

Chandigarh: TBRL starts construction of boundary wall to restrict movement of wild animals

By Saurabh Prashar

Restricting the entry of wild animals from the side of the Khol-Hi-Raitan wildlife sanctuary into the area of Terminal Ballistic Research Laboratory (TBRL), TBRL authorities started constructing a 2.500km long boundary wall going on different slopes of Morni Hills. The construction work began last week and is expected to be complete in a month.

The Haryana Forest and Wildlife department had earlier raised strong objection challenging the jurisdiction of TBRL, which works under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), but had later agreed. The move attracted sharp criticism from wildlife enthusiasts, who termed the decision to be anti-wild animals. They warned that it will increase human-animal conflicts at the side of some villages including Barewala, Nadda and others.



Sudhir Chaudhary, a wildlife enthusiast based in Panchkula, said, “Barewala village is located under the foothill on which a boundary wall is being constructed. Wild creatures including leopard, sambhars, monitor lizards etc usually move from one hill slope to another. But as the movement of these animals will be restricted by a long boundary wall topping concertina wires, these creatures will turn towards the nearby areas. There should be some mechanism to address the demand of boundary wall. The wall is being constructed immediately next to the wildlife sanctuary.”

A wildlife check post is located nearby the construction site. TBRL spreads in more than one thousand hectares of areas and a majority of its area consists thick forest and is covered with dense bushes. Prior to 2016, construction within an area of ten km from the wildlife sanctuary was prohibited, but was later reduced to zero km in Haryana.

“Legally we cannot challenge the construction because the land belongs to TBRL-DRDO. We had raised an objection to the reduction in radius in which construction cannot be done citing the exact map and jurisdiction. The TBRL officials produced the map and agreed to spare two-three meter place for making a pathway towards the wildlife sanctuary for the inspection. TBRL is a sensitive area. The authorities are making boundary walls all around it,” said Shiv Singh Rawat, Divisional Wildlife Officer (DWFO), Panchkula.

An incident of the death of a leopardess after being tangled in the barbed wires on the side of TBRL was reported in September, 2016.

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