











TIMES CITY

NCR bars tourism in green zones

Board Wants Sacred Grove Mangar Bani Earmarked As No-Construction Area

By **Deep Kumar Doshi**

New Delhi: Tourism activities won't be allowed in the Natural Conservation Zones (NCZs) in NCR, according to the minutes of recent NCR Planning Board (NCPB) meeting. The minutes revealed that the ministry of environment and forest had officially wanted deletion of the controversial clause allowing such activities in NCZ in the revised regional plan.

The board also decided that the sacred Mangar Bani had a 500-metre buffer radius

around it will be earmarked as a "no-construction zone", as proposed by Haryana government. Sources said the core grove is around 200 hectares.

As it was reported in TOI on April 26 that the board members agreed to limit construction in NCZs such as Aravallis, rhotbeds and major water bodies, the minutes recorded that only "regional recreation activities" will be permitted with "no construction exceeding 1.5% of the area with permission from competent authorities.



SAFE FROM EXPLOITATION

Delhi government, MoEF and environment activists were objecting to Haryana's proposal to allow more construction in these sensitive zones after obtaining permission from authorities con-

cerned. The minutes mention that MoEF secretary V Rajagopalan cited the Haryana mega-town policy that allows construction for both residential and commercial use to argue why "tourism" should not be allowed in the ecologically sensitive areas.

Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda had accepted all the suggestions to make necessary amendments. However, in its letter, MoEF mentioned that both the revised regional plan and Haryana sub-regional plan should not be finalized till

mapping of forest areas is completed. The green ministry wrote that the referenced maps of Haryana's 20 districts were "incomplete" and "not compatible" to the directions of Supreme Court. He had even raised the issue of how areas with 10-crore density (green cover) have not been shown as forest. Haryana has objected MoEF's parameter of identifying forest and has said it would not accept the new criteria until and unless they are approved by the Supreme Court.







