



Illegal Mining in the Aravalli Range

Why in News?

Recently, The Supreme Court verbally stated that [illegal mining](#) in the [Aravalli range](#) in Rajasthan should be stopped.

Key Points

- According to the court's amicus curiae (impartial adviser), the Rajasthan government tried to deceive the court by **recognizing only mountains that were at least 100 meters high as belonging to the Aravalli Range**, while not including shorter hills in the range.
 - Aravalli is the **only geographical feature** that **stops dry winds** from coming to the [Gangetic Plains](#) that come from Afghanistan and Pakistan.
 - **Aravalli is a natural barrier**. Losing it will transform our weather into the arid, dry climate.
- The court in November 2023 had taken note of [palaeolithic findings in the Aravalli](#) and directed the [Archaeological Survey of India](#) to protect the site, which could even be part of [national heritage](#).

Aravalli range

- The Aravallis of Northwestern India, one of the oldest fold mountains of the world, now form residual mountains with an elevation of 300m. to 900m. They stretch for a distance of 800 km. from **Himmatnagar in Gujarat to Delhi, spanning Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi, the 692 kilometre (km)**.
- The mountains are divided into two main ranges - the **Sambhar Sirohi Range** and the **Sambhar Khetri Range** in Rajasthan, where their extension is about 560 km.
- These are fold mountains of which rocks are formed primarily of folded crust, when two convergent plates move towards each other by the process called **orogenic movement**.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
 - **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** governs the functioning of ASI.
- It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- It was founded in **1861 by Alexander Cunningham- the first Director-General of ASI**. Alexander Cunningham is also known as the “Father of Indian Archaeology”.

