

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY

O.O.C.J.

P.I.L. WRIT PETITION NO.904 OF 2005

Ehsanul Haque A. Nadvi

v/s.

Union of India and others

.. Petitioner

.. Respondents

Mr. Akhilesh Upadhyay for the petitioner.

Mr. B.A. Desai, Additional Solicitor General with Ms. Naveena Kumai for the respondent Nos.1 and 7.

Mr. Z.A. Jariwalla i/by M/s. Thakore Jariwala & Associate for the respondent No.9.

Ms. P.A. Purandare i/by Mr. S.H. Ujjainwala & Associates for the respondent No.6.

Mr. Pradeep Jadhav, Assistant Government Pleader for the respondent Nos.2,4 and 5.

Mr. Abhijeet Wagh i/by M/s.Utangale & Co. for the respondent No.3.

CORAM : R.M.LODHA &
S.A.BOBDE, JJ.

DATED : 27TH SEPTEMBER,

2006.

P.C.

By order dated 29th June, 2006, the Bench requested the Director, Indian Institute of Technology, Powai to nominate an expert from the institute to inspect the Gilbert Hill, Andheri (West)

and report to this court as to whether any development or construction by the respondent Nos.8 and 9 in the area has resulted into damage to the Gilbert Hill and whether any portion of Gilbert Hill has been cut and/or removed for the development in the area and the suggestions for protection, preservation and conservation of the Gilbert Hill.

2. By the letter dated 26th September, 2006, the Registrar, Indian Institute of Technology, Powai has informed the Prothonotary & Senior Master that they are unable to nominate any faculty member from the institute as they do not have an expert available to give his opinion in the subject matter.

3. In the circumstances, we have to find some substitute who can give the report on the aspects aforementioned.

4. We wanted to know from Mr. B.A. Desai, Additional Solicitor General of India as to whether Geological Survey of India or National Environmental Engineering Research Institute or any other suitable corporate institution can nominate an expert for his opinion to the aspects noticed above.

5. The Additional Solicitor General prays for time to find out from the aforesaid institutes the availability of an expert.

Stand over to 11th October, 2006.

(R.M.LODHA, J.)

(S.A.BOBDE, J.)

Bombay High Court

Gilbert Hill is Mumbai's Mr Lava, Lava

By Ashley D'Mello/TNN

Mumbai: It's a natural marvel but few recognise it for what it is. A 200-foot monolith of black basalt that was created when molten lava was squeezed out of the fissures on the earth's surface 65 million years ago. Gilbert Hill in Andheri is so rare and spectacular a geological formation that experts say it should be treated like a national treasure.

"In the USA, this would be considered an important site. The Indian government should develop it into a tourist site," said US anthropologist Patricia Rawal, who is shocked at the neglected hill, which has gradually been hemmed in by a slum.

Two decades ago, a citizens' campaign saved the hill from being blasted by quarry-owners but in the absence of proper promotion, everyone dismisses it as an odd-shaped rock. The hilltop has two small temples set in a small garden that offers a grand, unhindered view of the city. However, few devotees climb the steep stairway hewed into the rock to make their offerings at the Gaodevi and Durgamata temples.

Rawal has seen the basalt formation in Wyoming as well as the Devil's Post Pile National Monument in eastern California and feels that Gilbert Hill compares well with them. "The geolo-

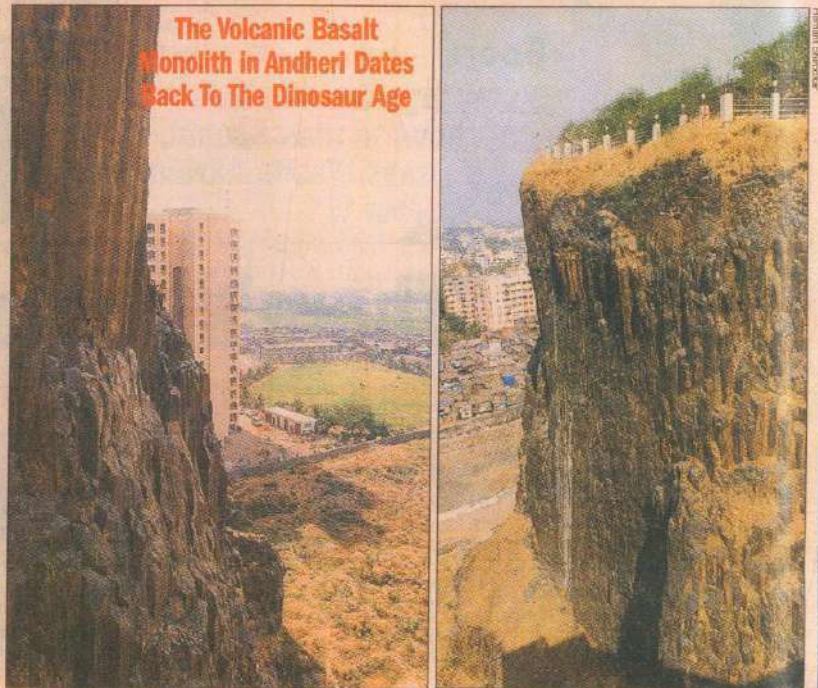
gist I consulted in the USA thinks the Mumbai formation is fantastic and unique. He based his judgement on photographs I had taken and his knowledge of basalt deposits on our planet."

V Subramanyan, former professor of geology at IIT, Powai, also feels that Gilbert Hill ought to be treated with more respect. According to him, the rock of Gilbert Hill is of volcanic origin and dates back to the Mesozoic era when molten lava spread far and wide, covering some 5,00,000 square km in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The volcanic eruptions also released poisonous gases that destroyed plant and animal life, including dinosaurs.

Prof Subramanyan says the hill is the remnant of a ridge and has a cluster of vertical columns akin to the Devil's Tower in Wyoming. According to him, such tall columns existed in neighbouring Jogeshwari until two decades ago but they were razed to the ground by quarrying.

To get to Gilbert Hill, turn left at Kasimalli Shikur Chowk on S V Road, shortly before Andheri railway station, and ask for the temple atop Gilbert Hill, a minute's drive away. You can drive right up to the base of the hill but it is preferable to park your vehicle near Leela Niwas or the Bombay Mercantile Cooperative Bank.

The Volcanic Basalt Monolith in Andheri Dates Back To The Dinosaur Age



Harish Shrivastava

MUMBAI FOR KIDS-IV