The Aravalli
Policy Lesson
Miners vs
Land Barons

Supreme Court will soon consider whether mining in the ecologically sensitive Aravalli region can restart. But Aravalli’s real problem may not be miners, but a real estate boom.

:: Avinash Celestine

October this year will mark the 10-year anniversary of the Supreme Court banning mining in the Aravalli region in Haryana. It is an anniversary that will be greeted with decidedly mixed feelings among local villagers, but with fondness on the part of the many real estate speculators who have seen the value of their landholdings skyrocket in recent years.

The Aravalli cut a broad swathe of northern and western India—stretching from Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west to Haryana and Delhi in the east. Over the next few months, the Supreme Court will decide whether or not to lift the ban on mining in the ecologically sensitive region, home to a range of wildlife, which also acts as a crucial source of groundwater for Delhi and its surrounding satellite towns. Before 2002, the region was also a major source for grit and sand for the construction industry, not just in the national capital, but across the country. The region also supplied half the country’s requirement of silica, a critical input in materials such as glass and semiconductors.

The ban was imposed because of environmental concerns—it was subsequently tweaked over the years by the court to varying degrees. Mining in the Rajasthan Aravalli was allowed months after the ban was imposed, while the restrictions remained in place in Haryana, in the Faridabad and Gurgaon districts.

In 2009, the court reaffirmed this ban, and asked the Haryana government and miners to come up with a rehabilitation plan for the area. Over the next few weeks, the Central government’s Ministry of Environment and Forests will submit a report on those plans to the court, based on which the judges will take a call. If the rehabilitation plans pass muster, the ban on mining in the Aravalli region in Haryana could be lifted.

But what effect has the ban had over the past 10 years? As mining has declined in importance, there are encouraging signs that the environmental payoffs are working out. But ironically, even as mining comes to a halt, the Aravalli is facing a potentially bigger long-run challenge: real estate speculation.

Water, Water Everywhere...

In a 2008 affidavit to the Supreme Court, the environment ministry pointed to results of a survey conducted in villages in Faridabad district. Between 1996 and 2003, ground water levels in one village declined by 17 metres, only to rise by about two metres in the years after that. In another cluster of villages in Faridabad district and neighboring Delhi, groundwater levels rose by about 2.7 metres after 2002-03.

In the years when mining was allowed, miners would dig deep down into the rock, breaking through the ground water table. The exposed water had to be pumped out for mining to continue, leading to a severe depletion of the water table, a problem which was reversed, at least partially after 2002. “This rise in water levels may be attributed to closure of the mining activities in the area,” said the ministry officials in their affidavit. This occurred despite rainfall being below normal between 2003 and 2007. Since the ban, forest cover too has improved.

But if water tables have risen, it probably provides little joy to locals. Sher Singh, 26, a resident of Kot village, situated in the middle of the erstwhile mining belt in the part of the Aravalli range which runs through Faridabad district, “There is a lot of unemployment in the area now,” he says. “When mining was still allowed, that was not the case—people did subcontracting work in the mines and there was a lot of employment for villagers. Now people go to Gur...

What is Illegal Mining

All miners prepare a mining plan which limits the amount of ore that can be mined per year. This is done to conserve resources.

Any ore mined in excess of these annual limits, is illegal. Transport of ore without proper permits is also illegal.

Any ore which is mined and on which royalty is not paid to the government is illegal.
The Rocky Journey

**1992**
No mining or other industrial activity allowed in Aravalli region, without permission of the central govt.

**October 2002**
SC bans mining in Aravalli, citing environmental concerns, and large-scale destruction of area's habitat.

**December 2002**
Ban remains in Haryana but eased in Rajasthan. A large chunk of the sand mining business moves to Rajasthan.

**2009**
SC suspends mining in Haryana. Aravalli till a rehabilitation plan is prepared.

**2012**
SC will decide whether to lift the mining ban.

With the mining ban in Haryana, Aravalli's, there is a shortage of material for the stone crushers in the region.

In December 2011, the Central Empowered Committee on Illegal Mining (CEC), a body which advises the court on matters related to forest conservation, conducted an investigation of the extent of illegal mining in Alwar in Rajasthan (which borders Haryana) and through which the Aravalli extend. The investigation also covered the district of Saharapur in Uttar Pradesh and part of Rajasthan.

In both Rajasthan and UP, the CEC found widespread instances of illegal mining – in Saharapur alone, the CEC says, over 2.4 lakh cubic metres of boulder, sand and baji was illegally mined and transported between July and September 2011. "Illegal mining on a massive scale," said the CEC, "was going on in UP, with the entire process being 'galalised' and facilitated by the concerned officers of the state." And in Rajasthan, the problem was, if anything worse. "The area under illegal mining has increased substantially as in 2010 compared to 2005," said the CEC.

But it was the reasons for the expansion in the scale of illegal mining, as given by the CEC, which are interesting. "The closure of legal mining in Haryana, and consequently the restitutioning of the construction material materials has enabled continuous supply to illegalities involved in illegal mining to make潍坊 profits," said the CEC.

Much of the sand and grit mined in Rajasthan (both legally and illegally) ultimately comes to be processed in the stone crushing zone in Faridabad district of Haryana itself. The stone crushers in this area used to process stone from mines located just a few kilometers away. "But now trucks come from a few hundred kilometers away," says Naren Kumar, who owns one of the 162 stone crushers in the area. "This has added to the transportation cost of material. There is also a severe shortage of stone for the crushers here," he says.

Som Sethi, of SS & Company, who had a number of mining leases in the region claims that prices of grit have risen from ₹250 per tonne in 2002 to over ₹400 per tonne in 2009, and are currently ruling at over ₹750 per tonne. The upshot? The mining lobby in UP and Rajasthan, says the CEC, "...are making windfall profits because of continued closure of mining leases and consequent steep rise in the prices of construction material."

So here's the common ground: mining ban in one area leads to more illegal mining in other areas. Then there's the prospect of a massive real estate expansion. The policy dilemmas in the Aravalli will continue beyond the 10th anniversary of the original mining ban.
मेटल कमोडिटी में फायदा

पिछले दो-तीन वर्ष में कमोडिटी बाजार में निवेश करने वालों की संख्या बढ़ी है जिसकी सुनहरी वजह यह है कि हाल के वर्षों में कमोडिटी ट्रेडिंग में निवेशकों का बहुत रिटर्न मिला है। सोने और चांदी जैसे कमोडिटी के पैसा लगाने वाले निवेशकों ने तो 42 प्रतिशत तक का रिटर्न हासिल किया है। जानकार नामित हैं कि आपने वाले समय में भी कमोडिटी बाजार में निवेशकों का अधिक रिटर्न मिलेगा।

उन्हें 2008 की गंते के बाद जब अमेरिका से दुरुस्तियाँ के कारण देर में निवेशकों के सेट बाजार में भारी निगमबंध बनी गई थी तब निवेश करने वालों के बीमारी सामने आया। उन्होंने इन बाजार निवेशकों के लिए कितने भी खुशी के बारे में 2009-10 में कमोडिटी एक्सचेंज के कारणों के बाद से इतना प्रतिस्पर्धा था कि फिर भी निवेशक निवेश्ता हुए। इसके साथ भी ब्रिटेन और अमेरिका में जियो इलेक्ट्रॉनिक एवं स्वतंत्र प्रतियोगी ने कमोडिटी बाजार में निवेश करने की अनुमति दी। इसलिए बाजार 2010-11 में कमोडिटी एक्सचेंज के कारणों के साथ 67 प्रतिशत की दर नई गई थी।

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अत्यन्त उत्कृष्ट एवं टिक्कल जानकारी में निवेशक और अस्तित्ववादक बाजार में बढ़ाई और मिल सफल बन गये कारण में भारत की सुनहरी कई लागू की गई। प्रतिक उदाहरणों में 2012 में भी अक्सर बाज़ार निवेशकों की उमंग हो गई। इसलिए इन दोनों हुआ में सबसे अधिक हुआ यह मिलेगा वायरल्स लाइनिंग रोगों के साथ ही।

भारत में केवल जानकारी के मुद्दों में उच्च स्तर में घूमते और वह अंदेशें वाले ने आज प्रभाव स्थायी अहमदाबाद के कारण पुरुषोगाम के पार्क में जाए तो होने वाले हैं। इसलिए अभिक्षण स्थल की है।

अत्यन्त गुणवत्ता एवं टिक्कल जानकारी में सुनहरी और अस्तित्ववादक बाजार में बढ़ाई और मिल सफल बन गये कारण में भारत की सुनहरी कई लागू की गई। प्रतिक उदाहरणों में 2012 में भी अक्सर बाज़ार निवेशकों की उमंग हो गई। इसलिए इन दोनों हुआ में सबसे अधिक हुआ यह मिलेगा वायरल्स लाइनिंग रोगों के साथ ही।
NHRC directs Centre to wake up to silicosis

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The National Human Rights Commission has finally woken up to the menace of silicosis, a disease claiming thousands of industrial workers. It has directed the Centre to declare silicosis a notifiable disease, apart from strengthening legal provisions to provide succour to victims.

Often described as an occupational health disease, silicosis is caused by inhaling fine silica dust and is prevalent in cement, asbestos, gems and jeweller and construction industries as well as in mines and quarries.

“The Supreme Court has asked the NHRC to ascertain the silicosis scenario from all states. It is an irreversible disease that cannot be cured beyond a point,” said NHRC member P C Sharma.

In its first special report submitted before Parliament in October, the NHRC has recommended strengthening of four existing laws to ensure better working conditions for workers and higher compensation for the victims of silicosis.

The laws advised to be amended are the Factories Act, 1948, Mines Act, 1952, Employee's Compensation Act, 1923, and ESI Act of 1948.

While silicosis is a notifiable disease under the Factories Act, 1948, and Mines Act, 1952, the NHRC has suggested making it notifiable from a health perspective so that every case or suspected case encountered by primary health centres or hospitals are reported back to the government.

The quasi-judicial agency has also recommended increasing the penalty provision in the two acts for not reporting silicosis cases.

“The acts have provisions for providing masks to employees, ensuring the floor to minimise dust and periodic health check up. But these provisions remain only on paper,” Sharma said. State government officials have indifferent attitude to silicosis patients as they are poor migrant labour. The NHRC is conducting regional reviews of silicosis.
Focus on tribals to win anti-Maoist battle: Jairam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Hyderabad, 21 January

Opposing mining, power and irrigation projects that cause mass displacement of tribals, Union Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh said today the battle against Maoists cannot be won without addressing issues like resettlement and rehabilitation of those affected.

"Our approach to mining is causing serious ecological and social havoc across the country. Over 20 million tribals have been displaced across the country in the last 50 years because of various projects. We have been totally insensitive to the tribals' problems and unless we are serious about resettlement and rehabilitation which accompany industrialisation, I am afraid we are not going to win this battle," he said while addressing a programme here.

He said the battle was not of guns, drones, planes and helicopters. "This is a battle for the minds... A psychological warfare. Unless we change the way our forest and tribal administration work, unless our approach to mining, which is causing such serious ecological and social havoc across the country, is changed, we are not going to win this battle," he said.
नवंबर 2011 में 15692 करोड़ के खर्च का उत्पादन

नई दिल्ली। परमाणु और अन्य उत्पादकों के खर्चों का चौथा नवंबर 2011 में देश में कुल 15,692 करोड़ रुपए के खर्च का उत्पादन हुआ। अधिकांश खर्चों के अनुसार इस राशि में पेट्रोलियम कल्चर तेल की हिस्सेदारी सबसे अधिक 35 प्रतिशत अंश 5,567 करोड़ रुपए है। इससे स्वाभाविक रूप से खर्च 4,628 करोड़ रुपए, इसके बाद लोगों अर्क 2,788 करोड़ रुपए, पाहलिक गैस 1,409 करोड़ रुपए, निजी गैस 301 करोड़ रुपए और सूचना पत्र 282 करोड़ रुपए शामिल है। नवंबर 2011 में देश के कुल खर्च का उत्पादन में छठे स्थान पर खर्चों की हिस्सेदारी 95 प्रतिशत रही।