Rajendra Singh
Bharat Raj Singh

Aravalli Under New Threat

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Will the Aravalli remain as it is?
Will India's culture and nature survive?

Aravalli Under New Threat:

Mining, Deforestation and Ecological Imbalance in Northern India

"समुद्रवसने देवि पर्वतस्तनमण्डले ।
विष्णुपत्नि नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्श क्षमस्व मे ॥"

("O Goddess Earth, who is clothed by the oceans and adorned by mountains as her bosom, Consort of Lord Vishnu, I bow to you—please forgive me for touching you with my feet.")

C. V. Raman Centre for Research and Innovation,
School of Management Sciences,
Lucknow – 226501

Aravalli Under New Threat: Mining, Deforestation & Ecological Imbalance in Northern India

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Descriptions:
This book-Aravalli Under New Threat draws serious attention to the new and multi-dimensional threats looming over the Aravalli mountain range. Mining-driven so-called development, the dilution of environmental laws, and policy imbalances have placed the Aravalli's water sources, forest cover, and ecological balance under grave threat. The crisis of the Aravalli is not limited to the destruction of mountains alone; it manifests as groundwater depletion, agricultural distress, youth unemployment, and social instability. The work clearly establishes that the Aravalli serves as a natural shield for the climate and rainfall cycle of northern and western India. Its degradation is a direct assault on water security, food security, democratic values, and the rights of future generations; therefore, the conservation of the Aravalli is a national responsibility.

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Message

Anandiben Patel
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12 January, 2026

I am pleased to know that the book titled "अरावली पर नया संकट", published by the C. V. Raman Centre for Research & Innovation, School of Management Sciences, Lucknow, is being brought out for readers.

I am confident that this book will create greater awareness and serve as a meaningful reference for all those concerned with environmental conservation and sustainable growth.

I extend my best wishes to the editors, contributors, and the institution for the success and wide reach of the publication.

Anandi Patel

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Foreword

While presenting this book–"*Aravalli Under New Threat- Mining, Deforestation & Ecological Imbalance in Northern India*", I experience a deep sense of responsibility along with heartfelt satisfaction. This volume on the Aravalli mountain range is not merely an environmental study; it is a serious and timely document connected with the protection of India's lifeline—its water security, climatic balance, civilization, and culture. If we view the Aravalli only as a geological formation, we would commit a grave error in understanding its true significance. In reality, the Aravalli is a living ecological system that has, for millennia, provided water, greenery, and stability to northern and western India.

As an environmental scientist and long associated with environmental conservation, I have learned that no society can sustain itself in the long run without maintaining a balance between nature and development. This book presents that fundamental truth with depth and authenticity. The crisis of the Aravalli is not merely the breaking of mountains; it is a crisis of drying water sources, destroyed agriculture, unemployed youth, spreading diseases, and social imbalance. Mining-based so-called development has generated short-term economic gains at the cost of long-term national loss—a price that future generations will be forced to pay.

The greatest strength of the writings in this book lies in their holistic vision. Geology, hydrology, forests, climate change, law, the judiciary, people's movements, indigenous culture, and ethical values are all woven together into a single narrative. This is not a book confined to paper-based theories; it is enriched by ground-level experiences, collective memories, and direct examples. The revival of rivers and springs after mining was halted stands as concrete proof that if nature is given an opportunity, it can regenerate both itself and society.

The book repeatedly emphasizes that mining destroys both the "water and youth" of a region. Water disappears, and the youth lose direction. In contrast, conserving the Aravalli opens pathways to water conservation, agriculture, employment, and social stability. This

is why the Aravalli has been described as India's "shield"—a shield that has long protected the country from desertification, water scarcity, and climatic imbalance.

Concepts such as "environmental yajna" and the possibility of satyagraha presented in this book revive the civilizational consciousness of India, where the relationship with nature is not one of consumption, but of conservation and coexistence. It is clearly stated that laws and directives alone are not sufficient; without public awareness, community participation, and moral resolve, the Aravalli cannot be saved. This very idea elevates the book from a simple study to a call to the people.

Today, when attempts are being made in the name of development to divide mountains by height and boundaries, this book warns us that destroyed mountains can never be rebuilt. There are laws for forests, but not for mountains—this question has been placed before the entire nation through this work by the author, Jalpurush Dr. Rajendra Singh. Decisions that fragment the Aravalli can damage not only the environment, but also democratic values and India's global environmental image.

In my view, this book is extremely valuable for environmental studies, policy-making, administration, education, and public awareness alike. It will serve as an important reference work for researchers, students, policy-makers, jurists, social activists, and conscious citizens. Above all, the book compels society to reflect on the fact that saving the Aravalli is not merely an environmental issue, but a question of life, culture, and the future.

I hope that this volume will provide readers not only with information, but also with sensitivity, discernment, and the inspiration to act. Protecting the Aravalli is, in essence, protecting India itself—its water, its climate, its culture, and its future generations.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to the author of this book, *Jalpurush Dr. Rajendra Singh*, for this courageous, fact-based, and socially meaningful effort in the larger public interest. His deep commitment to nature, water, and society is clearly reflected on

every page of this work. This book not only strengthens environmental consciousness, but also offers new direction to public movements and policy discourse.

I also express my sincere gratitude to *Shri Sharad Singh, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer* of the Shool of Management Sciences, Lucknow, who made library facilities available for the preparation of this work and provided continuous encouragement for its publication.

Finally, with great pride, I present this important book to the readers, with the firm belief that it will prove to be an inspiring and guiding document for society, governance, and future generations.

Chief Editor-
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Director General (Technical) & Chairman
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Preface

In the early 1990s, the historic movement to save the Aravalli mountain range began with Case No. 509/9, *Tarun Bharat Sangh vs. Government of India*, filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The victory in this case led, in light of the Supreme Court's orders, to the issuance of Notification No. S.O. 319(E) dated 7 May 1992. People from Sariska to Alwar, Gurugram, and eventually across the entire Aravalli region stood united. After 1993, through petitions filed in various High Courts and the Supreme Court, citizens succeeded in halting mining activities and secured several landmark victories. As a result, the conservation of the Aravalli began, and initiatives such as the "Green Aravalli" took root—starting from Rajasthan itself.

But what happened on 20 November 2025? The same Ministry of Forest and Environment of the Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan—established to protect forests and mountains—came forward to promote mining. The environmental authority that should have been the guardian of nature became the cause of the mountains' destruction. When "the flood itself begins to devour the fields," it is not merely a warning; it is a sign of catastrophe.

In 1990, the aware citizens of Alwar and Tarun Bharat Sangh transformed the campaign to save the Aravalli into a mass movement. As a result of that struggle, the Aravalli began to revive. Yet what changed by 2025 that, due to the vested interests of a few, the path to the Aravalli's destruction was reopened? A respected judge of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, just two days before retirement, issued an order that imperiled the entire Aravalli.

Alwar holds a unique place in history—it is from here that both the protection of the Aravalli and, unfortunately, its destruction began. Today, once again, people across the Aravalli region are rising to protect it. The "Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign" is gradually taking the form of a broader "Save the Aravalli Movement." This is a ray of hope. It is also heartening that leaders from different political parties are rising above partisan politics to join efforts to save the Aravalli.

Now, all sections of society in the Aravalli region must begin organized efforts according to their understanding and capacity. Every individual must make positive use of social media and the press from wherever they are. But it must be remembered that we stand to save the Aravalli because we are its sons and daughters. The Aravalli's timelessness is one—saving it is our sole objective.

This book *"Aravalli Under New Threat- Mining, Deforestation & Ecological Imbalance in Northern India"* is an effort to understand the Aravalli, to feel its pain, and to identify—and even explain to—those who are intensifying that pain. "If the Aravalli survives, you will survive too." Do not sell your mother, the Aravalli, for the greed of profit. Sacrificing the Aravalli is not merely the destruction of resources; it is akin to gambling away our heritage, our lives, our health, and our future. It is not like killing the goose that lays golden eggs; it is the heinous crime of killing the mother who gave us birth and nurtured us.

The Aravalli range is India's natural backbone. It is not merely a chain of hills, but the foundation of North India's climate, rainfall cycle, and life-support systems. When monsoon clouds rising from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea collide with the Aravalli, they transform into rainfall. This is why the existence of the Aravalli is essential for rivers, groundwater, and agriculture. Mining not only destroys the landform by cutting through these hills, but also disrupts the natural pathways of clouds, upsetting rainfall balance and intensifying droughts, floods, and the spread of desertification.

The role of the Aravalli is not only physical. This mountain range exemplifies a unique harmony between nature and culture. Its forests protect agriculture; medicinal plants have long supported health; wildlife maintains ecological balance; and indigenous communities have served as its natural guardians for centuries. Ancient traditions here—*devvan*, *oran*, water worship, tree worship—are living traditions of Indian environmental conservation. This book systematically documents these traditions and beliefs so that modern India may understand its roots.

The book also exposes the reality of forces that seek to fragment the Aravalli by dividing it into higher and lower categories, thereby breaking its holistic form. It clearly explains the circumstances under which the Supreme Court defined and limited the Aravalli, and how this decision was based on affidavits submitted by the Ministry of Forest and Environment. It further reveals why and how the same ministry—which enacted laws to protect the Aravalli on 7 May 1992—acted against the spirit of those very laws through its step of 20 November 2025.

Through these facts, the book offers not just information, but awakens conscience and awareness. It opens a pathway to understanding why society must rise to save the Aravalli and how organized, peaceful, and truth-based efforts can be undertaken. Through the truth of the Aravalli, this work underscores across India the importance of forests, mountains, the environment, and Indian faith and values.

Ultimately, this book - *Aravalli Under New Threat- Mining, Deforestation & Ecological Imbalance in Northern India* is not merely the story of the Aravalli. It is a call to protect India's nature and culture—a document that compels environmentalists, policy-makers, youth, and every conscious citizen to reflect that only if mountains are saved can water, life, and civilization remain secure.

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1.
Introduction

The Aravalli mountain range is not merely a physical feature in India's geographical structure; it is an ancient memory of the subcontinent's civilization, culture, climate, and life-support systems. This work seeks to understand and present the Aravalli in that broader civilizational perspective in which mountains are not heaps of stone, but living bridges connecting water, forests, human communities, and the future. To know the Aravalli is, in many ways, to understand the ecological foundations of northern and western India; and to protect the Aravalli is to safeguard the life-security of generations yet to come.

Counted among the most ancient mountain systems in the world, the Aravalli stretches approximately 1,500 kilometers in its broader geological span. Its age is considered far older than that of the Himalayas. Long before the Himalayan uplift reshaped the northern skyline of the subcontinent, the Aravalli stood upon the Earth's surface, silently shaping climatic rhythms and ecological balance. Extending across Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat, it has functioned as a climatic backbone of North India. The central argument of this book is that the Aravalli must not be assessed merely through measurements of elevation, mineral wealth, or commercial value, but as a living ecosystem whose survival determines the survival of millions.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the Aravalli lies in the domain of water. Its rocky formations, natural fissures, slopes, and vegetation together create a remarkable system for intercepting rainwater and gradually channeling it into the earth's interior. This slow percolation forms the foundation of groundwater recharge. Without the Aravalli, vast stretches of Rajasthan, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh would likely have turned into desert landscapes long ago. Acting as a natural shield, the range checks the eastward expansion of the Thar

Desert. In this sense, the Aravalli is not only a legacy of the past but a present and future life-support mechanism.

Indian civilization evolved in deep association with the Aravalli. Rivers flowed along its slopes, forests flourished in its valleys, and settlements emerged around its protective ridges. Agriculture, pastoral traditions, and forest-based livelihoods created balanced and resilient social systems. The harmony between civilization and nature remained the secret of India's long-term stability. This book repeatedly emphasizes that as long as human communities regarded the Aravalli as a mother, protector, and life-giver, society prospered. The moment it was reduced to a mere storehouse of resources, the process of decline began.

From the colonial period to post-independence India, pressure on the Aravalli intensified. Mining for stone, limestone, marble, and various minerals punctured the mountains. Forests were first cleared, then hills were blasted, and debris was dumped into grazing lands, agricultural fields, and riverbeds. The consequences were not confined to environmental damage alone. They manifested as social dislocation and public health crises. Groundwater levels declined sharply, rivers dried up, livestock and agriculture suffered, and thousands fell victim to silicosis and other mining-related diseases. Entire villages weakened economically, and many residents became laborers on their own ancestral land.

This book does not present these realities merely through official statistics or administrative reports; it records them through lived experiences and collective memory. The author's observations reveal that when mining proceeds, not only do mountains collapse—communities fracture. Conversely, when mining halts, regeneration begins: rivers return, fields regain fertility, and human dignity is restored. The revival of rivers such as the Arvari, Ruparel, and Sarsa stands as living testimony that when mountains survive, water and life return with them.

An important dimension of this work is the role of law and the judiciary. Decisions of the Supreme Court of India concerning Aravalli conservation have represented not merely legal interventions

but historic acts in defense of civilization itself. The judiciary has affirmed that environmental protection is not a matter of administrative convenience, but a fundamental question of life and constitutional rights. When mining was halted through judicial orders, nature demonstrated its capacity for renewal—proving that legal action can have tangible ecological impact.

Yet the voice of this book extends beyond institutional safeguards. It underscores that laws remain ineffective without public awareness and collective participation. Indigenous and forest-dwelling communities possess a worldview in which forests, hills, water bodies, and wildlife form an integrated whole. For them, these are not separate entities but interdependent elements of a single life-system. Mining has inflicted deep wounds upon this cultural equilibrium. The book honors this traditional wisdom and gives voice to the pain caused when development policies overlook it.

In the context of climate change, the Aravalli's importance becomes even more critical. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, droughts, and environmental instability are not merely global abstractions; they have local causes and solutions. The Aravalli functions as a natural climate regulator. Its degradation could push North India toward intensified heatwaves, water scarcity, and desertification. The crisis of the Aravalli, therefore, is not a regional issue but a matter of national climate security.

The book also offers a serious reflection on the prevailing model of "development." Mining-driven growth is presented as a path of short-term gain and long-term destruction. In the name of employment, revenue, and infrastructure, mountains are sacrificed, but the ultimate cost is borne by health systems, agriculture, and rural economies. In contrast, water conservation, forest regeneration, and community-based livelihoods provide a durable and sustainable model of progress.

A distinctive idea introduced in this work is that of the "Environmental Yajna." This is not a ritualistic offering into sacred fire, but a symbolic act of sacrifice—renouncing greed, excessive consumption, and indifference. It recognizes that laws often fail

because they are framed without understanding the traditions and knowledge systems of forest communities. The Environmental Yajna calls for moral transformation as the foundation of ecological protection.

The "Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign," public marches, and awareness journeys reflect the hopeful dimension of this narrative. Farmers, environmentalists, and citizens across four states have united to defend a shared heritage. The message is simple yet profound: the health of the Aravalli is inseparable from the health of the people.

The book further reflects on cultural awakenings linked to both the Himalaya and the Aravalli, highlighting the role of poetry, public discourse, and visionary leadership in shaping environmental consciousness. Conservation requires not only legislation but also emotional and cultural engagement.

A pressing question raised here is: if there are laws for forests, why not for mountains themselves? Once destroyed, mountains cannot be recreated. Therefore, the urgent need for a strong and independent "Mountain Protection Law" is emphasized. Decisions that fragment the Aravalli on the basis of altitude are cautioned against, as they risk legitimizing its gradual disintegration.

Ultimately, the book brings the reader to a decisive crossroads—Aravalli or desert. This is not rhetorical symbolism, but ecological reality. If the Aravalli collapses, rivers will dry, groundwater will fall, temperatures will rise, and North India will face profound crisis. If the Aravalli survives, water, climate stability, and life itself remain possible.

Thus, these chapters are not merely academic reflections but a call—a call to defend nature, culture, and democracy together. Law, public movement, and satyagraha are woven into a unified framework. Satyagraha here is not simply protest; it is steadfast adherence to truth. The objective is clear: to protect the land, ecology, and culture of the Aravalli in their entirety—without fragmentation, without discrimination, and without compromise.

2.
History of the Aravalli

The Aravalli Range is one of the most significant and ancient mountain systems of the Indian subcontinent. Located in western India, it stretches predominantly across the state of Rajasthan and extends into Gujarat, Haryana, and the National Capital Territory of Delhi. In Rajasthan, it is traditionally referred to as the **Adawala Mountains**, a term derived from regional linguistic usage that reflects its distinctive north–south alignment. The word "Aravalli" itself is often interpreted to mean "line of peaks," aptly describing its chain-like configuration of ridges and hill systems.

Geologically, the Aravalli is recognized as the oldest mountain range in India and among the oldest surviving fold mountain systems in the world. It is considered a remnant of the ancient supercontinent **Gondwana**, which once comprised present-day India, Africa, South America, Antarctica, and Australia. The formation of the Aravalli dates back to the Precambrian era, making it a geological structure of extraordinary antiquity. Although traditional references sometimes trace its origin to nearly 4.5 billion years in the broader context of Earth's geological timeline, more specific geological evidence places its major orogenic (mountain-forming) phases around 2.5 billion to 650 million years ago. Over immense spans of time, tectonic activity, metamorphism, and erosion shaped it into the residual mountain system visible today.

Stretching approximately 692 kilometers, the Aravalli Range extends from Palanpur in Gujarat in the southwest to Raisina Hill in Delhi in the northeast. Nearly 79.49% of its length lies within Rajasthan, making it the defining physical feature of the state. The Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi is built upon Raisina Hill, which forms the northernmost extension of the Aravalli system—symbolically linking this ancient geological formation to the heart of modern India's political framework.

Physical Features and Elevation

The highest peak of the Aravalli Range is **Guru Shikhar**, located in the Sirohi district at Mount Abu. Rising to approximately 1,722–1,727 meters above sea level, it is the highest point in Rajasthan. Mount Abu, the only hill station in the state, represents the most elevated and forested section of the range. The southern part of the Aravalli is broader, more rugged, and higher in elevation compared to the northern stretches, which gradually diminish into isolated rocky ridges and low hills as they approach Delhi.

The average elevation of the Aravalli Range is approximately 930 meters, though some academic sources such as NCERT estimate it to be closer to 1,000 meters. The width of the range varies from 10 to 100 kilometers. While many sections rise between 300 and 900 meters, certain peaks stand considerably higher, forming prominent landscapes in southern Rajasthan.

Structurally, the Aravalli system is divided into two principal sections:

1. **Sambhar–Sirohi Range** – This includes the major elevated zones, particularly around Mount Abu, and contains the highest peaks, including Guru Shikhar.
2. **Sambhar–Khetri Range** – This section consists of three discontinuous ridge belts separated by plains and valleys and is historically known for mineral deposits, particularly copper.

Geological Age and Evolution

The estimated geological age of the Aravalli Range is approximately 570–650 million years in its present form, though its foundational rock systems are significantly older. It represents a classic example of *a residual (relict) mountain range*, formed by ancient tectonic uplift and subsequently worn down by millions of years of erosion, weathering, and denudation. Originally, the Aravalli mountains were likely much taller, comparable to present-day Himalayan heights. However, prolonged geological processes have reduced them to their current subdued elevations.

Because of its antiquity and structural evolution, the Aravalli is frequently compared with the **Appalachian Mountains** of North

America, which share a similar geological history as ancient fold mountains that have undergone extensive erosion.

Geological Structure

From a geological standpoint, the Aravalli Range is composed primarily of rock formations belonging to two major geological systems: the **Delhi Supergroup** and the **Aravalli Supergroup**.

- The **Delhi Supergroup** consists mainly of hard and compact quartzite rocks, which provide structural integrity to many ridges. These rocks are highly resistant to weathering and form steep escarpments in several regions.
- The **Aravalli Supergroup** is composed predominantly of granite, gneiss, schist, phyllite, and other metamorphic rocks, indicating intense tectonic activity and high-pressure metamorphic transformations during its formation.

The region is also rich in mineral resources. Historically, it has been known for copper deposits in Khetri, zinc in Zawar, marble in Makrana, and various other minerals. Evidence suggests that copper mining in the Aravalli region dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization, indicating that the range has played an economic role for thousands of years.

Ecological and Climatic Importance

Ecologically, the Aravalli Range performs a vital function in the Indian subcontinent. Acting as a natural barrier, it prevents the eastward expansion of the Thar Desert. By obstructing desert winds, it reduces the spread of sand into fertile regions of eastern Rajasthan and the National Capital Region. The western side of the Aravalli, known as **Marwar**, is semi-arid and desert-prone, whereas the eastern side, called **Mewar**, is relatively fertile and agriculturally productive.

Several important rivers originate from the Aravalli hills, including the Banas, Luni, Sakhi, and Sabarmati rivers. These rivers support agriculture, groundwater recharge, and rural settlements across western India. In addition to influencing river systems, the Aravalli also plays a crucial role in climate moderation, rainfall distribution, and soil conservation.

Dense forests are mainly found in the southern stretches, particularly around Mount Abu and parts of Udaipur and Sirohi districts. However, much of the northern and central Aravalli region is characterized by sparse vegetation, rocky terrain, and sandy soil due to deforestation, mining, and environmental degradation over time.
The Aravalli traverses 19 districts of Rajasthan, influencing local hydrology, biodiversity, and ecological balance. Wildlife sanctuaries such as Sariska and parts of the Ranthambore region are ecologically linked to the Aravalli system.

Cultural and Human History
Beyond geology and ecology, the Aravalli Range holds immense cultural and historical importance. For centuries, indigenous communities such as the **Bhil tribe** have inhabited its forested and hilly regions, maintaining a deep cultural, spiritual, and ecological relationship with the landscape. The hills have been sites of ancient temples, forts, and settlements, including Kumbhalgarh, Chittorgarh, and Achalgarh, reflecting their strategic and historical relevance.

Throughout history, the Aravalli served as a natural defense barrier for Rajput kingdoms and as a refuge during invasions. Its rugged terrain provided protection and shaped the political geography of medieval Rajasthan.

Threfore, the Aravalli Range is not merely a chain of ancient hills; it is a geological archive, an ecological regulator, a climatic shield, and a cultural symbol of resilience. Its formation during the Precambrian era, its mineral wealth, its role in shaping Rajasthan's geography, and its deep connection with indigenous communities make it a mountain system of extraordinary significance. As one of the oldest surviving mountain ranges on Earth, the Aravalli stands as a living testimony to the dynamic processes of Earth's evolution and to the intertwined relationship between nature and civilization.

3.
The 100-Meter Controversy: A New Crisis in Aravalli Conservation

From Mass Movement to Judicial Assurance

By the 1980s, nearly 28,000 mines—both legal and illegal—were operating across the Aravalli region. In 1988, Tarun Bharat Sangh undertook the formidable responsibility of closing these mines. After a prolonged and determined legal and social struggle that continued until 1993, the Aravalli became largely free from mining activities. This was not merely a matter of legal enforcement; it was an effort to safeguard the very soul of the Aravalli and to preserve its cultural and ecological heritage.

The campaign began on Vijayadashami in 1990 with the stoppage of mining in Sariska. Subsequently, on 2 October 1993, the Aravalli Chetna Yatra commenced from Himatnagar (Gujarat), carrying the message of resistance against mining all the way to Delhi. On 22 November 1993, this message reached Parliament itself. On that day, it appeared as though the Aravalli had regained life once again.

In 1994, Aravalli Conservation Committees were established in every district, and district administrations were entrusted with the responsibility of halting mining operations. A mechanism was also created to submit regular compliance reports to the Supreme Court. At that time, it seemed that the Aravalli was secure and that a stable, long-term arrangement for its protection had been institutionalized. By 1996, I felt reassured and believed that my pledge to protect the Aravalli had been fulfilled.

The Re-Emergence of Mining and the 100-Meter Definition

However, within merely ten to fifteen years, the situation underwent a dramatic transformation. Mining associations and powerful lobbies reorganized themselves with greater financial strength and influence.

An alliance between governments and mining industrialists gradually emerged, and this alignment ultimately received validation through judicial approval. Efforts to reopen mining intensified rapidly.

At that very moment, several young individuals—such as Kalyani Meena—came forward to defend the Aravalli. Across the entire range, people voluntarily stepped forward to engage in conservation efforts. This development brought a sense of satisfaction. Yet I did not anticipate that both legal and illegal mining would once again resume before my own eyes.

When I first read the Supreme Court's judgment, I had not yet examined the government affidavits or the detailed actions of the ministry. Initially, it appeared that the Court had adopted a 100-meter elevation criterion with the intention of establishing a uniform legal framework for the Aravalli across all four states. Just as a base reference point is fixed in any systematic calculation, perhaps this too was intended as a technical baseline.

But upon studying the reports of the Forest Survey of India, the Geological Survey of India (GSI), and the Technical Sub-Committee (TSC), the reality became unmistakably clear. This definition, framed in the name of the sustained development of the mining industry, was in fact creating a new and grave crisis for our ancient natural heritage.

The actual geographical profile of the Aravalli demonstrates the following distribution of land area by elevation:

- Up to 20 meters: 1,07,494 sq. km
- 20–40 meters: 12,081 sq. km
- 40–60 meters: 5,009 sq. km
- 60–80 meters: 2,656 sq. km
- 80–100 meters: 1,594 sq. km
- Above 100 meters: only 1,048 sq. km

This means that the area above 100 meters constitutes merely 8.7 percent of the total region. If only areas above 100 meters are recognized as eligible for protection, then the overwhelming majority of the Aravalli landscape will effectively remain outside conservation

safeguards. Such a definition narrows protection so drastically that the ecological continuity of the range is fundamentally compromised.

Cultural Displacement and the Question of Justice

Indigenous and local communities—whose homes, agricultural fields, cattle enclosures, and cultural sites are largely situated below the 100-meter elevation—do not wish to be displaced. Their lives and cultural identities are deeply intertwined with nature. To remain free from the diseases and destruction caused by mining is not merely their preference; it is their right and their inherited way of life.

The Aravalli's unique ecological character and cultural richness stand unparalleled in the world. The mining industry, however, operates in direct contradiction to this living heritage. It was for precisely this reason that the campaign to save the Aravalli began from Jaipur 45 years ago.

The irony, however, is profound. From that very region, the mining lobby's initiative received judicial recognition. The voices of conservationists were overlooked. No government authority preparing official reports ever meaningfully consulted those who had long been working to protect the Aravalli, even though most conservation advocates reside in Jaipur and Alwar. No official entered into dialogue with me either. Had such consultation occurred, I could have presented factual data and widely accepted evidence.

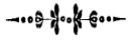
The 100-meter elevation definition is, in essence, a definition shaped by the mining industry. It is not accepted by geologists, environmental scientists, naturalists, or cultural experts. It lacks ecological integrity and fails to represent the holistic nature of the Aravalli mountain system.

The Government of India and all four concerned states—Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi—must reconsider this definition. Failing to do so would risk serious reputational damage to the governments themselves. It is not appropriate to shift the entire burden of this definitional dispute onto the Supreme Court. The judiciary is the supreme pillar of our democracy—above the

government itself—yet recent decisions appear to resemble one-sided compromises.

The 100-meter definition does not deliver justice to the Aravalli and cannot be accepted as equitable or scientifically sound. In this decision, the Aravalli mountain range was not granted its rightful position. Justice was not rendered in accordance with India's ecological ethos and civilizational values.

We respectfully appeal to the Hon'ble Supreme Court to reconsider this decision. The Aravalli is India's most ancient natural heritage. It should be regarded as a distinguished example of the harmonious union between Indian culture and nature. A reconsideration of this judgment would mark the genuine beginning of a renewed effort to preserve the Aravalli as an integral part of India's living heritage.



4.
Aravalli Conservation and India's Judicial Decision

The Supreme Court's Directive and the Question of National Priority

On 20 November 2025, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India delivered an important directive concerning the conservation of the Aravalli, declaring environmental protection to be "a matter of national priority." The Court observed that the existing administrative mechanism is fragmented and that policy inconsistencies across different states have weakened conservation efforts in the Aravalli region. In this context, the Bench clearly directed:

"By our order dated 20 November 2025, we direct the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to prepare, through the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, a Master Plan for Sustainable Management (MPSM) for the entire Aravalli region, understood as a continuous geological mountain range extending from Gujarat to Delhi, on the lines of the Saranda model."

The Court further mandated that this Master Plan be implemented within a fixed time frame and that a coordinated framework be developed among all concerned states to ensure an integrated policy for the protection and rejuvenation of the Aravalli. The Supreme Court emphasized that the Aravalli, extending in its entirety from Gujarat to Delhi, is one unified mountain range and must be treated and protected as a whole.

It is universally acknowledged, and affirmed by the Supreme Court, that mountain ranges emerge from the womb of the earth. Their ecological integrity must be preserved in its entirety. Whether the terrain lies beneath the earth's surface or rises above it, the entire geological structure demands equal protection. For this reason, the Court provided six months to establish a regulatory mechanism

ensuring that no mining takes place within the defined limits of the Aravalli. Keeping the Aravalli free from mining is synonymous with safeguarding India's natural heritage.

The Aravalli contains several valuable and strategically significant minerals required for national security. The Supreme Court has rightly allowed limited extraction in cases involving atomic or nationally critical minerals. However, cutting the Aravalli for ordinary minerals, destroying forests, and creating artificial gaps in the mountain chain cannot be justified under any circumstances.

Global Environmental Governance and the Lessons of COP-30

On the same day—20 November 2025—the COP-30 conference was held in Brazil, where world leaders gathered out of concern for the planet's future. The President of Brazil acknowledged that extensive mining had caused serious damage to the Amazon rainforest. To demonstrate the scale of this destruction, COP-30 was organized in Belém, at the heart of the Amazon. The conference itself became a powerful testament to the urgency of environmental protection.

A historic and far-reaching decision was taken at COP-30: the entire financial corpus allocated for forest conservation would be transferred directly to indigenous organizations, without intermediary control by governments or other institutions. The fundamental objective of this decision was to empower those communities who have protected forests for generations to determine their own ecological future. Indigenous peoples were recognized not merely as beneficiaries, but as the rightful custodians and decision-makers of forest ecosystems. This marked a global acknowledgment of local knowledge, traditional wisdom, and community accountability.

In the same spirit, Germany formally announced a commitment of one billion euros over the next decade to support a new global rainforest fund established under Brazil's leadership. This fund is not merely a channel for financial assistance but a mechanism of responsible oversight. Through satellite monitoring technologies, the actual condition of forests will be continuously observed. Communities and regions that protect forests will be rewarded and incentivized, while

those responsible for uncontrolled deforestation will face financial penalties.

German ministers described this initiative as central to protecting the "lungs of the Earth"—the tropical rainforests. They emphasized that if these forests collapse, not only the respective nations but all of humanity will face escalating climate crises, rising temperatures, and environmental instability. Forest protection must therefore be viewed not as charity, but as a shared global responsibility for the survival of the planet and humanity itself.

Brazil estimates that this fund may eventually grow to 125 billion dollars. Norway has pledged three billion dollars, while Brazil and Indonesia have committed one billion dollars each. Several rainforest nations are participating in this initiative, which will be overseen by a joint governing committee. Approximately seventy countries could benefit, provided at least 20 percent of the funds directly reach indigenous and traditional communities. So far, 53 nations have expressed support, and Brazil expects wealthy nations to provide an initial contribution of 25 billion dollars. Discussions surrounding fossil fuels extended the duration of COP negotiations.

This global decision sends a clear message: environmental protection cannot succeed through centralized authority or bureaucratic control alone. It must rest upon trust, rights, and participation of local communities. COP-30 signals the dawn of a new era in global environmental policy—one that accords respect, resources, and decision-making power to indigenous societies.

The Indian Context: Definition, Mining, and the Integrity of the Aravalli

Concerned citizens who care about the environment and the future raised their voices in the Supreme Court and various High Courts to protect the Aravalli. As a result of these petitions, a comprehensive understanding of the Aravalli across all four states emerged—an outcome that brought deep satisfaction. The Supreme Court declared that no new mining leases would be granted. This was a highly honorable decision, offering some relief to the Aravalli's long-standing suffering.

However, the Court also stated that while mining would not be permitted in areas above 100 meters, the Government of India may consider decisions regarding areas below that elevation. This recalls the situation of 1990, when more than 28,000 legal and illegal mines operated in the Aravalli. To close those mines, Tarun Bharat Sangh initiated action, and I undertook a foot march from Himatnagar, Gujarat, to Delhi on 2 October 1993 to ensure the enforcement of the government notification. The Government of India took that voice seriously, mines were closed, and the Aravalli began to revive.

Yet by 2015, illegal mining resumed in many places. Wherever mining continued, the Aravalli deteriorated. Water scarcity and climate stress intensified. Groundwater reserves depleted. Faridabad, Nuh, and Gurugram stand as stark examples. Gradually, both legal and illegal mining resumed, deepening the crisis. In Rajasthan, Anil Mehta and others continued legal battles through petitions. In Haryana and Delhi, Neelam Ahuja sustained similar efforts, and these struggles continue even today.

The Supreme Court has rightly permitted extraction of essential atomic minerals where necessary. But stripping the Aravalli naked for ordinary minerals, cutting forests, and fragmenting the mountain chain cannot be justified. The Aravalli is a single, integrated mountain range. To assert that only elevations above 100 meters constitute the Aravalli is fundamentally incorrect. A mountain range is one continuous geological entity. From its womb within the earth to its highest peak, the entire character of the mountain must be preserved—its vegetation, wildlife, and indigenous forest-dwelling communities. The oldest tribal communities are found on the heights of the Aravalli. To protect them, we must learn from the example of COP-30.

Tarun Bharat Sangh first raised its voice to save the Aravalli in 1988. In 1991, a Public Interest Litigation was filed in the Supreme Court against mining in the Aravalli. The case was heard with seriousness by Justice Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India, who ordered the closure of 478 mines in Sariska. On 7 May 1992, the Government

of India responded to this call and initiated efforts to wipe the tears of the Aravalli.

The movement spread across all four states—Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. On 2 October 1993, with the symbolic blowing of the conch for the Aravalli, the march reached Parliament on 22 November 1993. A memorandum was submitted to then Speaker Shivraj Patil, emphasizing that although a government notification had been issued, illegal mines were still operating. He acknowledged the challenges posed by different political administrations across states but assured efforts to close the mines and protect the world's most ancient mountain range.

On 20 November 2025, the Full Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India issued a landmark directive concerning the future of the Aravalli Range. In a significant move, the Court entrusted the Government of India with the responsibility of restoring and protecting the degraded mountain system, expressing concern over decades of environmental neglect, illegal mining, deforestation, and unregulated urban expansion that have damaged its ecological balance.

By assigning this responsibility to the Union Government, the Court emphasized that Aravalli conservation is a matter of national importance, not merely a state concern. The directive places particular responsibility on the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to implement clear policies, ensure coordinated action, and enforce compliance across all concerned states to prevent further degradation.

Judicial Vision: Beyond Fragmentation

A key feature of the Court's intervention is its effort to establish a unified and scientifically sound definition of the Aravalli. For years, varying definitions adopted by Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat created regulatory confusion and loopholes that weakened conservation efforts. The Court sought to correct this by treating the Aravalli as a continuous geological and ecological system rather than fragmented political segments, reaffirming that natural ecosystems cannot be effectively protected through inconsistent administrative boundaries.

A Unified Ecological Identity

Recognizing the Aravalli as a single mountain system reflects both scientific logic and constitutional responsibility. The range acts as a natural barrier against desertification, protects northern plains from the expansion of the Thar Desert, supports biodiversity, recharges groundwater, and stabilizes regional climate.

A unified definition would strengthen environmental governance through harmonized conservation strategies, integrated planning, and coordinated enforcement. The Court's initiative thus represents a forward-looking effort to align governance with ecological reality. With responsibility now resting on the Government and the MoEFCC, effective implementation, inter-state coordination, and strict monitoring are essential to ensure long-term restoration and protection of the Aravalli.

As the responsibility now rests with the Government of India, particularly the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the moment calls for decisive and transparent action. Policy consistency, inter-state coordination, scientific mapping, and strict monitoring will be essential. The hope is that the Ministry will indeed listen to the Aravalli's silent appeal and act in a manner that ensures restoration, protection, and sustainable stewardship for generations to come.

However, the distinction between "above 100 meters" and "below 100 meters" opens a window that could be misused by mining interests. To prevent distortion of the Court's decision, the Government of India, all four state governments, and society at large must remain vigilant. The Aravalli is not fragmented. It is a single, integrated mountain range born from the womb of Mother Earth. A creation emerging from a single womb cannot be divided into "large" and "small" categories for convenience. Every part of such a living unit deserves equal nourishment and equal respect. As the Supreme Court has stated, so must the government and mining stakeholders understand: together, we must protect the world's most ancient Aravalli mountain range in its entirety.

5.
The Revived Aravalli - Is Once Again Moving Toward Destruction

The *Aravalli Bachao Movement* had once initiated a historic process of making the nation water-secure and ecologically resilient. During the 1980s, when the entire Aravalli Range was being relentlessly crushed under the pressure of rampant mining, sands from the west were advancing toward Delhi through twelve natural gaps in the hills. The desert winds carried this ecological warning across the landscape. A decade later, in 1991, when mining operations in the Aravalli were finally halted following sustained struggle, the mountain range began to revive.

Those who had lost employment due to the closure of mines redirected their labor toward water conservation initiatives. Across Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat, communities united to protect and harvest water. As a result, greenery gradually returned to the Aravalli hills. The abandoned mines, once symbols of devastation, transformed into reservoirs—functioning like water banks that stored precious rainwater.

However, after 2014, illegal mining resurged with alarming intensity. This renewed extraction has once again begun stripping the Aravalli bare. The Faridabad region, which had grown lush after the mine closures of the 1980s and 1990s, now stands denuded. Consequently, hot winds from Rajasthan are again sweeping rapidly toward Delhi. Observing these developments, it appears that the Aravalli may once more facilitate the eastward march of western desert sands. The forests of the Aravalli once served as the “lungs of Delhi”; now, as those lungs weaken, both the mountains and the capital risk ecological illness.

We must recall that after 1991, when mines were shut, the Aravalli revived and water conservation gained remarkable momentum. Today, people of Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat must raise their voices again. In that earlier period, even the Speaker of the Lok Sabha personally came to receive a memorandum from the movement's activists. Within six months, the Government enacted legislation and issued a notification on 7 May 1992. A similar mass awakening across these states is urgently required once more.

In 1980, the destruction of the Aravalli hills through mining at Jhalana Doongri in Jaipur deeply pained me. Jaipur's urban expansion relied heavily on stones quarried from these hills. Jhalana Doongri became a stark symbol of destruction carried out in the name of development. At that time, I too believed mining represented progress.

In 1988, villagers—Jansi Meena of Palpur, Gopi Kumhar of Tilwad, Roopnarayan Joshi of Tildah, and others—while sitting around an evening fire, warned that mining would drain their wells dry. Mines were deeper than wells; any water conserved would simply seep into the pits. They doubted our capacity to shut down the mines, saying the owners were too powerful and dangerous to challenge. Fear was widespread.

Yet I began organizing fearlessly. A three-day meeting was convened at the Neelkanth Temple, drawing more than double the expected participants. Though conversations began cautiously, the camp concluded with a bold decision: to organize *Akhand Ramayana* recitations within the mining areas to dispel fear. Soon, continuous recitations commenced at twenty-two locations, involving mine owners, forest officials, and villagers alike. Dialogue followed, leading eventually to a collective environmental yajna (sacred offering).

At Bharatgarhi, the yajna continued for a week. During discussions, participants examined how mining harmed ecology and livelihoods. In the final offering, a collective resolution was made to stop mining. Officials such as Fateh Singh Rathore were invited, though forest officers initially remained absent.

Proving the mining zone to be forest land was extremely challenging. Ultimately, once it was legally established as forest area, the Supreme Court of India ordered the closure of mines. Enforcing the order proved difficult. I faced life-threatening attacks—even before a committee constituted by the Court. My vehicle was vandalized, and I suffered serious injuries. When filing a report at the police station, officials hesitated. A judge suggested forgiveness; I responded that justice required accountability. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests declared the department would not forgive the attack on forest land defenders.

The incident was later raised before the Supreme Court by Justice M. Rajeev Dhavan, leading to punishment for the attackers. Fear spread among mine owners, and operations ceased.

Subsequently, mine laborers were engaged in constructing ponds, johads, check dams, and embankments. Thousands of water conservation works began. Initially misled against Tarun Bharat Sangh, workers gradually realized their future lay in water and agriculture, not extraction. Many transformed from laborers into farmers. Training camps proliferated, teaching site selection and construction of johads, check dams, anicuts, and bunds.

As Aravalli communities became water-secure, they traveled to districts such as Chambal, Udaipur, Ajmer, Bikaner, Tonk, Pali, Chittorgarh, Dausa, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, Kota, and Dholpur to teach water conservation. Mining declined; farming increased. Violence diminished, and society grew more harmonious. The region's abundant minerals—marble, dolomite, granite, limestone, uranium, copper—remained beneath the hills, yet ecological restoration prevailed for over three decades when judicial and administrative will aligned.

Water and forest conservation initiated in 1991 strengthened biodiversity, revived wildlife habitats, enhanced greenery, and contributed visibly to climate adaptation and mitigation.But after 2014, crisis clouds returned. The definition of the Aravalli was altered; claims arose that only hills over 100 meters qualified. We argued that mountains are defined not by height alone but by geology,

structure, and biodiversity. Yet policy decisions increasingly favored industrial and mining interests. Distances from tiger reserves were reduced; forest lands were reclassified for industry. It appears governance now prioritizes industrialists over ecological futures.

India once embodied environmental stewardship, earning global respect. Today, by protecting extractive interests, we risk being viewed as adversaries of nature. Our treatment of the Aravalli has tarnished that identity. Destructive activities are accelerating, and halting them poses a formidable challenge. These crises must be transformed into opportunities through public mobilization.

Thirty-five years ago, when we laid the foundation of the Aravalli Bachao Movement, we believed people would carry it forward. We fought until the highest court upheld protection, and laws were enacted. Now, however, policies seem designed to weaken safeguards. The Forest Conservation framework increasingly recognizes only notified forests, casting doubt on earlier protections granted on 7 May 1992 to multiple land categories within the Aravalli.

Judicial authority, once powerful in enforcing environmental decisions, now appears weakened. By 2024, even approaching the courts for environmental protection evokes hesitation. Compromise often favors the powerful. Yet whenever I sought justice earlier, though delayed, it ultimately prevailed.

If the forests of the Aravalli survive, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat will remain water-secure. Forests retain water, recharge the earth, and invite rainfall. Without them, hot winds prevail, clouds disperse, and migration intensifies. To safeguard the Aravalli's water, forests, and land, a renewed Aravalli Bachao Movement—like that of the 1990s—is essential. The youth must once again commit themselves to reviving this ancient mountain system and restoring its life-giving waters.

6.
Fragmentation of the Aravalli Through Mining –
Dividing the Backbone of India into High and Low

The Aravalli Range is India's only transverse mountain system. While most Indian mountain ranges extend in a north-easterly direction aligned with the monsoon winds, the Aravalli stands in bold defiance, stretching from south-west to north-east. Its broad chest absorbs the sand-laden storms that blow in from the western deserts, trapping them within its dense forests and preventing their onward march. For this very reason, it has long been called the "backbone of India." It is also among the oldest mountain systems in the world, where ancient rock formations coexist with comparatively recent sand dunes that still appear between the rocky ridges—a rare geological spectacle that speaks of deep time and natural resilience.

Professor S.S. Dawariya, then Director of the Birla Institute of Scientific Research in Jaipur, conducted remote sensing studies and submitted his findings before the Supreme Court of India in support of my petition. At that time, mining had already carved twenty-two massive gaps into the Aravalli hills. The then Chief Justice, Justice Venkatachaliah, after hearing the submissions and reviewing the scientific report, directed the Government of India to protect the Aravalli in order to shield Delhi from advancing sandstorms. Consequently, on 7 May 1992, the Ministry of Environment and Forests issued the Aravalli Protection Notification.

Even before that notification, the Supreme Court had delivered a historic judgment recognizing the Aravalli as a single, integrated mountain range that deserved comprehensive protection. At that moment, it seemed that the tears of the Aravalli had finally been wiped away and that its pain had been understood by the judiciary. But today, after reading the judgments, reports, and affidavits associated with the Supreme Court's decision of 20 November 2025,

one is compelled to say with sorrow: who truly understands the pain of the Aravalli now? The mountain itself has been divided into hierarchies—only peaks higher than 100 meters are to be recognized as Aravalli; those below that height are no longer deemed worthy of the name. The smaller hills, which we had struggled to protect since the 1980s, are being selectively identified and excluded.

In 1986, to support the regeneration of the Aravalli, we constructed a large earthen dam in Gopalpura village with the cooperation of the Meo community, aiming to reduce grazing pressure on the hills. As soon as the dam was completed, water returned to Gopalpura. Young men who had migrated to cities due to unemployment, illness, and helplessness began returning when they saw their wells refill. Around that time, Jansi Meena of Palpur village approached me and said, "All our wells have dried up because of the mines. Please construct a johad for us as well."

We built johads in Palpur under his leadership and in Tilwara under Chhotelal Meena. Chhotelal would often say, "Mining is destroying not only the mountain but us as well. The johads you build will sustain us only if mining is completely stopped." Although Tarun Bharat Sangh constructed johads in both villages, much of the water drained into the deeper mining pits. Thus, the struggle to conserve water inevitably became a struggle against mining. When the Supreme Court's strict orders led to mine closures, wells in both villages overflowed once again.

Subsequently, Jansi Meena's son Khyaliram Meena, along with Mahesh Sharma and Gopi Kumhar of Malana, organized the "Aravalli Bachao Yatra" across the region. In Palpur, Tilwara, Vairwa Doongri, Bansevgarh, Govardhanpura, and Malana, local leaders including Sarpanch Panchu Ram undertook direct satyagraha to halt mining. Even influential mining companies such as Patni and R.K. Marble arrived in Malana, yet they could not operate in the face of peaceful public resistance. At that time, fearless judges like Justice Venkatachaliah listened to the suffering of both the mountain and its people and delivered justice accordingly.

On 10 October 2025, I visited him at his residence in Bengaluru. He remembered the entire Aravalli story and said, “We had clearly instructed the Union and State Governments that it is everyone’s responsibility to protect those saving the mountains from the mining mafia. No action against Rajendra Singh could be taken without the Supreme Court’s permission.” That order safeguarded both the dignity and survival of the Aravalli. Although dozens of false cases were filed against me and police harassment was frequent, there was then a functioning legal framework to protect environmental defenders, and it was enforced. The pain of the mountains was heard. Today, however, few seem willing to listen. Those who understand the Aravalli’s suffering wish to protect it, yet their own hardships continue to grow.

The Aravalli stands across the land precisely to reduce the suffering of its people and forests. Hence, compared to the adjoining desert, the Aravalli region receives more consistent rainfall. The mountain range intercepts clouds and compels them to release rain—almost as though nature itself appointed it as a sentinel of precipitation.

Its rocks are crisscrossed with natural fractures that transform the range into an immense groundwater recharge system. Rainwater percolates through these fissures, replenishing aquifers deep below. For this reason, in Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat—wherever the Aravalli persists—many areas continue to enjoy sweet, reliable drinking water. In truth, the Aravalli is India’s largest natural groundwater bank, operating silently for generations without machines or financial investment.

Even today, it is evident that where the Aravalli remains intact, life retains balance. But if mining is granted free rein, consequences will extend far beyond the hills. Cloud patterns will destabilize, monsoons will become erratic, floods and droughts will intensify, agricultural productivity will decline, and water scarcity will deepen. Ironically, such destruction is often justified in the name of “sustainable development,” though it represents calculated ecological ruin.

If we truly comprehend the Aravalli’s pain, the first step toward recovery will naturally follow. We must regard it not merely as a

mineral repository but as a life-support system. It provides clean air, secures food production, strengthens water security, and prevents forced migration. A protected Aravalli demonstrates how pollution-free, exploitation-free living is possible.

When mining resumes, forests are the first casualties. Water sources become contaminated, youth are exploited as cheap labor, soil erosion accelerates, fertile land turns barren, fodder becomes scarce, and women bear the burden of fetching water from distant sources. My experience from earlier decades confirms that when mines operated, villagers ceased to be owners of their land and became laborers under mining interests. When mines closed, people reclaimed their fields, revived agriculture, and regained stability. If mining returns, so will deprivation.

Ultimately, the pain of the Aravalli and the pain of its people are inseparable. The mountain's ecological wounds and the cultural crisis of its inhabitants are intertwined. To halt this dual crisis, we must understand its depth and take decisive steps against destructive mining. A mining-free Aravalli could become a living global example of environmental protection, water balance, and genuine sustainable development—a priceless legacy whose preservation is our shared responsibility.

7.
India's Ancient Heritage - Let Us Save the Aravalli

Once again, the old pain has returned to the veins of the Aravalli Range. It is the same pain that was born in the 1980s from the relentless rumbling of legal and illegal mines, and against which Tarun Bharat Sangh had launched its determined struggle. What once appeared to be a decisive victory now seems, in retrospect, only the first milestone in a long and unfinished battle. Within fifteen years, it became painfully clear that mining syndicates had re-emerged far more powerful and organized than before. Where young Khyaliram Meena and countless villagers had once stepped out of their homes to defend the Aravalli, the same hills are now being carved open again. Lines of trucks move under the cover of darkness, hill slopes appear slashed like deep wounds visible from afar, and village wells—once sweet and abundant—have grown shallow and bitter. All this unfolds before us, yet the administrative system seems to have deliberately closed its eyes.

The Aravalli mountain system is India's most ancient natural heritage. Being among the world's oldest surviving mountain ranges, it has long drawn global scientific attention. Serious reflection on the Aravalli crisis began in Jaipur in 1980. Later, in the early 1990s, the Government of Japan collaborated with the Government of India to implement the "Greening Aravalli Project" between 1989 and 1999, aimed at ecological restoration. Simultaneously, Tarun Bharat Sangh not only awakened public consciousness about making the Aravalli green again but also initiated direct, community-based action on the ground. In 1986, at Bhartrihari in Alwar, the Aravalli Bachao Conference was organized, where a solemn pledge was taken to protect the mountains.

The first campaign targeted the closure of mines within the Sariska forest area. Once mining ceased, "environmental yajnas" were

organized across the Aravalli region. Ramayana recitations were conducted village after village as moral resistance against destructive extraction. In 1991, 478 mines in Sariska were shut down. Around the same period, the then Justice Venkatachaliah of the Supreme Court of India directed Shri Kamal Nath, then Union Minister for Environment and Forests, to declare the entire Aravalli as an ecologically sensitive zone. The Ministry accordingly issued two notifications declaring the whole Aravalli region environmentally sensitive and prohibiting mining of stone, gravel, sand, and other materials.

The Aravalli was not defined merely as hills but as an integrated ecological region, including its surrounding lands. Consequently, industrial and mining activities were restricted across Aravalli areas in Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Gujarat.

Delhi itself can be understood through two geo-cultural identities: the Aravalli zone known historically as Khandavprastha and the Yamuna region as Indraprastha. The Aravalli hills stretch from Delhi in a garland-like chain down to Himmatnagar in Gujarat, forming a continuous ecological corridor.

Yet certain areas such as parts of Sawai Madhopur and Bharatpur, and even Chittorgarh—located centrally within the Aravalli system—have not been fully acknowledged in official documentation, despite their rich heritage.

Protecting the Aravalli is imperative for the government because its culture and ecology are inseparable. The people of the region share an intimate relationship with water, forests, land, wildlife, and forest-dwelling communities. Mining fractures these bonds. India's traditional "life-knowledge," rooted in harmony with nature, once positioned the country as a global guide. Historically, India accounted for nearly 32 percent of the world's economy. Today, after pursuing extractive development models, that share has drastically reduced. By aligning the Aravalli's economy with its ecological and cultural strengths, India could revive sustainable prosperity.

When mining dominated the Aravalli, disease and helplessness were widespread. After mining halted and unemployment initially rose,

Tarun Bharat Sangh mobilized water conservation as a mass campaign, reconnecting people to agriculture. Farming expanded rapidly, embodying climate adaptation in practice. Rajasthan's Aravalli region became a rare example of climate adaptation and mitigation working together. This lived experience informed global dialogue at COP-21 in Paris, where the principle "water leads to climate resilience" gained recognition, emphasizing agriculture supported by water conservation.

In 2016, NABARD began supporting such initiatives. Gradually, greenery, forests, and agriculture expanded in the Aravalli. However, the Supreme Court's decision of 20 November 2025 has raised new uncertainties. The apparent satisfaction of the Ministries of Forest, Environment, and Climate Change is perplexing, as such decisions seem to benefit mining and industry more than conservation. When rulings reduce forest protections or enable industrial encroachment, environmental authorities should be concerned. Their apparent comfort suggests troubling alignments.

The central question now is not why the Aravalli must be saved, but who bears responsibility for safeguarding this invaluable natural and cultural heritage. The answer lies not merely in government corridors but among those who hold shared sensitivity toward nature and culture, who work at the grassroots to secure the present and future. Sadly, such voices have often been inadequately heard in decision-making forums.

History testifies that in 1991, public consciousness proved decisive. Civil society groups across Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat united against mining, compelling governmental reconsideration. Mining bans acknowledged that Aravalli conservation concerned not only ecology but livelihoods, health, and social stability. Governments then actively rehabilitated miners into agriculture and water conservation, prioritizing health and self-reliance.

At that time, the Aravalli's condition was tragic—nearly stripped bare. Forests were cleared, open-cast mines perforated the hills, grazing lands were buried under debris, and dry rivers and dust-filled air symbolized the mountain's tears.

When mining stopped and forests regained breath, nature demonstrated remarkable resilience. Trees returned, streams flowed again, and rivers revived. Senior journalist Ramesh Thanvi called it the "Conch Call of the Aravalli." Siddharaj Dhadda saw it as nature's rebirth. Leaders such as Rajju Bhaiya and K.C. Sudarshan described it as a civilizational renewal. Sudarshan personally visited twice, calling it a profound example of cultural and ecological harmony.

Dedicated activists—including Amarnath Bhai, Lokendra Bhai, Tej Singh Bhai, Mahavir Tyagi, Jagat Mehta, Omji, and Kishore Bhai—contributed significantly. Today, individuals like Anil Mehta, Nand Kishore Sharma, Tej Rajdan, Prof. Shiv Singh Sarang Devot, Neelam Ahuvalia, and Ibrahim Khan continue the struggle at various levels.
Hope arises from this ongoing commitment. As long as the vision that unites nature and culture remains alive, the Aravalli's survival remains possible. The Aravalli will endure—because those who stand to protect it still exist, and their resolve continues to breathe life into this ancient heritage.

8.
The Battle Between Mining and Life–Who Will Save the Aravalli?

The Aravalli Range is India's most ancient natural shield—the mother of rivers, the seeker of rain, and the nourisher of civilization. For centuries it has stood as the foundational pillar safeguarding culture, water, and life itself. Yet the irony of our times is that the gravest threat to the Aravalli does not arise from foreign invaders, but from those entrusted with its protection. The growing nexus between governance and industry has strengthened a mindset that views the mountain range merely as a source of profit, pushing its ecological, cultural, and human values into the background. In this context, recent developments cast a profound shadow over the future of the Aravalli.
On 20 November 2025, the Supreme Court of India effectively placed responsibility for mining in the Aravalli back into the hands of governments. Administrative officials, mining industrialists, traders, and political actors appear aligned, preparing the ground for large-scale extraction. Efforts are underway everywhere to normalize and streamline mining operations. The Union Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, along with the four concerned state governments, seems more anxious about industrial profits than ecological justice. Consequently, injustice toward the Aravalli is once again becoming active and visible.

Had the government truly sought to protect the Aravalli's natural and cultural heritage, such affidavits and official reports would not have been framed in ways that weaken its safeguards. Hills below 100 meters in height—many already damaged—should have received recognition and protection. Instead, arguments were crafted largely to benefit mining industries. Little thought appears to have been given to wildlife, forest ecosystems, soil health, biodiversity, or long-term environmental security. Yet ecological health and safety are the only

true pathways to sustainable development and lasting well-being. Had governments embraced this path sincerely, the Aravalli would have received meaningful justice in court.

The slogan of "mining-led sustainable development" is misleading. It is not sustainability; it is a contradiction. If, hypothetically, limited and carefully chosen zones were designated for extraction—ensuring that desert winds would not intensify pollution in the National Capital Region—perhaps some balance could have been considered. But nowhere in India has mining demonstrated that it can proceed without increasing disease, displacement, unemployment, or ecological harm. Across states, extractive industries have uprooted indigenous communities and degraded landscapes, leaving behind pollution, encroachment, and social distress.

In Indian thought, a woman who gives birth and the Aravalli that gives birth to rivers are both revered as life-givers. From the womb of the Aravalli have emerged hundreds of rivers, many of which dried up due to mining and groundwater exploitation. Over the past fifty years, Tarun Bharat Sangh has helped revive dozens of these rivers. When rivers dry, civilizations weaken; culture and flowing waters are deeply intertwined. This shared symbolism explains why river and woman are often equated in Indian consciousness.

The sun draws vapor from the salty seas, forming clouds. It is the Aravalli—standing transversely across the land—that compels these clouds to release rain. Facing both the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea monsoon currents, this primordial mountain system acts as a rain sentinel. In recognition of this sacred geography, ancient sages established the Brahma Temple and Brahma Sarovar at Pushkar in its heart—the only Brahma temple in India.

Where clouds once gathered over Rajasthan, the Aravalli forests ensured rainfall. Mining raises local temperatures by three to five degrees Celsius. In areas such as Jhalana Doongri in Jaipur, temperatures historically remained one to three degrees higher due to active mining, even in winter months.

Mining stands opposed to both the ecological and cultural essence of the Aravalli. While a few mine owners may benefit economically, large numbers of workers suffer from diseases such as silicosis, leading to deteriorating health and eventual financial hardship.

The greenery of the Aravalli is the true foundation of both economy and ecology. Just as the spine supports the human body, the Aravalli supports India; thus, its protection is essential. A mining-free Aravalli is a pathway to national prosperity. Prosperity is not merely an industrial measure—two centuries ago, India accounted for nearly 32 percent of global GDP without large-scale mining. Agriculture, culture, and ecological harmony sustained that strength.

Today, the Aravalli's prosperity lies not in excavation but in regeneration. When forests thrive, clouds do not pass without rain. Rainwater nurtures agriculture, providing employment for youth rooted in their land. The water of the Aravalli can sustain farming livelihoods for generations.

Yet troubling days seem ahead. Saving the Aravalli from decline demands courage from its people, just as in earlier decades. Understanding its truth is the first step. Only by recognizing the depth of its suffering can we mobilize others. Collective organization and peaceful resistance—satyagraha—must once again rise to defend its nature and culture.

A proposal has emerged to initiate a judicial process in Jaipur on 7 December to seek justice for the Aravalli. This is not merely a legal act but a moral and social intervention. Mining simultaneously destroys two vital capitals: water and youth. Water disappears, and young people are left unemployed. That is why the Aravalli has long been called India's "shield," protecting both its water wealth and youthful energy.

Mining accelerates erosion. Once mountain layers are stripped away, rainwater runs off rapidly instead of percolating, leaving neither moisture in fields nor life in springs. Agriculture collapses, and employment crises deepen. The Aravalli then loses its maternal capacity to nourish both land and rivers.

Experience confirms that wherever mining prevailed, springs dried up. The drying of springs is not merely the loss of water; it is the rupture of an entire life cycle. But when mining stopped, nature revived itself. Rivers such as the Chambal, Jahajwali, Bagani, Saras, Ruparel, Maheshwar, Sherni, Deora, Manohar, and Medhar once again began flowing perennially. This demonstrates that if left undisturbed, the Aravalli can restore both itself and society.

Mining renders the Aravalli barren, yet its natural productivity is immense. Its integrated systems of water, soil, forests, and biodiversity generate abundant life even within limited resources. To preserve this productivity, mining must cease, and conservation, ecological enhancement, and rainwater harvesting must expand widely.

This is a decisive moment. Either we surrender the Aravalli to extraction and lose our collective future, or we choose the path of greenery, water, and life. Protecting the Aravalli is, in truth, protecting ourselves. Such protection cannot rely on law alone; it requires awakened citizens, organized communities, and the moral force of satyagraha. Wherever mining has occurred, springs have died; wherever it has ceased, they have revived. The choice before us is clear—and urgent.

9.
The Groan of Mother Earth – The Pain of the Mountain, the Question of Civilization

The Aravalli Range was born from the womb of Mother Earth. To mine it is not merely an economic activity—it is an act comparable to destroying a child within the mother's womb before birth. From this very womb flows the water that sustains countless lives. Yet when mining drills and blasts into its body, the mountain's life-bearing veins are severed. Its subterranean channels—through which water quietly travels—are cut apart. The rivers that flow above it begin to weaken and dry. Agriculture declines. Forest herbs disappear. Dense woodlands shrink. Wildlife, microorganisms, and the intricate web of life essential to human survival begin to collapse. This is not only the mountain's suffering; it is the beginning of our own downfall.

The Aravalli is our Mother Earth in physical form. To tamper with her womb is to invite deep economic ruin. Groundwater recharge across this vast region depends primarily upon the natural fractures within these ancient rocks. Through these invisible fissures, rainwater percolates deep into the earth, replenishing aquifers and sustaining wells across four states. Because of this silent hydrological system, Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat continue to receive safe and stable drinking water in many regions. Mining will contaminate, poison, and eventually exhaust these very sources. Once polluted or destroyed, no technology available to us can fully restore their original purity and vitality.

By cutting and hollowing out the hills, mining will allow the western desert to advance eastward in the form of expanding sand corridors and dunes. Agricultural production will decline sharply and irreversibly. This destruction will not remain confined to the hills—it will destabilize India's economy and severely damage its ecological

balance. True justice for the Aravalli does not lie in granting it mines, but in granting it greenery. Instead of promoting extraction, the judiciary and policymakers should initiate a "Green Aravalli" mission—an ambitious ecological restoration program across the four states. Just as the Government of India has encouraged natural farming in northeastern hill states like Sikkim, Nagaland, and Assam, similar support must be extended throughout the Aravalli region. Financial assistance, institutional backing, and policy reform should align agriculture with the mountain's ecological character, enabling prosperity rooted in nature rather than destruction.

Nature's prosperity nourishes cultural prosperity. In our civilizational memory, Indra, Mitra, and Varuna bring rain where greenery and sacred hills exist. That is why our ancestors worshipped stones and mountains—not out of superstition, but out of deep ecological wisdom. Our civilization followed the Law of Sacrifice—the willingness to give before taking. Today, however, governance appears to operate under a Law of Exploitation. When exploitation becomes policy, survival becomes uncertain. How can the Aravalli endure under such thinking? It can endure—but only if society awakens. If people unite in moral resolve, perform acts of collective ecological commitment, and seek reconsideration through public interest petitions before the Supreme Court of India, hope remains alive.

Public pressure must be directed toward five governments—India, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi—so that they understand the Aravalli's scientific, ecological, cultural, and spiritual identity. A definition that limits the Aravalli to hills above 100 meters is not a definition of preservation but of fragmentation. The true definition recognizes the Aravalli as a continuous, living mountain system. Mining divides it into artificial pieces, increasing its suffering and weakening its resilience.

Across large parts of the Aravalli, spontaneous experiments in natural farming are already emerging. If governments adopt a structured and visionary action plan, both culture and ecology will flourish. The toxic burden of chemical fertilizers and pesticides will decrease. Soil health will improve. Communities will regain self-reliance.

The Aravalli has gifted India two major wildlife national parks and numerous sanctuaries. Yet commercial expansion, industrial intrusion, encroachment, and pollution now threaten these protected spaces. The Forest Department must be strengthened through ethical training, adequate resources, institutional dignity, and operational independence. Officers and forest guards who dedicate their lives to protecting these fragile ecosystems deserve security and recognition. Often, their good work is ignored, while political leaders claim credit. Yet when an error occurs, the punishment falls solely upon them. Justice requires both accountability and acknowledgment.

The Aravalli is not merely a regional landscape—it is an ancient global heritage. It deserves a comprehensive preservation mission. Today, however, it appears abandoned, shedding silent tears while mining interests prepare to deepen its wounds. Those meant to protect this heritage seem, at times, to be complicit in its erosion—as though a daughter were preparing to consume her own mother.

The decision of 20 November 2025 has inflicted one of the deepest wounds upon the Aravalli. If this wound is not urgently reconsidered, it may never fully heal. Communities across the region, rooted in diverse traditions and lineages, would never permit sacred trees to be cut before their eyes. Festivals, rituals, and seasonal celebrations in the Aravalli are deeply intertwined with ecological respect. Mining will replace natural materials in these traditions with synthetic substitutes, slowly reshaping cultural values toward greed. And greed is the deepest wound of all. As greed increases, the foundational character of nature and culture changes. Civilizations rooted in restraint and balance give way to consumption-driven societies that eventually exhaust themselves.

When mining once dominated the Aravalli, wells, stepwells, ponds, johads, and rivers dried up. And when rivers dry, civilizations weaken. The pain of mining dries not only water but also memory, culture, and continuity. In 1991, when mines were closed, rivers revived—and with them, the rebirth of local civilization began. The return of flowing water restored dignity, stability, and hope.

Climate instability will intensify if mining expands. Rising surface temperatures will increase drought frequency. Sudden cloudbursts over deforested slopes will trigger destructive floods. Bare hills are more vulnerable to such extremes. Regions will oscillate between flood and drought, trapped in cycles of disaster. This recurring flood-drought-devastation pattern is not a distant prediction—it is the unfolding pain of the Aravalli.

We stand at a decisive threshold. Either we heed the groan of Mother Earth and restore the Aravalli's life-support systems, or we deepen wounds that future generations may never be able to heal. The mountain's suffering is inseparable from the question of civilization itself. How we respond to the Aravalli's pain will determine not only the fate of a mountain range—but the moral direction of our society.

10.
Let Nature Nourish, Not Mining– Stop Mining, Make the Aravalli Life-Sustaining

Have we truly multiplied to such an extent that, in our race for higher production to fill our stomachs, we have forgotten the principle of restrained and respectful use of the earth—especially in the Aravalli Range? This belief that unlimited exploitation of nature is necessary to sustain a growing population is largely a misconception propagated by a distorted, material-centric worldview. In a country like India, fundamentally agrarian and deeply rooted in its soil, the argument that unchecked extraction is essential for survival does not hold. It has always been true that hands connected to the land rarely remain hungry.

The so-called "Green Revolution," though once celebrated as transformative, has extracted from the soil so intensively that states like Punjab and Haryana—once symbols of lush prosperity—have witnessed alarming social and ecological consequences. The metaphor often used is that fields once growing wheat and rice have begun yielding violence instead. The modern farmer has, in many ways, become dependent on imported systems—expensive chemical fertilizers, hybrid seeds, pesticides, artificial irrigation, and heavy machinery. These have not only endangered soil fertility but have also displaced millions from traditional livelihoods.

Now, after exhausting fertile plains, attention turns toward digging up the Aravalli hills in the name of feeding the nation. The decision delivered on 20 November 2025 by the Supreme Court of India requires urgent reconsideration. Agriculture in the Aravalli region must not become extractive—it must become regenerative and life-nourishing.

Will this modern, chemical-intensive agriculture sustain us indefinitely? Evidence suggests otherwise. Nations that embraced unrestrained industrial agriculture have already faced ecological collapse. When the global community recognized the looming crisis, the Brundtland Commission—formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development—was constituted under the United Nations framework to address sustainable development concerns.

Excessive chemical fertilizers are turning fertile soil barren. According to reports of the World Health Organization, nearly two million people annually suffer pesticide-related poisoning, and tens of thousands die prematurely. Moreover, pesticide residues persist in crops, entering human bodies and giving rise to chronic diseases. Despite this, harmful insects do not disappear; instead, stronger and more resistant species emerge. Hybrid seeds, often promoted as "improved," invite new diseases and fail to adapt to specific local climates. Intensive cultivation has depleted essential minerals such as sulfur, copper, and zinc from soils. Large dams, extensive canal systems, and power projects—like the Narmada Project—have submerged and destroyed vast tracts of fertile land. Agriculture, once a livelihood rooted in dignity, has increasingly turned into an industrial enterprise. Mechanization has replaced animal power, weakening traditional livestock-based nutrient cycles. We now stand at the brink of ecological decline. The pressing question is not whether we face danger—but what alternative path we must adopt.

The alternative is not hidden; it lies in our own traditions. Traditional farming ensured that whatever was taken from the earth was replenished through human labor and organic nourishment. This created a balanced relationship between soil and society. Production was aligned with ecological sustainability—what we may now call a resilient agro-ecological system.

Farming once gave to all—it did not consume everything itself. Today, greed-driven development has fostered pollution, exploitation, encroachment, and mining. If this continues unchecked, even the ancient Aravalli will be devoured.

Organic manure prepared from soil, cattle dung, and organic waste does far more than increase yield. It improves soil texture, enhances water retention, and supports beneficial microorganisms that naturally supply nutrients to crops. It reduces the need for repeated irrigation and costly chemicals. Farmers in the Aravalli region have long relied on traditional pest control methods instead of chemical pesticides. If termite infestation increases, they enrich the soil with goat-based compost. On field boundaries, plants such as Calotropis (Aak), neem, mahua, and banana are cultivated to deter pests naturally. These methods protect biodiversity while minimizing expenses.

Nitrogen enrichment through green manuring—using crops such as sunhemp and dhaincha—is another time-tested practice. Crop rotation further preserves soil vitality by alternating deep-rooted and shallow-rooted crops, ensuring balanced nutrient use. Double cropping systems prevent soil fatigue and sustain productivity. Such integrated traditional wisdom makes agriculture self-reliant, low-cost, and environmentally harmonious.

Traditional agriculture never required massive dams for irrigation; it relied on rainfall and decentralized water management. Even today, in parts of the Aravalli, communities have revived rainwater harvesting after recognizing earlier mistakes. Over the past fifty years, villagers have constructed nearly 15,800 small traditional ponds and embankments, leading to the revival of 23 rivers that now flow perennially and cleanly.

If we fail to return to regenerative farming, we may one day regret our choices as deeply as industrialized nations now do. Mining and unchecked industry will ultimately render land uncultivable. Agriculture must not become merely a market commodity—it must remain a cultural and ecological practice. This alone represents true climate adaptation and mitigation.

Two centuries ago, before industrial extraction dominated policy, India contributed nearly 32 percent to the global economy. Today, reckless development has reduced that share drastically. Prosperity rooted in nature has been replaced by dependency.

The people of the Aravalli must therefore rise again. They must protect this ancient heritage from destructive mining and exploitative industry. Development must be redesigned to prevent displacement, degradation, and ecological ruin.

Greed-based development destroys farming, water, and youth alike. It turns prosperity into pollution. The Aravalli must be freed from such exploitation. Its agriculture, industry, and economic systems must become life-sustaining—not extractive. Only then can the Aravalli remain fertile, resilient, and nourishing for generations to come.

11.
The Environmental Traditions of the Aravalli –
Understanding What "Tradition" Truly Means Is Itself an Act of Justice

Before speaking of the environmental traditions of the Aravalli Range, it is essential to clarify what we mean by "tradition." Many who dismiss our traditions as mere rigid customs or blind superstitions claim that rituals derived from the Vedas and Upanishads constitute tradition. Yet this understanding is incomplete. Even the Vedas and Upanishads themselves emerged from living traditions. The sages and seers of ancient India examined, refined, and validated practices through the disciplined framework of the four stages of life—brahmacharya (studenthood), grihastha (household life), vanaprastha (retirement), and sannyasa (renunciation). Only after being tested in lived experience were they elevated into Vedic hymns and philosophical authority.

Our traditions reflect individualistic, life-affirming, social, and universal perspectives simultaneously. In contrast, Western civilization often links human existence primarily with machinery and material productivity. Even Professor M. N. Roy, though a fierce critic of Mahatma Gandhi, ultimately acknowledged Gandhi as a representative of India's civilizational traditions and paid tribute to him as such.

The verse—
"Yāvajjīvet sukhaṃ jīvet, ṛṇaṃ kṛtvā ghṛtaṃ pibet;
Bhasmībhūtasya dehasya punarāgamanaṃ kutaḥ?"

("Live happily as long as you live; borrow if needed and drink ghee. Once the body is reduced to ashes, there is no return.")
—reflects a hedonistic strand that has occasionally appeared within Indian thought as well. Yet alongside such tendencies arose

masterpieces like *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* and the profound awakening of Lord Buddha. Some ritualistic followers once accused Buddha of undermining tradition, yet he proclaimed, "Eṣa dhammo sanantano"—this is the eternal path. He was not a destroyer but a restorer of timeless principles. Today, however, we seem once again to be embracing the doctrine of borrowed indulgence—consume first, worry later.

Ecology, Environment, and Aravalli's Living Heritage

The term "ecology" is not native to Hindi, yet our linguistic and cultural tradition has always absorbed and reshaped new expressions. In adopting the English word Ecology as "paristhitiki," we enriched language but also risked distortion. In Indian understanding, "environment" is more than surroundings; it encompasses both *pranavaran* (the life-sustaining envelope) and *chitavaran* (the consciousness-sustaining sphere).

The ancient maxim states:
"Dashakūpa samā vāpī, dashavāpī samo hradah;
Dashahrada samo putraḥ, dashaputra samo drumaḥ."

("One stepwell equals ten wells; one pond equals ten stepwells; one son equals ten ponds; and one tree equals ten sons.")

Indian philosophy never separated ecology from environment. This integrated vision helped our civilization emerge as a moral guide to the world. Western industrial thought, however, often portrayed nature as a rival to human advancement. Charles Darwin's interpretation of "survival of the fittest" was frequently misapplied to justify dominance over nature, planting seeds of exploitation.

In contrast, the Indian worldview sees human beings as indebted to nature. Whatever is taken must be returned. This equilibrium is dharma. But today, consumerist thinking increasingly overshadows this sacred understanding.

In Sanatan culture, nature is revered as mother. Scientific inquiry helps us understand her laws, but we use that knowledge for harmonious coexistence, not for reckless extraction. Wise use allows

nature to flourish; exploitation invites ecological backlash—what we describe as nature's fury.

Aravalli: Living Tradition Versus Destructive Mining

In today's Aravalli region, examples of both coexistence and exploitation are visible. In Sariska, traditional communities practice pastoralism. Their livestock graze on forest grass and leaves, producing milk and ghee without harming ecological balance. Controlled grazing strengthens forest health rather than weakening it. Rainwater harvesting ensures that livestock, wildlife, trees, and humans all thrive together. This is an ideal model of utilization—not exploitation.

In stark contrast, legal and illegal dolomite mining within the core areas of Sariska Tiger Reserve represents ecological devastation. Mining enriches a few individuals but impoverishes land, water, forests, and wildlife. Dust chokes vegetation; water bodies dry up; animal habitats shrink.

Ironically, the same Western development model that caused such crises now attempts cosmetic remedies. Green Revolution, White Revolution, and Industrial Revolution have inflicted heavy ecological costs. Merely observing "World Environment Day" will not restore balance.

The Way Forward: Learning from Indigenous Traditions

The path to restoration lies in learning from Aravalli's indigenous communities. At one time, even they began cutting forests. Yet through awareness and guidance, many transformed into committed environmental guardians. Illegal mining cannot be stopped by law alone; it requires awakened social conscience.

"Dharmo rakshati rakshitah"—Protect dharma, and dharma will protect you.

Here, dharma does not refer to sectarian religion but to the intrinsic qualities of nature—the warmth of the sun, the coolness of the moon, the fertility of the soil, the fluidity of water. To violate these qualities is adharma.

Communities in Sariska and across the Aravalli are once again organizing yajnas, awareness campaigns, and nonviolent resistance to oppose illegal mining. This is the authentic path of Sanatan tradition—coexistence with nature, not conquest; conservation, not exploitation.

If we genuinely understand our traditions—not as rigid rituals but as living ecological wisdom—then protecting the Aravalli becomes not merely an environmental obligation but a civilizational duty.

12.
An Environmental Yajna to Protect the Aravalli Geological Chain

Our Forest Department operates largely within the framework of written statutes and procedural regulations. When one law fails to adequately protect forests, another is enacted in its support. Yet those who draft and implement these laws have seldom attempted to understand the living traditions of the forest or the deeply rooted belief systems of forest-dwelling communities. These legal mechanisms often stand far removed from the organic harmony between India's nature and its culture. Consequently, ecological imbalance intensifies—floods swallow fertile lands, droughts expand, and the very institutions established to protect forests and mountains now appear before the Supreme Court of India in positions that indirectly enable mining activities.

In such a context, these laws seem less like protective measures and more like imposed structures upon forest dwellers and wildlife alike. Instead of strengthening the ancient bond between communities and their forests, they have eroded it. The symbolic "Vanraj"—once representing the lion as king of the forest—has been replaced by bureaucratic authority. Forests, hills, tigers, deer, trees, and even forest communities are treated as administrative units rather than as interconnected life systems. This transformation has fractured emotional and spiritual relationships. What was once intimate and sacred has become distant and regulated.

For forest dwellers, the jungle, hills, streams, and wildlife are not separate categories but components of a single living reality woven into daily existence. This integrated perception is the essence of environmental health. Every element of the surrounding ecosystem is spiritually connected and revered. For them, the Aravalli Range is not merely terrain; it is sacred geography. Each hill embodies divinity.

When colossal machines slice into these hills before their eyes, they can only watch in anguish. Decades of mining have rendered many forest dwellers economically vulnerable, unemployed, and physically afflicted.

When forest communities worship trees, they also protect the purity of ponds and catchment areas, ensuring that no contamination occurs nearby. Their festivals celebrate specific trees, birds, and animals that sustain their lives. These traditions cultivate ecological discipline. Mining, however, fractures these relationships, severing sacred bonds that once governed responsible living.

Policy distortions and administrative reversals have repeatedly wounded the spiritual foundation of forest dwellers. They have witnessed sacred landscapes destroyed—at times by monarchs, at times by landlords, ministers, legislators, or mining corporations. Such relentless injury inevitably reshapes mental and spiritual identity. Today, many forest communities struggle between preserving their cultural ethos and surviving within an imposed development narrative.

Ironically, they have often been labeled as encroachers or enemies of the forest. In truth, they were its custodians, priests, and inheritors. It was mining interests that alienated them from their ecological roots. Yet when Tarun Bharat Sangh began engaging with these "unlettered but profoundly knowledgeable" communities—learning from their indigenous wisdom—their dormant self-confidence and spiritual strength revived. Through collective participation and grassroots initiatives, much of what had been lost began to re-emerge. Mining was halted in Sariska, and shared efforts toward forest and environmental restoration expanded across numerous Aravalli villages.

From this awakening arose a remarkable initiative: the "Environmental Conservation Yajna." This was not merely an organizational program of Tarun Bharat Sangh; it was the collective decision of hundreds of forest villages across the Aravalli region. On 7 December 2025, communities resolved to assemble peacefully against mounting injustice. No hostile slogans echoed; instead,

thoughtful dialogue on ecological protection prevailed. During these discussions, an elderly forest dweller proposed, “Why do we not perform a yajna to save our Aravalli?”

It was collectively decided that the culmination of this yajna would occur on Vasant Panchami, the day associated with Goddess Saraswati—the embodiment of wisdom and knowledge. The yajna draws upon the ancient principle of life through sacrifice—protecting and nurturing nature rather than exploiting it for short-term gain.

This yajna extends far beyond ritual offerings into a sacred fire. It represents a shared moral commitment undertaken by forest dwellers, tribal elders, and experiential knowledge-holders. Echoing the spirit of the Rigvedic assemblies, it emphasizes unity of purpose: sit together, deliberate together, eat together, and resolve together. Such participatory engagement renews commitment to tradition and charts a transformative path for safeguarding the Aravalli’s forests and ecological integrity.

The reflections emerging from this environmental yajna may also challenge prevailing administrative models such as the rigid core-buffer approach. In Rajasthan’s Aravalli region, ancient systems like *oran* (sacred groves), *devvan* (community forests), *kankar-bani*, and *rakhat-bani* have long proven effective. These traditions protect even small hillocks, halt desert expansion from the Thar, conserve biodiversity, and secure water sources through community-regulated norms sustained across generations.

The principles evolving from this knowledge-yajna may generate enduring frameworks for conservation. Then the narrow debate about protecting only hills above 100 meters will lose relevance. The entire Aravalli mountain chain—lifeline of marginalized tribal and forest communities—will no longer be reduced to fragmented mining zones. This yajna teaches the ethic of renunciation-based living, reminding society that sustainability arises from restraint. It calls upon the judiciary to honor India’s knowledge traditions and interpret justice in that light. It urges the government to recognize tribal communities as respected citizens whose homes and forests deserve protection rather than displacement.

The Aravalli will survive.

It is the forest dwellers themselves who, through this environmental yajna, seek to preserve not only their mountains but also India's nature, culture, and civilizational continuity. In protecting the Aravalli, they are safeguarding the ecological spine and moral conscience of the nation.

13.
Aravalli or Desert?
The Decision Is in Our Hands – The Gathering Threat Over the Aravalli

The woman who gives birth to us and the mountain range that gives birth to rivers are both mothers. The Aravalli Range—one of the world's most ancient mountain systems and the 692-kilometer-long backbone of India—stands today at a decisive crossroads. If we genuinely resolve to protect it, the entire world can stand with us in that effort. When Japan partnered with the Government of India to help green the Aravalli, it demonstrated that global cooperation is possible when heritage is valued. Many nations have already lost their ecological inheritance; India has long prided itself on remaining conscious of its civilizational legacy. That legacy was born from the deep union of culture and nature, rooted in the disciplined harmony between human life and the five great elements—earth, sky, air, fire, and water.

If nature is divine creation, then culture is the refinement of human behavior in alignment with that creation. This philosophy sustained the Aravalli for centuries. India's ecological faith—its reverence for mountains, rivers, forests, and soil—has preserved environmental balance even when other parts of the world pursued development at the cost of irreversible destruction. But today, a new wave of profit-driven growth threatens to overturn that balance.

I have witnessed such devastation in places like Owens Valley in California, in parts of Africa, and across Central Asia. Similar scars are visible in regions of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan where mountains were stripped bare in the name of development. Now the Aravalli risks becoming another such casualty. Its pain is profound—recognize it. The suffering of the Aravalli is inseparable from our own. The wounds inflicted by unrestrained mining will soon become crises of breath, health, and survival. Pollution, groundwater

depletion, and ecological collapse will not remain confined to hills—they will shape the destiny of entire populations.

It was Tarun Bharat Sangh that first raised the alarm in 1980 in Jaipur against mining in Jhalana Doongri. In 1988, beneath the canopy of Neelkantheshwar in Sariska, preparations began to approach the Supreme Court of India to seek judicial intervention. In 1991, a landmark public interest litigation led to the closure of mining operations in the Aravalli. Justice Venkatachaliah, then Chief Justice, treated the matter with gravity and ordered the closure of 478 mines in Sariska. The movement soon echoed across Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat. On 2 October 1993, a symbolic "lion's call" march began from Himmatnagar in Gujarat and culminated in Delhi's Parliament on 22 November. A memorandum was submitted to Speaker Shivraj Patil highlighting that illegal mines continued despite official notifications.

The Aravalli's geological character—marked by deep fractures—enables rainwater to recharge aquifers naturally. Through this inherent hydrological strength, 23 rivers, including the Arvari, Bhagani, Sarsa, Sherni, Jahajwali, and Maheshwara, were revived after mining halted. Their perennial flow became living testimony to ecological restoration. If mining resumes across the Aravalli, these rivers will once again dry. And when rivers dry, civilizations weaken. Drinking water scarcity will intensify. Fodder, fuelwood, and agricultural productivity will decline. Mining debris will choke farmlands. Ecological imbalance will cascade into economic instability.

Mining also destroys wildlife habitats and ecological corridors, fragmenting biodiversity. While crores are spent to protect forests and wildlife, mining threatens to undo those investments. Medicinal plants unique to the Aravalli will disappear. Rising surface temperatures—often by three to five degrees Celsius in mined zones—will exacerbate climate volatility. Unseasonal rains, flash floods, and drought cycles will increase. Over 35 years of mining cessation, the Aravalli demonstrated a rare global example of climate adaptation and mitigation. To reverse that progress would be an ecological tragedy.
At twilight, the Aravalli hills stretch quietly into the horizon—rock faces exposed, trees sparse in places, yet still holding memories of

lost greenery. From its womb emerged hundreds of rivers, many of which dried under mining and water exploitation. Through persistent community effort, dozens were revived. The relationship between civilization and rivers is sacred and inseparable. When rivers fade, culture fades with them.

The sun evaporates ocean water into vapor; clouds carry it across the subcontinent. The Aravalli, standing transversely against monsoon winds from the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, compels clouds to release rain. It is revered symbolically as Brahma's manifestation. At Pushkar, within its embrace, stands India's only Brahma temple—a testament to ancient ecological reverence. Where Aravalli forests once intercepted clouds, rainfall followed. In mining zones such as Jhalana Doongri, temperatures were historically recorded 1–3 degrees higher than surrounding Jaipur—even in winter—due to deforestation and excavation.

Today, anxiety quietly spreads across Aravalli villages. On 20 November 2025, the Supreme Court's full bench decision entrusted responsibility for addressing Aravalli's crisis to the central environmental authorities. Yet the affidavits and interpretations presented have intensified public concern.

The Aravalli is a single, integrated geological entity. Fragmenting it through arbitrary height-based definitions risks ecological distortion. Scientific classification should include geological continuity, hydrology, and ecological interdependence—not merely surface elevation. Narrow definitions could exclude ecologically critical zones, opening them to real estate expansion and intensified mining. Such shifts would threaten water security across northern India, increase heat pressures, disrupt rainfall cycles, and degrade air quality in Delhi-NCR. Over decades, these cumulative impacts could transform fertile regions into semi-arid landscapes. The Aravalli is not just terrain—it is living heritage. Communities have preserved rainwater systems, pastoral traditions, and forest-based livelihoods for centuries. Their experiential knowledge understands how rocky layers retain moisture and how subtle wind patterns signal seasonal change. If mining expands, desertification may encroach into Delhi, Haryana, western Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab. Professor S. S. Dabaraya of Birla

Science Institute once identified 22 ecological gaps in the Aravalli—an analysis that prompted earlier protections. Reopening these vulnerabilities may accelerate desert spread. If India fails to protect the Aravalli, the world may question its environmental commitments. The wound will not be ecological alone—it will be civilizational. Is democracy now captive to extractive interests? What meaning do global climate commitments hold if domestic landscapes are sacrificed? Public trust erodes when governance appears aligned with mining lobbies.

The greenery of the Aravalli forms the foundation of both economy and ecology. Just as the spine supports the human body, the Aravalli supports India. A mining-free Aravalli is the pathway to enduring prosperity. Two centuries ago, India's prosperity flourished without industrial-scale extraction—sustained instead by agriculture, culture, and ecological balance. Today, indigenous communities risk displacement as mineral interests expand. Villagers witness shrinking wells, declining fodder, and weakened water flows. When hill systems fragment, the most vulnerable suffer first.

The Aravalli must be protected in its entirety—from base to summit, including forests, herbs, wildlife, and tribal communities. International agreements such as COP and the Sustainable Development Goals emphasize mountain conservation. India must align its domestic policies accordingly. The prosperity of the Aravalli lies in greenery, not mining. When forests thrive, clouds do not depart without rain. Rain nurtures fields and sustains youth through agriculture-based livelihoods.

On World Mountain Day, 11 December 2025, the Aravalli Heritage Public Campaign emerged to defend both ecological and cultural identity. Forest dwellers, wildlife, and communities stand resolved. Trust in mining-driven development has weakened. The decision is now ours: Aravalli or desert. To save the Aravalli is to safeguard water, culture, climate, and the future of northern India. The transverse mountain must not be fragmented. Its protection is not only environmental duty—it is national responsibility.

14.
A Threat to Aravalli's Abundance –
Save the Treasure of Forest Medicines

The Aravalli Range, regarded as one of the most ancient mountain systems in the world, has for centuries nurtured and enriched human life through its immeasurable abundance. Its vast stretches of forest, diverse wildlife, and countless medicinal herbs and plants have formed the living foundation of Indian culture, Ayurveda, and the Sanatan way of life. The wealth of this mountain chain is not merely geological—it is biological, cultural, and spiritual.

At the heart of this range lie the tiger reserves of Sariska Tiger Reserve and Ranthambore National Park. These are not only safe habitats for wildlife but also ancient sites of meditation and spiritual discipline for sages and seers. Even today, pilgrimage centers in these regions preserve their sacred memory. The tribal and forest-dwelling communities here consider the mountains, forests, and rivers as manifestations of the divine. This abundance—whether in the form of majestic tigers or life-saving medicinal herbs—is woven into their daily existence, their rituals, and their identity.

India's entire traditional medical science evolved from these forests and their botanical richness. From common ailments to the most complex diseases, remedies have long emerged from forest herbs. Traditional healers proudly assert that true medical wisdom is not born in laboratories but in disciplined communion with forests. When Western civilizations were still grazing sheep in wooded lands, practitioners here were conducting advanced surgical procedures rooted in ancient knowledge systems. Such intellectual and medicinal sophistication was made possible by the forests of the Aravalli and the indigenous knowledge they sustained.

The descendants of those early scientists still live within these landscapes, preserving oral traditions and botanical expertise. In Haripura village of Sariska, forest-dweller Nagaram Gurjar explains that even severe bleeding can be stopped instantly by crushing and applying Rohida grass; fever subsides with a decoction of Sadabahar and black pepper; and common cold or cough is relieved by Tulsi leaves with minimal dietary restraint. Villagers trust these remedies because they work. Women of Bhil communities even practice natural family planning through local herbal knowledge, without resorting to hazardous synthetic drugs.

The Aravalli ethos follows the principle of "moto khanon, moto pehnon"—consume and wear what is locally available, without artificial luxury. It is this blind pursuit of luxury that has driven society toward crisis. Today, people apply chemical cosmetics in pursuit of fairness, resulting in rising skin disorders, whereas traditional oils and herbal pastes once preserved both skin health and vitality. Decoctions made from the bark of Satyanaashi (Kalokher) treat chronic skin conditions. Mustard oil infused with garlic alleviates bodily stiffness and dryness—remedies simple, affordable, and effective.

Modern allopathic medicine itself depends on forest plants. Without the root of Sarpgandha (Rauwolfia serpentina), many heart and blood pressure drugs would not exist. Quinine for malaria comes from the Cinchona tree. Yet chemically synthesized medicines often produce side effects. Ayurveda, by contrast, rests upon the principle:

"Swastyasya swasthya rakshanam, aturasya vikar prashamanam cha"—Protect the health of the healthy, and alleviate the illness of the sick.
"***Vāsanāyāme, Āśāyāme jīvitsya cha, Rati pitti, Kṣhayī kāshī, Vimathan auṣadhiti"*** —In sensual desires, in hopes, and in the urge to live; in passion and agitation; in wasting disease, cough, and in the churning effect of medicine."

Medicines derived from Aravalli's forest herbs aim not only to cure disease but to maintain balance. They strengthen vitality rather than create new disorders.

Traditional wisdom further holds that even proximity to certain medicinal trees sustains hope and well-being. Banyan and Peepal trees are not avoided at night because of superstition, but because they release higher carbon dioxide after sunset. A Tulsi plant in the courtyard purifies air and reduces illness. Such ecological insights are deeply understood by tribal communities—often more intimately than by modern medical science. Consequently, they fall ill less frequently and rely largely on self-sustained healing systems.

Over time, as the Rishi tradition weakened, the Aravalli shifted from being a center of spiritual discipline to becoming a playground of material indulgence. It turned into a retreat and hunting ground for politicians, officials, and industrial magnates. It was labeled variously as protected area, sanctuary, tiger reserve, or national park—but now its very definition has been altered to favor mining, granting extensive freedom to extractive industries. In districts such as Alwar and Sawai Madhopur, Sariska and Ranthambore groan under the renewed pain of mining—pain that resonates across India.

Under the pretext of formalizing national park definitions, villages in these areas are being displaced, even as valleys and hills are blasted with dynamite. Can conservation truly succeed by evicting indigenous inhabitants while simultaneously tearing open the mountain's chest? Those who see forests merely as material resources may support such policies. Yet ecological balance will suffer, wildlife health will decline, cultural identity will erode, and economic vitality will diminish. History shows that India's prosperity once reached nearly 32 percent of global GDP when ecological harmony prevailed. Today, reckless development has reduced that strength dramatically.

Human beings invite disease through unjust interference with nature. What our ancestors termed "nature's wrath" is often the consequence of our own excess. Imported medical solutions provide temporary relief but leave behind chronic conditions such as cancer and silicosis—diseases linked to mining and industrial pollution. This is the cost of so-called modern development.

Yet hope remains. Many organizations and communities are working to reduce pressure on core wildlife zones by regenerating ecosystems

outside protected areas. Tarun Bharat Sangh, for instance, built rainwater harvesting structures in Gopalpura, inspiring villagers across Thana Gazi, Rajgarh, Alwar, Jaipur, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, Dholpur, and Dausa. Nearly 15,800 small dams and ponds were constructed in over 2,000 villages—reviving agriculture, restoring employment, and reducing dependence on forest extraction.

Despite bureaucratic obstacles from district administrations, irrigation departments, and forest authorities, these efforts continued. Even when permissions were denied and structures ordered demolished, communities persevered. Their awareness deepened—they resolved to protect forests, wildlife, mountains, and water. Those once labeled "illiterate" proved themselves true guardians of ecological wisdom, halting mining through nonviolent resistance.

Environmental conservation is not merely atmospheric or physical; it is intellectual, cultural, and moral. Government initiatives often falter due to narrow definitions of environment—restricted to hills, trees, and water, while ignoring culture and civilization. If mining within a sanctuary is deemed "sustainable development," how can such thinking command respect?

Forest departments claim to protect wildlife yet facilitate mining leases. Definitions shift; relationships fracture. When authority expanded over forests, communities lost ownership and stewardship. In place of conservation, exploitation grew. No institutional mechanism currently safeguards the sacred union of culture and nature.

If mining continues unchecked, illness will spread; medical costs will exceed incomes; mine owners may profit, but losses will be irreversible. The government and judiciary must hear Aravalli's cry and reconsider their decisions. Otherwise, people will once again rise through satyagraha, struggle, and environmental yajna. Thirty-five years ago, the people of Sariska halted mining through collective resolve. Today, a new generation must stand up to protect the treasure of Aravalli's forests and medicinal wealth—before this ancient abundance is lost forever.

15.
The Agony of the Aravalli –
COP-30 Versus the Supreme Court
Brazil COP-30: A Global Initiative to Save Mountains

The Aravalli Range is an ancient geological chain stretching 692 kilometers from Gujarat to Delhi. In local language, it is often called the "transverse mountain" because of its distinctive orientation. Today, its suffering symbolizes the shared pain of mountain ecosystems across the world. In countries where judiciaries and democratic governments overlook mountains and forests—allowing their degradation in the name of development—global platforms like COP-30 send a powerful and corrective message.

On 20 November 2025, COP-30 convened in Belém, Brazil, placing strong emphasis on the protection of forests and mountains. The conference recognized rainforests as the "green lungs" of the Earth and announced the creation of a new global fund. This mechanism proposes satellite-based monitoring, rewarding nations and communities that protect forests and penalizing those responsible for excessive destruction. Crucially, it was resolved that financial assistance for indigenous welfare would flow directly to indigenous organizations, without intermediary governmental control, empowering communities to safeguard their mountains, forests, and habitats independently.

The President of Brazil presented compelling evidence of the severe damage inflicted upon the Amazon's forests and mountains by mining. Hosting COP-30 in the heart of the Amazon at Belém was itself a symbolic gesture underscoring urgency. Germany pledged one billion euros over ten years; Norway committed three billion dollars; and Brazil and Indonesia each announced one billion dollars. Brazil estimates that the fund could eventually grow to 125 billion dollars, with at least 20 percent reaching indigenous and traditional communities directly. Approximately 70 countries may benefit, and 53 have already expressed support.

Brazil expects an initial 25 billion dollars from developed nations. These commitments reflect a firm global resolve to preserve mountains and their forests. We wholeheartedly welcome such decisions. Yet the pressing question remains: what will become of the indigenous communities of the Aravalli?

On that very same day, India's Supreme Court of India delivered a significant decision concerning the definition of the Aravalli. Accepting the central government's recommendation, the Court adopted a definition restricting the Aravalli to areas exceeding 100 meters in elevation. It further directed the preparation of a sustainable mining management plan for the entire region and ordered that no new mining leases be granted until such a plan is finalized.

While exemptions have been provided for minerals of national strategic importance, the relaxation for ordinary minerals appears tailored in a manner that benefits specific industrial interests. The people of the Aravalli believe that cutting mountains, destroying forests, and opening new scars in the range for ordinary mineral extraction is unjustifiable under any circumstances.

This contradiction raises deep concern. On one side, a global consensus is emerging—rewarding protection, penalizing destruction, and empowering indigenous custodians. On the other, India narrows the Aravalli's definition based on elevation, potentially excluding its lower ecological zones from protection. If these areas are opened to mining, the consequences could include water scarcity, intensified climate instability, and biodiversity loss. Mountains worldwide are recognized as integrated ecological systems; their protection cannot be fragmented by height alone. Whether visible above ground or hidden within geological layers, the entire structure deserves equal preservation.

The Court has granted six months to frame regulations for areas above 100 meters. Yet reconsidering this approach before that deadline—and declaring the Aravalli mining-free—would better safeguard India's heritage.

Previously, the Court had clearly stated that the Aravalli must be viewed as one continuous mountain chain from Gujarat to Delhi, not divided by state boundaries. However, permitting mining in areas below 100 meters risks fragmenting the range itself. Such fragmentation could set a harmful precedent not only for India but for mountain systems globally. We respectfully urge both the government and the Supreme Court to reconsider this decision. Failure to do so may undermine global efforts to protect mountain ecosystems and tarnish India's international standing.

A nation known for protecting nature and culture would face a grave contradiction if it facilitates the destruction of its own mountains. India must revisit its commitments made in previous COP summits. Only by honoring pledges toward ecological stewardship can we truly aspire to moral leadership.

Environmental advocates have long petitioned courts across India to safeguard the Aravalli. Earlier judicial interventions provided hope by restricting new mining leases and allowing the mountains' wounds to begin healing. The new definition, however, risks reopening and deepening those wounds.

Will the tears of the Aravalli ever cease? Doubt persists, especially as mining industries appear to wield substantial influence. Government affidavits presented in court reinforce this perception. The prospect of handing vast stretches of the Aravalli to extractive interests evokes memories of the 1990s, when more than 28,000 legal and illegal mines operated across the region.

In response, a foot march from Himmatnagar, Gujarat, to Delhi on 2 October 1993 demanded enforcement of protective notifications. The government listened; mines closed; the Aravalli began to regenerate. Yet by 2025, illegal mining has resurfaced in several areas. Where mining resumes, ecological decline follows—water crises deepen, groundwater depletes, and climate instability intensifies. Faridabad, Nuh, and Gurugram stand as living examples. In Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat, renewed resistance has emerged. The Jaipur conference of 7 December 2025 has reinitiated the "Aravalli Heritage Water Campaign."

The Aravalli is not merely a physiographic hill range. Geologically, it represents one of Earth's most ancient formations—predating human existence, rising gradually from the seabed over millennia. Its undulating terrain encompasses forests, lakes, wetlands, wildlife habitats, plateaus, and plains. To define it solely by elevation or subject it to modern engineering interests is unjust.

The Aravalli embodies the five great elements—earth, sky, air, fire, and water. To reinterpret it as inert stone for extraction is both intellectually and morally troubling. The judiciary, legislature, and executive do not possess the authority to redefine a living geological heritage for convenience. Their duty is to cooperate with nature's design, not dismantle it. History teaches that societies that attempt to conquer nature ultimately face self-destruction.

Earlier judicial recognition had declared the Aravalli a natural heritage worthy of protection. The present decision, however, treats it as fragmented terrain rather than a living continuum. If future generations study this ruling in academic institutions, it may be viewed as an educational misjudgment.

The Aravalli must be understood as a single geological entity, not divided into convenient segments. It was shaped to sustain life—human and ecological—not to satisfy greed. The current trajectory appears driven by narrow interests rather than holistic wisdom. Should the Supreme Court reconsider, it would align justice with ecological truth. If the Aravalli survives intact, India's backbone will remain strong, and both culture and nature will continue to flourish.

16.
Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign –
Environmentalists from Four States Raise Their Voice Against Mining and for Ecological Protection

There was a time when the Aravalli Range stood dry, scarred, and stripped of its green cover—and when the mountains lost their vitality, the rivers too fell silent. That painful memory has not faded. It was this collective unease, this shared ecological grief, that brought concerned citizens, environmental thinkers, activists, farmers, and youth from across India together at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jaipur during the "Nyaya Nirman Mela," where the "Save Aravalli Conference" was convened.

Every person present carried within them the memory of those years when rivers such as Arvari, Ruparel, Bhagani, Jahajwali, and Maheshwara were gasping for survival. These were not mere water channels; they were living arteries of culture, agriculture, and rural dignity. When mining once stopped and these rivers gradually revived—flowing again with clean, perennial water—hope returned to the valleys. But now, with renewed signals that mining might resume, anxiety has returned like a shadow over the landscape.

Water conservationist and widely respected "Waterman of India," Dr. Rajendra Singh, steered the conference toward a decisive moral and legal reflection. He asked:
"It was the Hon'ble Supreme Court that earlier ordered the closure of mining in the Aravalli. What has changed so fundamentally that the same Court now appears ready to permit mining within this ancient mountain system? The Court must reconsider, so that India's heritage is preserved and our nation remains truly prosperous."

He reminded the gathering that India's civilizational strength has always rested on the harmonious relationship between nature and

culture. The country did not become morally influential through extraction and exploitation, but through balance, restraint, and ecological wisdom. If that harmony weakens, the very foundation of our identity trembles.

After deliberation, all participants unanimously agreed that the Aravalli movement must now rise beyond regional concern and become a national mission. A formal resolution was passed to name it the "Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign." It was further resolved that representatives from all four Aravalli states—Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, and Gujarat—would jointly guide and coordinate the campaign.

Plans were outlined to initiate structured dialogues in schools, colleges, and universities across the Aravalli belt. Teachers and students would engage in discussions about ecological health, public health, water security, and climate resilience. Scientific data, community experience, and cultural memory would be woven together to build awareness. A long-term roadmap to keep the Aravalli mining-free would be prepared through collective consultation.

The reasoning behind this effort is clear and grounded in reality: the greenery of the Aravalli directly supports food security, rainfall balance, groundwater recharge, and climate moderation in all four states. Participants repeatedly emphasized that human health is inseparable from the health of the mountain system. If the Aravalli weakens, water tables fall, crops fail, air quality worsens, and diseases increase. Our lungs breathe the air filtered by its forests; our fields depend on its rainfall cycles.

Padma Shri Laxman Singh of Jaipur, a respected figure deeply connected to the Aravalli region, strongly endorsed these concerns. He declared that the Aravalli is not merely a mountain range but a life-support system. If the voices of citizens are not heard by the government or judiciary, he suggested organizing an environmental yajna—an act of collective spiritual and ecological commitment—to eaffirm the pledge to protect the mountains. He publicly reaffirmed

his full dedication to the Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign. His words added moral strength and clarity to the gathering.

From Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Kunika shared distressing observations. In her region, mining combined with aggressive tourism expansion has resulted in extensive ecological degradation. From Shamlaji to Himmatnagar, hills have been cut, groundwater disturbed, and ecosystems fragmented. She pledged to conduct awareness campaigns in educational institutions to help young people understand the long-term consequences of unchecked mining.

Smriti Kedia from Udaipur raised another troubling development: small Aravalli hills are being purchased for enormous sums and converted into luxury hotels, often accompanied by intensified mining and blasting. This commercial transformation of fragile hillsides, she warned, is reshaping the ecological character of the region. Kavita Srivastava added that children and youth of the Aravalli region can become powerful custodians of the mountains. Farmers' organizations, she noted, are firmly anti-mining and ready to align with the campaign.

Gautam Upadhyay from Chhattisgarh voiced concerns that echoed beyond Rajasthan. Environmental activists from Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra are deeply worried that recent judicial decisions appear to strengthen mining lobbies. If this trend spreads, rivers may dry, forests fragment, and public health deteriorate across multiple states. The Aravalli issue, he emphasized, is not isolated—it is a signal to all mountain systems in India.

Advocate Aman reminded the audience that constitutional pathways remain open. Protecting mountains is not optional; it is embedded within environmental jurisprudence and citizens' rights to life and health. This is the moment to approach the Supreme Court again with stronger scientific evidence, constitutional arguments, and community voices.

Neelam Ahuja spoke firmly: this struggle must move beyond digital activism. Emails and social media posts are not enough. A structured people's movement must arise across the entire Aravalli landscape—

from village assemblies to district platforms, from state-level dialogues to national forums. Legal action will continue, but grassroots awareness and public mobilization are equally essential. Saving the Aravalli is a collective duty that transcends politics.

As the Jaipur evening deepened and the conference formally concluded, no one felt a sense of closure. Instead, there was an unmistakable spark of resolve. The Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign had moved from idea to action. The faces of participants reflected determination rather than fatigue. Each person seemed to carry home the same silent vow:

"We will protect the Aravalli. Because when the Aravalli stands strong, our rivers flow, our health endures, and our future remains secure."

— Reported by Global Bihari

17.
The Call of the Himalaya and Aravalli Echoed During Atal's Birth Centenary

Poetry Will Unite the People in the Defense of the Mountains

New Delhi: On the evening of 16 December 2024, at the LTG Auditorium in Delhi, on the occasion of World Mountain Day, an event unfolded that touched hearts deeply and stirred collective conscience. Under the birth centenary celebrations of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, during the "Bharat Gaurav Gatha" and National Poets' Conference, an impassioned call rang out for the protection of the Himalaya and the Aravalli Range.

Presided over by senior leader Murli Manohar Joshi, the gathering carried both reverence and urgency. In his address, a tone of concern and responsibility resonated clearly. He appealed sincerely to poets, writers, and thinkers of the nation:

Awaken through your poetry the spirit that says, "If the Himalaya survives, we survive." Give voice to the pain of the Aravalli. Let literature become the conscience-keeper of the nation. When the people feel this truth in their hearts, they will rise together and stand united to restore these great mountain ranges to their lost greenery and glory.

The memory of Atal Ji evokes deep emotion. He possessed a rare ability—to listen with patience and dignity even to those whose views sharply differed from his own. That quality alone sets him apart in today's polarized political climate. Leaders of the present generation have much to learn from him about how to remain firm in principle while embodying the true spirit of democracy. By leading coalition

governments successfully, he proved that respecting ideological diversity is not weakness but strength.
During the turbulent years from 1996 to 1999, young people were mesmerized by his oratory—his speeches carried conviction, poetry, and national pride in equal measure. For millions of youth, he became a moral and intellectual compass. On his birth centenary, it is vital for the younger generation to understand that Atal Ji's vision rose as high as the Himalaya and was rooted as deeply as the cultural soil of the Aravalli. He understood India not merely as a political entity, but as a civilizational force shaped by harmony, coexistence, and shared destiny.

Throughout his life, he strengthened the sacred bond between nature and culture. His politics was not divorced from environmental responsibility. He believed that a nation cannot be strong if its rivers are dying, its forests disappearing, and its mountains wounded.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee was not merely a statesman; he was an embodiment of thoughtfulness, moral courage, and balanced judgment. His life reflected a seamless unity between what he spoke and what he practiced. Decisions taken by him were neither impulsive nor ego-driven; they were the outcome of reflection and guided by the welfare of the people.

Upon assuming the office of Prime Minister, he introduced the ambitious "Interlinking of Rivers" project, envisioning it as a long-term national solution to India's water challenges. At that time, it was perceived as a visionary and bold initiative. However, when he was presented with grassroots evidence—especially regarding the effectiveness of decentralized rainwater harvesting and traditional water systems—he did not cling stubbornly to his initial framework. Instead, he displayed intellectual humility.

He directed then Union Minister Suresh Prabhu to carefully listen to field experiences and reassess accordingly. His message was clear: governance must be guided by ground realities, not merely grand designs. That willingness to revise policy in light of evidence remains one of his greatest strengths.

In drought-affected Rajasthan, community-led efforts created johads, check dams, ponds, and small water bodies rooted in traditional wisdom. These decentralized water structures reconnected rainfall with rivers naturally. Over time, rivers revived and began flowing perennially. This success proved that nature does not respond to force; it responds to cooperation. Atal Ji recognized this profound truth.

He would invite environmental workers and experts for extended discussions, listening attentively without prejudice. For him, dissent was not disloyalty; it was dialogue. He measured arguments carefully and was unafraid to adapt policies in public interest. Power, for him, was never a display of authority but an instrument of service.

Eventually, he accorded top priority to rainwater conservation, modifying the broader river-linking concept accordingly. His approach clarified that development must be sustainable, community-oriented, and environmentally harmonious—not merely monumental or industrial.

Even amid the demands of office, his poetic soul remained alive. He believed in inclusive leadership—carrying along allies and critics alike. By promoting decentralized water conservation, he strengthened not only ecological security but also democratic participation. He could accept opposing viewpoints when convinced of their merit, because for him humanity and national interest stood above political rivalry.

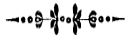
At the Delhi event, Murli Manohar Joshi reminded the nation of this ocean-like depth in Atal Ji's democratic spirit. He emphasized the environmental importance of both the Himalaya and the Aravalli. The Aravalli functions as a natural shield, preventing the westward desert winds from advancing further east and protecting Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi, western Uttar Pradesh, and the National Capital Region. Today, however, mining and encroachment threaten this fragile defense system.

If the Aravalli is weakened, fertile agricultural lands, wildlife habitats, sanctuaries, rare medicinal plants, and ecological balance will suffer grave consequences. The Himalaya regulates climate and rivers; the

Aravalli stabilizes plains and groundwater systems. Together, they form the backbone of northern India's environmental resilience.
Their preservation cannot remain the responsibility of government alone. Poets must write, students must question, citizens must unite, and policymakers must act responsibly. Cultural awakening often begins with words—words that move hearts before they move laws. The message that echoed that evening was simple yet powerful: Mountains are not inert stones; they are living guardians of civilization. To protect them is to protect ourselves.

If the Himalaya stands, India stands.
If the Aravalli breathes, our rivers breathe.

Only when society awakens collectively will these ancient mountain chains regain their full vitality. And when that happens, future generations will inherit not barren ridges, but living landscapes rich with forests, water, wildlife, and hope.



18.
A Law to Save the Mountains Is Now Essential

The Aravalli Can Never Be the Same Again

We must all clearly understand one irreversible truth: mountains destroyed by mining can never be truly revived. The Supreme Court's decision of 20 November 2025, by opening the Aravalli hills to mining, risks pushing them toward permanent devastation. Once their geological body is fractured and blasted apart, returning them to their original state will not be possible. Rivers and ponds can be revived; we have seen them return to life with collective effort and patience. But a mountain range—once dynamited, hollowed, and fragmented—cannot be reconstructed by human machinery or even by nature within any meaningful human timescale. To allow such destruction before our eyes is to silently consent to a long-term ecological catastrophe. The annihilation of mountains is not only the ruin of stone—it is the undoing of climate stability, groundwater systems, biodiversity, and ultimately human survival itself.

Despite its civilizational importance, no comprehensive and robust law has yet been enacted specifically to protect the Aravalli mountains in their entirety. Laws exist to protect forests growing upon them, and wildlife inhabiting them, but the core geological body of the mountains—the very structure that sustains forests and rivers—remains legally vulnerable. The 7 May 1992 notification for Aravalli protection was limited largely to the Alwar–Gurugram belt. Subsequently, High Courts and the Supreme Court delivered strong judgments in favor of protection across the broader Aravalli range. Yet mining lobbies consistently challenged these safeguards, and eventually, on 20 November 2025, succeeded in reshaping the policy landscape in their favor.

If such trends continue, it would resemble neglecting the safety of a noble and defenseless being until harm becomes irreversible. To

protect forests, we must first protect mountains. Without mountains, forests are temporary; without geological stability, no ecosystem survives long. A dedicated Mountain Protection Law is now indispensable. Earlier, the judiciary relied on wildlife and forest conservation laws to restrict mining. But those frameworks are no longer sufficient. When industrial pressure grows strong enough to influence even decisions in ecologically sensitive zones, as appears to have happened in the Aravalli case, it becomes clear that a new legal architecture is required—one that recognizes mountains as foundational ecological entities in their own right.

The current definition imposed upon the Aravalli, shaped under administrative frameworks and departmental jurisdictions, has effectively become mountain-adverse. It reflects the combined influence of political actors, bureaucratic interests, and industrial lobbies. We cannot accept such a definition. Across regions, citizens are raising their voices as representatives of the mountains themselves—but those entrusted to listen remain silent. Responsibility has been assigned to departments tasked with environment, forests, and climate—but not explicitly with mountain conservation. Thus, institutional satisfaction prevails, even as ecological alarm deepens. It is a situation akin to a flood devouring the very fields it was meant to nourish.

If forests are cleared under the umbrella of the 20 November decision, administrative and commercial alliances will remain insulated from accountability. Wildlife protection laws may prove inadequate in the face of expanding extraction. Those who enable destruction will continue to prosper, and in the devastation of the Aravalli, the cynical proverb “heads I win, tails I win” will seem painfully relevant. Authority over protection now lies in the very hands that may sanction harm.

Therefore, the Hon’ble Supreme Court should promptly reconsider its decision and, in doing so, reinforce its own moral authority. We continue to hold deep faith in India’s judiciary. This is the moment to reaffirm that faith. Historically, our judiciary has enhanced India’s global reputation for justice and environmental foresight. In safeguarding the ancient heritage of the Aravalli, it can once again

uphold that legacy. Aravalli is embedded within both our culture and our ecology. The judiciary and the government together must act to preserve it. Internationally, commitments have been made toward environmental protection; domestically, fulfilling them begins with protecting the Aravalli.

Saving the Aravalli is both a governmental responsibility and a civic duty. In a democracy, meaningful action begins when public pressure awakens political will.

Let us unite with a shared sense of duty. Demand legislation dedicated to mountain protection. File a review petition before the Supreme Court. Launch an Aravalli Literacy Campaign. Engage students, teachers, farmers, and researchers in awareness journeys. Invite geologists to clarify before the courts and government the true scientific definition of the Aravalli as a unified geological chain. Adopt non-violent methods—Ramayana recitations at mining sites, environmental yajnas, peaceful marches, sit-ins, fasting, and collective reflection. Strengthen the *"Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign."*

This movement must rise above party politics. Political parties should not attempt to control it—only support it. All who offer sincere support will be welcomed with respect. Collective leadership and equal participation must define its character. Through writing, social service, teaching, seminars, and public dialogue, each person should contribute according to ability. When protecting a natural inheritance, calculations of profit and loss must not dominate. Only the principle of "shubh"—that which benefits all—should guide us. True good is timeless; profit is fleeting. Nature builds continuously and renews itself, but once broken beyond a threshold, restoration may no longer be possible.

If mining is halted, the Aravalli will continue providing food security, water security, fodder, fuel, and climate balance. Mining benefits only a few, while obstructing the constructive good of all. It risks undermining the creative power of the Panchamahabhutas—the five elements of earth, sky, air, fire, and water.

Let us unite in faith and environmental responsibility. Protecting the Aravalli is sacred work. Ignoring it invites ecological imbalance and civilizational regret. Future generations will not forgive us if we fail to safeguard the mountains and water we inherited from our ancestors. They will ask why we stood silent while irreversible destruction unfolded before our eyes.

Our tradition teaches that what we inherit must be handed forward intact, enabling us to depart this world with moral fulfillment. To remain silent while ancestral heritage is destroyed is a grave moral failure. The Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign stands for enduring good; mining stands for temporary gain. Choose what is eternal over what is momentary.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the daughters and sons of the Aravalli rose to defend it. That spirit must rise again. Let each individual begin today, in whatever capacity possible. The Aravalli is our heritage. Protecting it is both our constitutional right and our constitutional duty. Once mined, the Aravalli will never return to its former state. Let us preserve it as it was given to us. Let its children stand united and prevent its dismemberment.

With the powers granted by the Constitution, we respectfully urge the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision and safeguard India's ancient mountain heritage—the Aravalli—so that it may endure for generations to come.

19.
Save the Aravalli –
The Call of the Mountain, Culture, and Democracy

There was a time when the Ministry of Environment did not function as an auxiliary arm of industry, as it increasingly appears to do today. Its original mandate was to protect ecological balance, forests, rivers, and mountains—not to reinterpret environmental safeguards in ways that enable extraction. The recent affidavits submitted before the Supreme Court make this shift painfully evident. A ministry created to defend nature now seems entangled in defending "*regulated exploitation."*

After the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, terms such as "sustainable development" entered our official vocabulary. On the surface, the phrase appeared noble and progressive. In practice, however, it gradually became a convenient shield behind which industrialists could legitimize exploitation, pollution, and encroachment. I was present during the early debates around the adoption of this terminology. Many of us raised serious objections and fought prolonged battles against its misuse. The details of those struggles need not be recounted here, but one truth remains undeniable: in the context of mining, the word "sustainable" has often been deployed to create global illusion rather than genuine balance.

Before November 2025, the Supreme Court of India had consistently delivered judgments recognizing the Aravalli as an ancient national heritage worthy of protection. Its forests, wildlife, and forest-dwelling communities were safeguarded in an integrated manner, ensuring that the Aravalli range remained ecologically whole. Governments at the time supported these judicial directions, and a collaborative effort between the judiciary and executive seemed to prevail.

Until about twelve years ago, it appeared that the judiciary stood firmly above legislative and executive pressures, acting as the ultimate guardian of constitutional values and ecological justice. Today, however, questions arise. It increasingly appears that judicial reasoning is being influenced by recommendations from the executive and legislative branches—or perhaps by indirect industrial pressure. The same judiciary that once placed India's democracy and civilizational heritage at the center of its decisions now appears to be part of a framework that risks dismantling one of India's oldest mountain systems.

The legislature and executive together have crafted policies that may tarnish India's global environmental reputation. Whether this development occurred intentionally or inadvertently is unclear. But its consequences are real and unfolding. The burden of this shift will be borne not only by the people but also by the institutions that permitted it.

The concern is not confined to the Aravalli. Across Telangana, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the northeastern states, people have begun mobilizing to protect their mountains. A nationwide movement could emerge—one comparable in scale to the historic farmers' movement. It would be unfortunate if such unrest were to cast doubt upon the dignity of India's highest judicial institution, something unprecedented in our democratic history.

The discontent has grown to such an extent that spiritual leaders and saints have begun openly criticizing judicial decisions. Some voices, including respected ascetics, have accused members of the judiciary of failing to understand India's cultural and ecological ethos. Such criticism reflects a deepening divide between institutional authority and public sentiment.

India is a democracy, and in a democracy, the people are sovereign. The Constitution guarantees equality. Yet, in redefining the Aravalli by dividing it into "higher" and "lower" zones—protecting the higher elevations while permitting exploitation of the lower regions—the judiciary has unintentionally introduced a metaphorical hierarchy into

nature itself. This approach has ignited public anger. An institution that historically delivered justice to the marginalized now appears, in this instance, to authorize the dismantling of what lies "below."

For us, the Aravalli is not merely terrain; it is a mother. To amputate its limbs, hollow its torso, and preserve only fragments of its crest is to wound collective identity. The people appeal: do not divide the Aravalli. Dividing the mountain divides society. The Aravalli belongs to all of us as one shared mother—do not sever her body in the name of technical definitions.

Just as the judiciary once protected the Aravalli with foresight and courage, we appeal again with faith and humility: treat the entire range as one living entity, deserving protection like the human body itself. Do not apply foreign scientific abstractions mechanically to India's sacred mountain systems. In many Western frameworks, mountains are seen as geological commodities—stone masses available for consumption. In our civilization, mountains are sacred spaces, living pilgrimage sites, embodiments of divinity.

For us, mountains are not objects of indulgence. They are manifestations of the divine—formed of the five primordial elements: earth, sky, air, fire, and water. The Aravalli is the cradle of these life-sustaining forces. It generates water, climate stability, biodiversity, and agricultural fertility. Let it remain the foundation of our existence. Do not dismantle it in pursuit of fleeting profit.

Our judiciary is constitutionally independent. We trust that it will uphold this independence by placing India's ecological heritage and cultural ethos above transient economic interests. We request that it hear the Aravalli's pain and wipe its tears once again. With simplicity and equality, the people of the Aravalli appeal for justice—for the mountain and for the credibility of India's judiciary.

When I was twenty-nine years old, in 1991, I secured the first Supreme Court order to protect the forests and wildlife of the Aravalli. That judgment resulted in the closure of 478 mines in Sariska. In 1992, further orders halted mining in Alwar, Gurugram, Faridabad, and Mewat districts. On this foundation, the Government

of India issued the 7 May 1992 notification for Aravalli protection. By 1993, illegal mining operations and speculative real estate projects across the broader range were dismantled. The Aravalli was declared an ecologically sensitive zone.

Together with the people, we launched the Aravalli Shankhnaad Yatra from Himmatnagar in Gujarat, directly visiting mining sites to ensure compliance and closure. On 22 November 1993, we reached Parliament in New Delhi and submitted a memorandum to Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil. As a result, mining was comprehensively halted, and development projects causing environmental destruction were restrained.

Those victories were not merely legal triumphs; they were affirmations of democratic will, ecological wisdom, and cultural integrity. Today, that legacy stands at a crossroads. The call to save the Aravalli is not merely about geology—it is about democracy, cultural continuity, and the moral courage to protect what sustains us all.

20.
The Cry of the Aravalli –Will Not Remain Silent Anymore Till Mining Continues–

Why Does Mining Persist in the Aravalli Even After Supreme Court Orders?

The Aravalli is not merely a chain of hills; it is the lifeline of northern India. Every rock, every forest patch, every grazing ground, and every seasonal stream within it safeguards our climate balance, sustains agriculture, and protects the livelihoods of indigenous communities. For decades, civil society groups, farmers, environmental defenders, and ordinary citizens have remained vigilant about its preservation. The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly expressed grave concern over unregulated mining and ecological degradation in the Aravalli, clearly stating in several orders that no new mining lease should be granted without proper environmental and forest clearances.

Yet, in recent months, these warnings appear to have been overlooked in certain areas. According to citizen campaigns and local sources, between 2 and 18 December 2025, multiple new mining leases were reportedly issued across districts that fall within the Aravalli region of Rajasthan—Alwar, Jaipur, Kotputli, Tijara, Rajsamand, Dausa, Bhilwara, Sirohi, and Jhunjhunu. The Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign reports that 20 leases were issued in Alwar, 6 in Jaipur, 7 in Kotputli, 2 in Tijara, 2 in Rajsamand, 1 in Dausa, 6 in Bhilwara, 5 in Sirohi, and 1 in Jhunjhunu. These figures, the campaign states, are based on field inspections, government notifications, and publicly available records. In the spirit of judicial transparency, it must be clarified under which category these leases fall and whether they fully comply with environmental and forest approvals mandated by the Court.

The judicial decision delivered on 20 November 2025 has raised profound questions about the traditional identity and territorial integrity of the Aravalli. Civil society fears that interpretations of this decision may weaken the protective framework that once safeguarded the range. Experience shows that when the identity of a landscape is diluted or redefined narrowly, pressures intensify—urban expansion, tourism projects, industrial corridors, and mining ventures quickly follow. This article does not seek to accuse the judiciary or government directly. Rather, it serves as a cautionary civic voice, urging vigilance before irreversible damage occurs.

The Rajasthan government has publicly shared information about recently issued leases, yet citizen groups claim that precise geo-locational details and comprehensive disclosures remain unclear. Such ambiguity is concerning because the Supreme Court had explicitly emphasized that any new mining activity must align with approved mining plans and prior environmental clearances. Transparency is not merely administrative procedure—it is the foundation of public trust.

History bears witness that effective restraint on destructive mining has often come not from paperwork alone, but from people standing on the ground. Since 1980, direct grassroots efforts have played a crucial role in protecting and revitalizing the Aravalli. The Aravalli Parikrama and the Aravalli Shankhnaad (Clarion Call) campaigns of 1990–1993 demonstrated that when farmers, indigenous communities, environmentalists, and informed citizens unite, they can defend mountains and restore water systems. Eighteen coordinated groups traversed the Aravalli across regions such as Bharatpur, Dholpur, Sawai Madhopur, Bundi, Bhilwara, Phulwari ki Nal, Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Mewar, Pali, and Marwar. Conferences held at Guru Shikhar and Mount Abu strengthened collective resolve, ensuring that illegal mining was halted and that protective notifications were implemented in spirit as well as in letter.

Citizen campaigners argue that we stand once again at a similar crossroads. Discussion alone will not suffice. Field verification, ground-level awareness, and participatory observation are essential. A renewed parikrama of the entire Aravalli—bringing together

geologists, revenue record experts, local farmers, tribal communities, media representatives, students, and teachers—can help reveal the factual situation and influence policy decisions. The campaign further observes that large-scale industrial ventures and urban expansion appear to be intensifying in ecologically sensitive zones. It becomes imperative for local communities to understand how these developments may affect their land, water sources, and long-term survival. This narrative is framed as a citizen warning, not an indictment, but it calls for vigilance rooted in evidence.

The campaign also highlights that recent redefinitions and notifications have challenged the traditional land identity of the Aravalli. By narrowing or altering its classification, industrial entities and large investors may find it easier to acquire land. This shift places farmers and indigenous communities at heightened risk. Preservation of traditional boundaries, historical revenue records, and geo-spatial documentation is therefore essential—not merely for legal reasons but for the inheritance of future generations.

The appeal from civil society is clear: the land of the Aravalli must remain the land of the Aravalli. Its ecological integrity must be safeguarded so that coming generations inherit not a memory, but a living mountain range. If action is delayed, the Aravalli may survive only in textbooks and photographs. Cutting mountains in the name of development is not development—it is a betrayal of the future.

The time has come to listen to the Aravalli's call. A renewed journey of truth and people's participation must begin. The clarion call of the Aravalli must once again echo across villages, towns, and institutions. The Aravalli Heritage People's Campaign plans to initiate direct parikrama visits and awareness programs as its next step. Its objective is not merely to halt mining but to protect the authentic Aravalli—to secure the lands of farmers and tribal communities, to preserve water systems, and to maintain ecological balance.

This effort will gain strength through the cooperation of media, local residents, students, and teachers. Ultimately, this citizen appeal affirms that the echo of the Aravalli must reach every ear, awaken every conscience, and inspire active participation in every hand.

Public awareness and collective civic action remain the most powerful tools to safeguard the Aravalli. The moment demands attention—delay is no longer an option.

21.
Save the Culture and Nature of the Aravalli Through Satyagraha

The awakening of people's power and the emergence of a movement for Aravalli conservation now seem inevitable. That this initiative will take form is almost certain. Whether the ultimate objective—***sadhya-siddhi,*** the fulfilment of the moral goal—will be achieved through Satyagraha, however, still remains an open question. The recent developments in the Supreme Court have undeniably stirred the people of the Aravalli into awakening and standing up. In that sense, something significant has occurred. Yet, the atmosphere in which questions are being raised about the Indian judiciary is not a healthy sign for democracy.

It is within this charged and uncertain climate that a campaign to safeguard the culture and nature of the Aravalli has been born. People have accepted it not as a distant issue, but as a personal challenge tied to their own lives and the lives of their children. From here begins the natural and spontaneous process of collective participation—*lokshakti* joining hands without coercion, without orchestration, but out of shared conviction.

The foremost task is clear: mining in the Aravalli must be stopped. The recent judicial developments must be transformed into a people's campaign dedicated to protecting the ecological and cultural identity of the Aravalli. This transformation from concern to organised movement is unfolding organically. Public conscience will shape it further. Those who believe in peaceful living and who hold faith in truth and non-violence are now discussing how to initiate a disciplined and lawful Satyagraha in mining-affected regions. Thoughtful deliberations are underway regarding its moral code, its strategy, and its constitutional framework. This effort too will soon

take structured form. It is advancing along the path of truth and non-violence.

It must be clearly understood that a movement and a Satyagraha are not the same. Their spirit and method are different. A movement may arise spontaneously from a campaign, or it may be prepared through gradual mobilisation and dialogue. Both can adapt their methods in order to achieve their objective. Satyagraha, however, remains unwavering in its insistence on truth. A Satyagrahi has neither enemy nor friend; there is only adherence to truth. The principles are defined at the outset and lived until the end without compromise. If violence intrudes and truth is compromised, true Satyagrahis suspend their own struggle rather than allow it to deviate from its moral path.

Revered Bapu, Mahatma Gandhi, halted his Satyagraha during the freedom struggle when violence erupted, including during the Kakori episode. Many activists engaged in the spirit of "Do or Die" did not approve of his restraint. Yet Gandhi remained faithful to the discipline of Satyagraha. For him, truth was supreme and non-negotiable. Satyagraha follows its own ethical compass and proceeds strictly within that framework.

In the present Aravalli movement, there is no singular Bapu guiding the path. It is not yet clear which direction the movement will ultimately take. What is visible is that a spontaneous campaign is gradually turning into a broader public movement. Satyagraha still appears somewhat distant. Yet within the collective consciousness of the people, traditional faith in nature and culture continues to nurture an environmental awakening in the Aravalli region.

This movement is not only for the Aravalli or even for India alone. Its message must resonate across the world, for mountain ecosystems everywhere are under threat. At present, however, this global outreach has not taken place at the required scale. There is an urgent need to carry the voice of the Aravalli beyond national borders.

I have been travelling across various states of India to share this concern. On 26 December 2025, two late-night meetings were held in Hubli and Holkoti to discuss the Aravalli issue. Professor Rajendra

Pokhar convened the gathering in Hubli, and Dr. D. R. Patil organised the meeting in Holkoti, Gadag. On 25 December, discussions were held at Nalanda University and in Rajgir city. On 24 December, meetings took place in Hyderabad and Jaipur. The possibility of this evolving into a nationwide movement is very strong. I am travelling outside Rajasthan almost daily, spreading awareness. When colleagues from Rajasthan call, I return there as well to speak. This engagement brings a sense of purpose and hope.

A collective leadership is gradually emerging. Now it is essential to deepen understanding among activists, guardians, and fellow campaigners. Thoughtful and capable individuals, inspired by Indian civilisational values, can dedicate themselves to the environmental protection of the Aravalli and remain steadfast for the long term. Only those who combine understanding with commitment can give lasting direction to a cause.

I know that people are coming forward with sincere dedication in the Aravalli Save Movement. Most participants are acting with thoughtful conviction, doing whatever they can within their capacity. It is heartening that women are participating in significant numbers. This diversity strengthens the moral force of the movement. It will not be easy for any authority to fragment such an effort, because it draws strength from all castes, religions, faith traditions, and also from secular citizens. In such an environment, the struggle can mature into disciplined Satyagraha and ultimately achieve its moral objective.

Students, teachers, farmers, pastoralists, environmentalists, Gandhian thinkers, socialists, communists, and religious leaders—all streams of society are actively engaged. This is no longer merely a courtroom battle; it is transforming into a full-fledged people's movement. The judiciary too will need to view this ***lokshakti*** in the light of the Constitution. The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court, when it truly hears the pain of the Aravalli, will deliver justice—not compromise. The exploitation, encroachment, and pollution of the Aravalli must come to an end.

It is almost certain that the Aravalli campaign will take the shape of a sustained movement. If it evolves into disciplined Satyagraha,

transformation in both state and society will follow, because its objective is noble: to protect the nature and culture of the Aravalli. The path is clear—protect the land of the Aravalli in its entirety, without dividing it into artificial hierarchies of higher and lower. Along that very path, this movement continues to advance with determination and faith.

22.
Satyagraha to Success

The Aravalli campaign is undoubtedly evolving into a movement. Whether the ultimate objective—*sadhya-siddhi*, the realisation of its moral and ecological goal—will be attained through Satyagraha remains, for the moment, an open and thoughtful question. The recent developments in the Supreme Court have, in one sense, awakened and mobilised the people's power of the Aravalli region. That awakening is significant and welcome. Yet, the emergence of questions directed at the Indian judiciary is not an entirely healthy development in a constitutional democracy.

It is within this sensitive and complex atmosphere that a campaign to protect the nature and culture of the Aravalli has taken birth. People have not treated it as a distant environmental issue; rather, they have embraced it as a life challenge, intimately connected with their own future and that of coming generations. From this point onward, a natural and spontaneous process of collective participation has begun. Without coercion or artificial provocation, *lokshakti*—people's power—is steadily gathering strength.

The immediate and unavoidable demand of the time is twofold: first, to ensure a complete halt to mining in the Aravalli region; and second, to transform the ongoing campaign—guided by the spirit of the Supreme Court's earlier protective intent—into a strong and organised public movement dedicated to defending the ecological and cultural integrity of the Aravalli. This is not a path of confrontation. It is a constitutional, peaceful and morally grounded effort. Public consciousness is moving organically in this direction, and collective thought is gradually shaping the campaign into a structured movement.

Those who believe in truth, non-violence, and harmonious living are carefully considering the lawful framework of Satyagraha in mining-affected regions. Discussions are being held regarding its ethical discipline, its procedural legitimacy, and its constitutional boundaries.

This process is steadily moving from reflection to action. It is advancing firmly along the path of truth and non-violence, with seriousness and restraint.

It is important to understand that a movement and a Satyagraha are distinct in both spirit and method. Sometimes a campaign naturally grows into a movement; at other times, a conducive atmosphere is consciously created to build one. A movement may modify its methods to achieve its objective. Satyagraha, however, remains unwavering in its insistence on truth. A Satyagrahi neither identifies enemies nor cultivates allies; the only loyalty is to truth and principle. If violence infiltrates a Satyagraha conducted in the name of justice, a genuine Satyagrahi will suspend the struggle rather than allow its moral foundation to be compromised.

Revered Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated this discipline during the freedom struggle. On several occasions, including after incidents of violence such as Kakori, he suspended his Satyagraha. Many activists at that time found his decision difficult to accept, especially those inspired by the fervour of "Do or Die." Yet Gandhi remained steadfast in his ethical commitment. For him, the integrity of the method was as important as the goal itself. Satyagraha possesses its own discipline, its own moral boundaries, and its own philosophical depth—and therein lies its enduring strength.

In the present Aravalli movement, there is no single central leader like Gandhi. It is a movement emerging from collective consciousness. Its direction is still evolving. What is evident is that a spontaneous campaign is gradually assuming the character of an organised movement. The stage of Satyagraha appears on the distant horizon, not yet fully formed but visible as a possibility.

Within the collective psyche, traditional faith linked to nature and culture remains alive. That living faith is once again presenting the Aravalli as a symbol of environmental stewardship rooted in Indian civilisational values. This movement must not remain confined to the Aravalli or even to India. Its message carries global relevance, for mountain ecosystems across the world are facing similar pressures.

However, sufficient international outreach has yet to take place, and this gap needs urgent attention.

I, as the author, have been travelling across various states of India to share this concern. On 26 December 2025, two late-night meetings were held in Hubli and Holkoti to deliberate on the Aravalli issue. Professor Rajendra Pokhar organised the meeting in Hubli, while Dr. D. R. Patil convened the discussion in Holkoti, Gadag. On 25 December 2025, dialogues were held at Nalanda University and in Rajgir city. On 24 December 2025, meetings took place in Hyderabad and Jaipur. These interactions indicate that the campaign has the potential to evolve into a nationwide movement.

Much of my time is currently spent outside Rajasthan, sharing the Aravalli concern across different states. Yet whenever colleagues from the Aravalli region call, I return there to engage in dialogue. This engagement is both my responsibility and my source of satisfaction.

Clear signs of collective leadership are emerging within the movement. What is now required is a deeper intellectual and moral understanding among activists, guardians, and campaign participants. Thoughtful and capable individuals, inspired by Indian civilisational faith, can dedicate themselves to the long-term protection of the Aravalli environment. Only those who combine wisdom with restraint can offer society enduring direction.

It is heartening that people are stepping forward with commitment in the Aravalli Save Movement. Most participants are contributing according to their understanding and capacity. The significant participation of women strengthens the moral and social foundation of the movement. With representation from diverse castes, faiths, traditions, and ideological backgrounds, it will not be easy to fragment this collective effort. Such diversity enhances its resilience and its potential to mature into disciplined Satyagraha.
Students, teachers, farmers, pastoralists, environmentalists, Gandhian thinkers, socialists, communists, and individuals rooted in spiritual traditions are all actively engaged. This issue is no longer confined to courtroom litigation. It has assumed the character of a broad-based

people's movement. The judiciary is expected to view this rising *lokshakti* through the light of the Constitution. There is hope that the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court, upon hearing the pain of the Aravalli, will deliver a just and balanced decision—one that effectively restrains exploitation, encroachment, and pollution.

Thus, the transformation of the Aravalli campaign into a sustained movement appears both natural and inevitable. Should it advance into the disciplined stage of Satyagraha, constructive change within both state and society is possible. Its objective is not directed against any institution or individual; it is solely to safeguard the nature and culture of the Aravalli.

For this, it is essential that the land of the Aravalli be protected in its entirety, without artificial hierarchies or discriminatory distinctions between higher and lower terrain. Along this balanced, peaceful, and constitutional path, the movement continues to move forward—with faith, patience, and hope that justice, wisdom, and environmental protection will ultimately prevail.

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