological and hydrological systems. The framework will include assessment of the feasibility of a composite landscape/ecological index based on appropriate spatial data and scientifically determined criteria, and its potential to inform differentiated approaches to conservation and management, along with assessment of the adequacy of existing regulatory provisions. This will be subject to further expert review and stakeholder inputs and, where considered necessary, field validation in selected representative areas before its implications for the final delineation and management of the Aravalli landscape can be appropriately assessed.

iii) Expert consultation and technical validation: Obtain further inputs from domain experts and specialised institutions, as required, to examine specific scientific and technical

questions emerging from the ongoing analyses and to subject important findings and methodological choices to appropriate technical scrutiny and validation.

iv) Further stakeholder consultation and follow-up: Complete the review and categorisation of submissions already received, including seeking additional information and clarification from concerned State agencies where needed. Undertake further targeted stakeholder consultations and outreach, particularly in areas and with stakeholder groups that could not be adequately covered during the Aravalli Landscape Rapid Field Assessment. Further stakeholder consultations will help the Committee validate and contextualise the findings emerging from the scientific and spatial assessments and ensure that the final assessment reflects the diversity of ground-level realities across the Aravalli landscape.

v) Further field assessment and validation: Undertake additional field assessment in representative areas, including validation of emerging observations relating to ridge continuity and isolated hills, landform characteristics, ecological values, hydrology, mining impacts, restoration and other issues identified during the Rapid Field Assessment.

vi) Further review of scientific literature: Undertake further review and synthesis of scientific literature relevant to the issues before the Committee, including emerging evidence relating to the geological, ecological, hydrological, biodiversity and socio-economic dimensions of the Aravalli landscape.

vii) Integration, cross-validation and synthesis: Integrate the scientific and spatial analyses, thematic assessments, morphometric and geological evidence, expert inputs, stakeholder representations and field observations, and undertake cross-validation of the evidence before arriving at the Committee's considered responses and recommendations on the issues referred to it by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

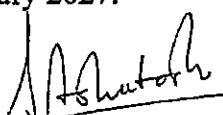
The Committee considers that these activities are inter-related rather than sequential or stand-alone tasks. Their completion will enable the Committee to move from individual analytical outputs and stakeholder inputs towards an integrated assessment of the Aravalli landscape and a considered response to the questions and issues placed before it by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

The Committee considers it particularly important that quantitative outputs with potentially significant regulatory and socio-economic implications should be reported only after the underlying methodology, datasets and analytical parameters have been sufficiently tested and

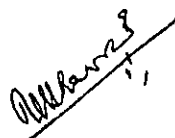
the results have undergone appropriate technical validation and cross-comparison. Accordingly, the Committee's present work is directed towards establishing a scientifically robust, transparent and reproducible basis for such outputs rather than placing before the Hon'ble Court numerical estimates that may subsequently require revision following further methodological examination. Completion of these inter-related activities will require not only additional time but also adequate technical, administrative and financial support, particularly where additional datasets, specialised analytical capabilities, field validation and expert inputs are required.

7. Prayer

In view of the above, the High-Powered Committee respectfully requests the Hon'ble Supreme Court to extend the time for submission of its comprehensive report by six months, up to 28 February 2027.



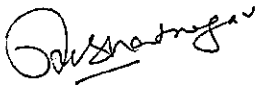
Dr. Subhash Ashutosh
Ex-Director General, Forest
Survey of India
Member, HPC



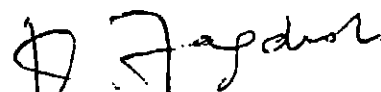
Dr. Rajendra Kumar Sharma
Director (Retd.), Geological
Survey of India
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Shri Brij Mohan Singh Rathore
Former Joint Secretary,
MoEF&CC
Member, HPC



Prof. Ashok K. Bhatnagar
Former Professor and Head of
Botany, Delhi University
Member, HPC



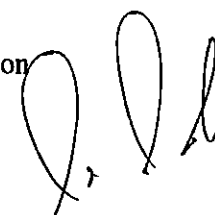
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PRESS NOTE

Supreme Court constituted High-Powered Committee invites Responses from Public on Matters relating to the Aravalli Hills and Ranges

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Posted On: 21 JUL 2026 11:07AM by PIB Delhi

It is for information of all stakeholders/public concerned that the Supreme Court of India, vide its Order dated 25.05.2026 in Suo Motu Writ Petition (Civil) No. 10 of 2025, constituted a High-Powered Committee (HPC) to examine matters related to the Aravalli Hills and Ranges, besides Ancillary issues, and submit its comprehensive report to the apex Court before 31.08.2026.

Therefore, the HPC has invited representations, suggestions and inputs from a wide range of stakeholders from the States of NCT of Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat or any other such State(s); environmentalists; conservationists; not for profit organisations; mining lease holders; project proponents; villagers; farmers; mine workers and local communities, whose livelihoods and wellbeing may be intrinsically linked to the ecosystem and biodiversity of the region; and interested persons/entities who may be affected by, or have a legitimate interest in the issues under consideration.

Submissions from all stakeholders, to the extent possible supported by documentary evidence or other verifiable material, should be communicated through email at or through google forms specifically designed for the purpose (link: <https://forms.gle/FpWwXBES5Gfr9bn16>), within 21 days from the date of publication of this notice.

VM

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