

15 July 2025

Context: The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has sanctioned coal mining in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, which is situated within a crucial tiger corridor that connects three significant reserves, raising ecological concerns.



- This region is located between the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Kanhargaoon, and Tipeshwar Wildlife Sanctuaries—essential for the movement and genetic flow of tigers.

About Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve: What It Is?

- TATR is recognized as one of India’s oldest and most significant Project Tiger reserves, consisting of Tadoba National Park (established in 1955) and Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary (established in 1986), which were merged in 1995.

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Location:

- It is located in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, encompassing 87 square kilometers of reserved and protected forests.
- It is part of the Central Indian Tiger Landscape.
- Historical Roots:
 - The reserve is named after the tribal deity Taru, whose shrine is located by the Tadoba Lake.
 - Historically, this area served as a hunting ground for the Gond and Maratha rulers prior to the implementation of protection laws.

Ecological Features:

- The reserve is home to tigers, leopards, sloth bears, gaurs, and a variety of bird species.
- Key rivers such as Andhari, Era, and Tadoba Lake nourish the verdant tropical deciduous forest.
- Neighbouring Corridors:
 - It is connected to Tipeswar (Yavatmal) and Kanhargaon, creating a vital tiger dispersal corridor that is essential for maintaining genetic diversity and mitigating human-wildlife conflict.

Coal Mining in the News: Durgapur Opencast Project

What It Is?

- The Durgapur Opencast Mine, operated by Western Coalfields Ltd, has obtained NBWL approval to divert 80.77 hectares of forest land within the tiger corridor.

Project Features:

- It is situated between Tadoba–Kanhargaon, Tipeswar, which is a critical linkage for tigers.
- The approval was granted alongside a Wildlife Management Plan costing Rs. 18.07 crore, developed by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
- The plan includes measures such as fencing, the removal of invasive Prosopis species, and field surveys aimed at minimizing disruption to wildlife.