

Coal mining protests in the Hasdeo Aranya region

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In news— Protest against coal mining is going on in the Hasdeo Aranya region.

Hasdeo Aranya/Arand region-

- Hasdeo Aranya is a forest **in the Indian state of Chhattisgarh**, located in the centre-east of the country.
- It is traversed by the **Hasdeo river, a tributary of the Mahanadi**.
- **It is home to Adivasis from Gond, Lohar, Oraon, and other parts of India**, who live on 1,70,000 hectares of land rich in biodiversity.
- 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.
- Hasdeo represents one of the largest coal reserves in India, having estimated reserves of 5.18 billion tonnes of coal.
- **There are more than 20 known coal mines on the Hasdeo reserve**.
- After a joint study in 2010, the Ministry of Coal and the Ministry of Forest and Environment deemed the Hasdeo reserve a 'No Go Area,' prohibiting any sort of mining due to its rich biodiversity and exceptional ecology.
- Interestingly, the Parsa East Kente Basan coal mine was permitted within a year after the prohibition, based on a goal of extracting as much coal as possible at the

lowest possible cost.

- After the gram sabhas opposed mining in the Madanpur South and Gidmudi Paturia blocks that were allotted to the Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Company (APMDC) and Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company (CSPGC) respectively, clearances were withdrawn.