

# Mountain of troubles

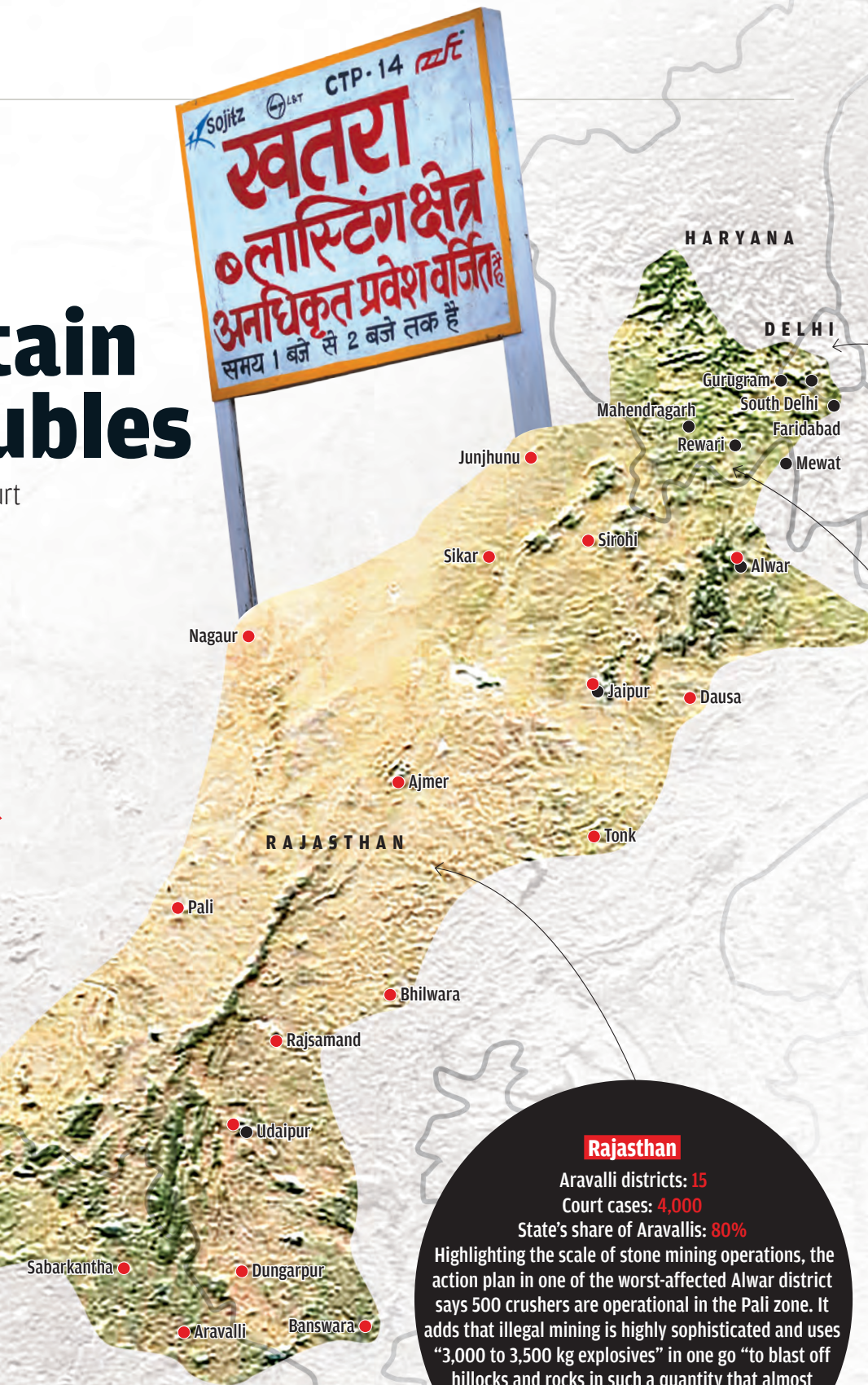
Even after over 4,000 court cases, destruction of the Aravallis continues



**LEGENDS**  
 ● Mining districts of the Aravallis  
 ● Districts with real estate boom



**Gujarat**  
 Aravalli districts: 3  
 Court cases: 20  
 State's share of Aravallis: 10%  
 Unfettered stone mining and encroachment all the Aravallis in Gujarat



**Delhi**  
 Aravalli districts: 1  
 Court cases: 30  
 State's share of Aravallis: 3%  
 Huge residential colonies, religious institutions, university campus and security force camps have encroached the Delhi ridge, the last stretch of Aravallis, in the northern part of the capital. The ridge acts as lungs for the city's polluted air and protects it from desert sands blowing from Rajasthan

**Haryana**  
 Aravalli districts: 5  
 Court cases: 200  
 State's share of Aravallis: 7%  
 The state has lost 7.5 per cent of the mountain forests in the past two-and-a-half decades, suggests the Forest Survey of India

**Rajasthan**  
 Aravalli districts: 15  
 Court cases: 4,000  
 State's share of Aravallis: 80%  
 Highlighting the scale of stone mining operations, the action plan in one of the worst-affected Alwar district says 500 crushers are operational in the Pali zone. It adds that illegal mining is highly sophisticated and uses "3,000 to 3,500 kg explosives" in one go "to blast off hillocks and rocks in such a quantity that almost 1,000 dumpers, each carrying 40 to 60 tonnes stone, are loaded and transported" every night

## Legally wronged

33 years after the first court case, illegal mining and real estate projects continue to destroy the Aravallis

- April 1985** | M C Mehta files a writ petition against 69 respondents. The petition, which triggers a series of court cases on the Aravallis, is ongoing
- 1990** | Shekhar Singh files a writ petition demanding regulations to check real estate and mining activities in Raisena hills in Gurgaon
- May 7, 1992** | The Centre issues the Aravalli Notification, making environment clearances mandatory for new industries, mining and developmental activities
- May 10, 1996** | In the M C Mehta case, the apex court takes cognisance of pollution caused by mining in Badkal and Surajkund lakes. The court stops mining within 2 km radius of the lakes
- 1995** | A petition filed against the decision to construct 13 five star hotels in Delhi's Vasant Kunj Ridge. The court allows just one hotel and sets up the Ridge Management Board (RMB)
- 1998** | The apex court revises its ban to 1 km, leaving most of the Aravallis unprotected. Rampant mining and construction activities follow
- May 2002** | Acting on RMB, the apex court bans mining and pumping of groundwater within 5 km of Delhi-Haryana side and in the Aravallis
- February 14, 2000** | The apex court bans mining activities in notified areas like sanctuary, park, or game reserve
- October 2002** | The apex court bans mining activities in the Aravallis
- December 16, 2002** | The apex court allows mining in areas approved by the environment ministry under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (FCA). Haryana government informs construction was allowed in some regions in the Aravalli forest that were treated as revenue land. This was a violation of the 1996 T N Godavarman verdict
- May 14, 2008** | The apex court reviews the areas identified as revenue land and denies the permission for construction in them
- May 8, 2009** | The apex court observes large-scale violation of the 1992 Aravalli Notification and orders suspension of all mining leases in Faridabad and Gurgaon
- February 19, 2010** | The Supreme Court orders Forest Survey of India to map mining areas in Aravalli hills in Rajasthan
- January 28, 2011** | The apex court directs all states to draw and implement action plans to restore village commons to Panchayats. The judgement halts privatisation of village commons
- 2011** | In Lafarge Umiyam Mining (P) Ltd v Union of India, the apex court says forestland cannot be termed as non-forest land for projects
- July 2015** | National Green Tribunal (NGT) directs Haryana to stop construction in areas recorded as *Gair Mumkin Pahar* or unculturable land
- October 2018** | The apex court cancels the allocation of land in Faridabad for a housing complex. The state amends the Punjab Land Preservation Act, 1900 in February 2019, to bypass the judgement
- December 2017** | NGT directs Haryana to take action against any non-forestry activity in forest areas including *Gair Mumkin Pahar*
- March 1, 2019** | The apex court put a stay on the Haryana legislative Assembly amendment
- March 2019** | NGT bans mining within 1 km of the Balam Ambaji sanctuary in Gujarat

Prepared by DTE/CSE Data Centre  
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 Data source: Supreme Court-constituted Central Empowered committee reports, Court judgements, Wildlife Institute of India study published in May 2017, Comptroller and Auditor General report titled Economic Sector of Rajasthan Government, 2017  
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