

Regarding need to stop mining activities in the region around Gandhamardan Hills in Odisha-Laid

SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA (KORAPUT): I would like to draw urgent attention of the Government towards the renewed threat of mining in the ecologically and culturally significant Gandhamardan Hills, spanning Odisha's Bargarh and Balangir districts. Mahanadi Mines and Minerals Pvt Ltd has acquired 112 acres of land in villages around the hills, raising fears of bauxite exploitation. Renowned for their biodiversity, these hills host over 1,200 plant species, including 220 medicinal varieties essential to Ayurvedic practices, serving over 50,000 individuals annually. For the 55,000 tribal residents, the hills are a spiritual and livelihood cornerstone. The sacred Nrusinghanath and Harishankar temples, embodying Odisha's cultural heritage, face desecration. Mining threatens to destroy ecosystems, decimate biodiversity, and eliminate medicinal plants critical to traditional healthcare. It would displace the livelihoods of thousands of tribal people, plunging them into uncertainty. Culturally, the sanctity of the Nrusinghanath and Harishankar temples and other sacred sites would be irreparably damaged, eroding the community's spiritual fabric. Would urge the Central Government to halt mining to preserve the region's ecological and cultural sanctity as well ensure transparency and community consent in land use decisions. Designate the Gandhamardan Hills as a protected area.