



Coal Mines Expansion in Chhattisgarh | Chhattisgarh | 07 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The [Forest Advisory Committee \(FAC\)](#) of the environment ministry has accorded an “in-principle” approval for expansion and opening of a number of mines in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Meghalaya and exploratory drilling in Assam’s wildlife rich Doyang reserved forest.

Key Points

- Three of the mines are in Chhattisgarh’s **Korba district**. These are Gevra mine, Kismunda mine, and Dipka Opencast coal mine.
- In Chhattisgarh, FAC recommended “in-principle” approval:
 - for the additional diversion of 94.293 hectares of forest for expansion of **Gevra mine**.
 - to expansion of **Kismunda mine** for diversion of an additional 43.942 ha of forest land.
 - Kismunda opencast mine flows adjacent to a **Hasdeo tributary** which makes it a particularly **vulnerable area**.
 - to **South Eastern Coalfield Limited (SECL) Dipka Opencast coal mine** for diversion of additional 0.093 ha of forest land in Korba’s Katghora forest.
- FAC has recommended that **Chhattisgarh government ensure treatment of the catchment area** and directed SECL to follow the rules imposed by the Water resource department for conservation of the Hasdeo river.

Forest Advisory Committee (FAC)

- It is a **statutory body** which was **constituted by the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980**.
- It comes under the **Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**.
- It considers questions on the diversion of forest land for non-forest uses such as mining, industrial projects, townships and advises the government on the issue of granting forest clearances. However, its **role is advisory**.

South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL)

- SECL is the **highest coal producing company of India**. The coal mines of SECL are spread across two states namely Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
- It operates **65 coal mines**, of which **39 coal mines lie in Chhattisgarh State**, while the rest **26 coal mines are situated in Madhya Pradesh**. Out of these 65 coal mines, 46 mines are worked by underground method of mining while rest 19 mines are Opencast mines.

Hasdeo River

- The Hasdeo river is a **tributary of the Mahanadi river** which originates in Chhattisgarh and flows through Odisha into the Bay of Bengal.
- The Hasdeo forests are also the catchment area for the **Hasdeo Bango Dam** built across the Hasdeo river which irrigates six lakh acres of land, crucial to a State with paddy as its main crop.
- Besides, the forests are ecologically sensitive due to the **rich biodiversity** they offer and due to the presence of a **large migratory corridor for elephants**.

