

'DAMAGE TO ARAVALLIS SCARY'

Relevant for: Environment & Disaster Management | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development & EIA

A view of the Aravallis in Rajasthan. The SC said future generations would have to pay a heavy price for the ecological damage.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the demolition of structures built illegally by a prominent builder in the protected forests of the Aravallis, noting that ecological damage done by colonisers to the ancient hills was irreversible and "quite frightening."

A Bench of Justices Madan B. Lokur and Deepak Gupta ordered that all structures built after August 18, 1992 in the area known as 'Kant Enclave' at Anangpur in Faridabad district of Haryana should be demolished.

They have to be razed down by December 31, 2018, the court said.

It held that these illegal structures defy a Haryana government notification of August 18, 1992, issued under the Punjab Land Preservation Act, declaring the area as forest land and fragile.

Granted exemption

The court, however, ordered not to disturb constructions made between April 17, 1984 and August 18, 1992. These structures were built on the basis of an exemption given to Kant & Co. by the State's town planning department under the Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Areas Act of 1975 for setting up a "film studio and allied complex" in the area. The exemption was removed when the August 18, 1992 notification kicked in.

Kant & Co., the court ordered, should pay a full refund to investors to whom they had already transferred the land. The builder has to pay interest at 18% per annum from the date of the investment.

Department pulled up

The court pulled up the State town and country planning department for supporting the illegalities. The department was myopic and brazen to push its agenda in favour of the builder no matter what it cost to the environment and ground water in the area.

The Bench accused the department of having "completely vitiated the efforts of the forest department as well as the orders of the Supreme Court."

"There is no doubt that at the end of the day, the State of Haryana comes out in very poor light and must be held accountable for its conflicting and self-destructive stand," Justice Lokur, who wrote the 81-page judgment, observed.

"It is not only the future generations that have to pay a heavy price for this environmental degradation, but even the present generation is paying a heavy price for the environmental and ecological degradation inasmuch as there is an acute water shortage in the area as prophesied by the Central Ground Water Board," Justice Lokur said.

Sign up to receive our newsletter in your inbox every day!

Please enter a valid email address.

Our existing notification subscribers need to choose this option to keep getting the alerts.

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com