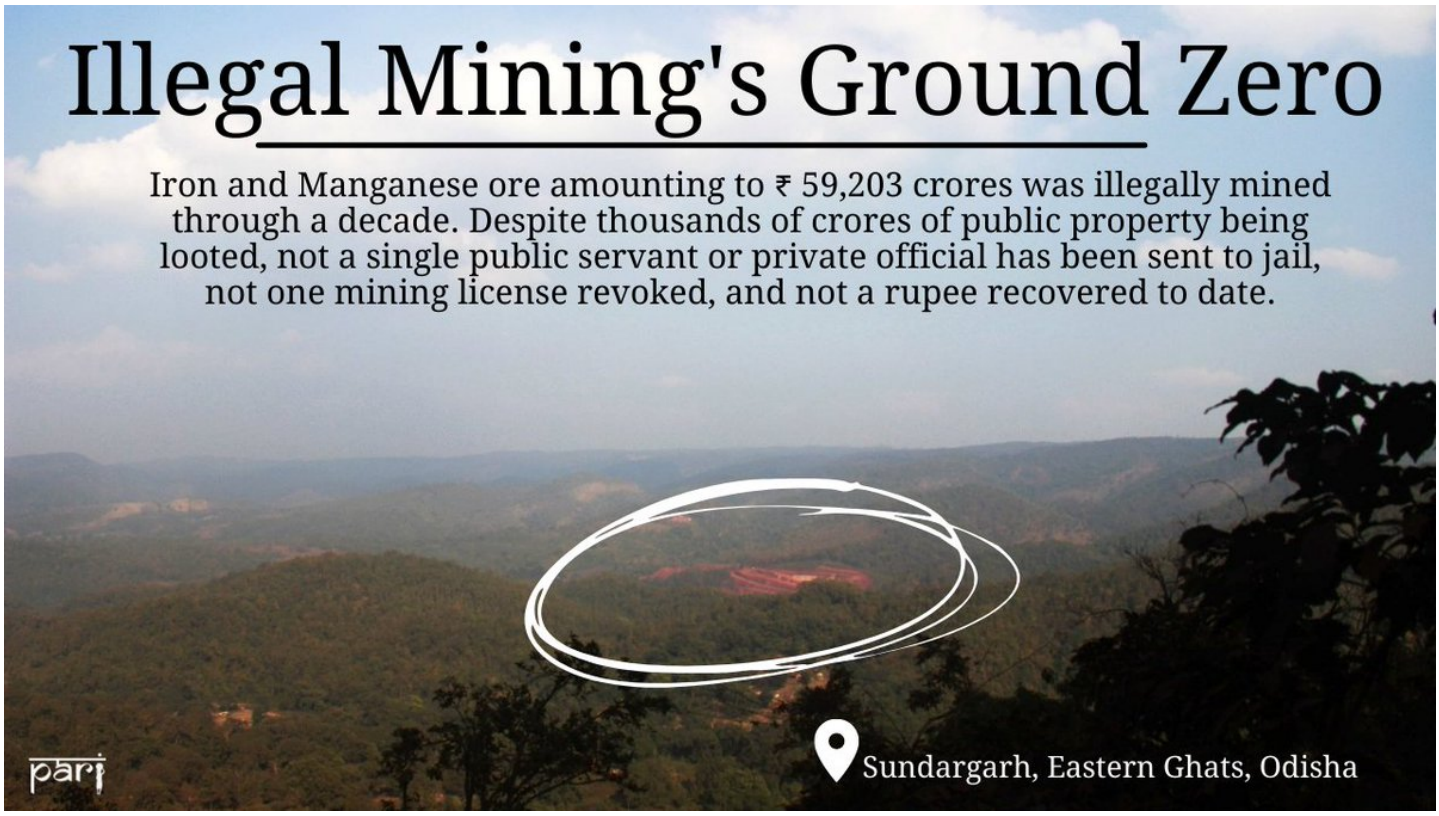
Twitter Thread by People's Archive of Rural India

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See how unprecedented mining in the forests of Odisha has violated a raft of laws and regulations, severely despoiled the complex eco-system, and resulted in windfall profits for miners at the cost of the public exchequer. [Photo Thread] 1/n

Full story: https://t.co/oH82uzNHzg



North Odisha's rich deciduous forests and mountain ranges hold 1/3 of India's haematite iron ore reserves. Here, a mining company constructs a road through the forests around the mining town of Bonai. Mining is done in over 45,000 hectares (ha) of which 34,000 is forested area



This makes it the site of the state's largest corruption scam. Truck traffic ferrying iron ore dominates the area's roads. They only halt on Sundays, after villagers agitated for this weekly break so that they could use the roads to attend church and visit markets. 3/n



Trucks jam the road leading up to the mines in the Kurmitar mountain range. The Supreme Court-appointed Justice MB Shah Commission estimated that at current rates of extraction, quality iron ore reserves in this region could run out in 35 years—the government rejected the claim



The Shah Commission’s report was tabled in Parliament on February 10, 2014. Over the past decade, fuelled by a commodity boom led by exports to China, mining increased manifold. These images show the contrast between the mined landscape, and areas that are yet to be mined. 5/n



An indigenous man walks across a dried mountain stream. He says locals have seen the stream’s fish population disappear in the past 7 years. During the rainy season, waste from the mine flows downhill into the stream, making it impossible to cultivate the kharif crop. 6/n



The remoteness of villages ensures that the limited safeguards which Adivasi communities have, such as participating in environmental public hearings or consenting to chopping off of trees for projects, are effortlessly violated by mining companies and government officials. 7/n



The area’s indigenous Adivasis are deeply dependent on forest produce, including lac, mahua, and sal for food, fuel, and livelihood. The loot is encouraged as much by opaque governing, as by the state’s traditional contempt for these marginalised Adivasi communities. 8/n



Post a 9-hour workday in Orissa Mining Corporation’s iron ore mine, Jaitru Giri and his family return to their shack, at the mine’s outskirts. The Shah Commission criticised mining companies for not paying labourers a fair wage despite making profits from illegal mining. 9/n



Villagers opposed South Korean steel giant POSCO’s plans to start a mine in the area. The residents' primary fear was the mine’s environmental impacts on the area’s network of mountain streams, which currently irrigate their farms, allowing them to grow crops all through the year


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