



Irregularities in Hasdeo Mining Clearance

Why in News?

The [Chhattisgarh State Scheduled Tribe Commission \(CSSTC\)](#) has identified irregularities in the **environmental clearance process** for the [Parsa coal mine](#) located in Surguja, Chhattisgarh.

- CSSTC has recommended the **revocation of forest clearance** for this [mining project](#), situated in **Hasdeo, a biodiversity-rich region**.

Key Points

- **About CSSTC:**
 - The Chhattisgarh government **formed the Tribal Advisory Council to recommend policies related to Scheduled Tribes**.
 - Some of the **tribes in Chhattisgarh** include the [Gonds](#) of Bastar, Baiga tribes, Pahari korwa tribes, Abhuj Maria, BisonHorn Maria, Muria, Halbaa, birhors tribes, Bhatra, and Dhurvaa.
 - The **Chief Minister** of Chhattisgarh is the **Chairman** of the Council, and the Minister of Tribal and Scheduled Caste Development Department is a member.
- **Findings of the CSSTC:**
 - **Irregularities in Environmental Clearance:** The Commission discovered that the **environmental clearance** for the Parsa coal mine, mandated to be obtained only with gram sabha consent, was **secured using forged documents**.
 - **Alleged Misuse of District Administration:** The Commission's letter stated that the mining company allegedly manipulated district officers and employees to obtain environmental clearance and permission for forest land diversion for the coal mine.
 - The Commission highlighted that such actions infringe on the rights of gram sabhas, recognised as autonomous entities under the [Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution](#).
 - **Complaint from Tribal Villages:** The Commission's **investigation was prompted by a complaint in 2021** from 41 residents of Salhi, Hariharpur, and Fatepur villages, alleging that forged gram sabha documents had been used for the project.
- **Demand for Cancellation and Legal Action:**
 - Following the CSSTC report, the [Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan \(CBA\)](#), which leads **anti-mining protests in Hasdeo**, called for the cancellation of the mine's forest and environmental clearances.

Hasdeo Arand Forest

- Hasdeo Arand, a sprawling forest in the **northern part of Chhattisgarh is known for its biodiversity and its coal deposits**.
- The forest falls under **Korba, Sujapur and Surguja districts** with significant tribal population.
- The **Hasdeo river, a tributary of Mahanadi**, flows through it.
- Hasdeo Arand is the **largest un-fragmented forest in Central India consisting of pristine Sal (Shorea robusta) and teak forests**.
- It is a **noted migratory corridor** and has a significant **presence of elephants**.

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