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# Encroachment creeps into the ridge, eats into greenery

turn a blind eye arguing that this section is "incompletely notified".

A reason that does not go down too well with the conservationists.

So even as the Supreme Court in its judgement clearly said that the only activity to be carried out in this area is 'greening', vast stretches of land here are fast falling prey to construction. Further more, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in its Masterplan 2001 has earmarked the area as ridge area.

However, in a recent development in the ridge, old ruins have been covered by a place of worship and new construction has come up around it frequented by



'The ridge is losing its glory'

slum-dwellers in the vicinity, the mandir, popularly known as Sati Mata Mandir, now has the priest's residence, a few shops and

makeshift structures to support the mandir. Residents also complain that the slum-dwellers fell trees and the ridge is used as

a short-cut to other places which interferes with the wildlife in the ridge and the greens.

Vikram Soni, who has been regularly visiting the ridge, says: "The ridge till about two years ago had at least 10 canyons with three to four feet of water even in the summers. I have seen migratory birds like the Siberian Goose frequent this area."

He adds: "With this kind of violation, not only have birds stopped visiting this place but water bodies have also dried up."

Soni adds that the DDA under whose jurisdiction this part of the central ridge falls, has also been quarrying in the ridge.

Senior DDA officials maintained that they had no information regarding this.

Part of the central ridge, this piece forms the land stretching from southwest of Mehrauli to Mahmudpur. Construction in the area has completely been banned by the Supreme Court ever since 1996.

Even the Geological Survey of India has clearly said that this area falls under the ridge.

Soni adds: "Construction and other activities are in strict violation of the protection of the ridge as prescribed in all Supreme Court judgements, the Masterplan, DDA statutes and the Aravalli fragile area notification of 1994."