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# Bauxite Mining & Tribal Protest in Odisha

Published On: 17-04-2026



## Why in News?

Violent clashes occurred between tribal communities and police in Rayagada district, Odisha over the construction of a road to the Sijimali bauxite mining project, leaving several injured.

## Summary:

The conflict highlights tensions between mineral resource exploitation and tribal rights. Odisha, which holds the largest share of India's bauxite reserves, has witnessed repeated protests due to concerns over displacement, environmental damage, and lack of consent under forest laws.

## Key Data & Facts:

Bauxite – Distribution (India)

Odisha – 41% of total reserves

Chhattisgarh – 20%

Andhra Pradesh – 12%

Gujarat – 8%

Odisha accounts for ~73% of India's production (2022–23)

## Global Scenario:

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Largest reserves: Guinea

### **Top producers:**

Guinea (26%)

Australia (25%)

China (19%)

India (~6%)

### **About Bauxite:**

Sedimentary rock rich in aluminium

Primary ore of aluminium

Found mainly in tropical and subtropical regions

Formed by lateritic weathering

India ranks among top 10 countries in reserves

### **Processing of Bauxite:**

Bayer Process ? Converts bauxite into alumina

Hall-Héroult Process ? Converts alumina into aluminium

By-product: Red mud (environmentally hazardous)

### **Uses of Aluminium:**

Transportation (aircraft, automobiles)

Electrical industry (conductivity)

Packaging (cans, foils)

Construction & defence sectors

Issue: Tribal Protest in Odisha

### **Reasons for Opposition:**

Fear of displacement and livelihood loss

Dependence on forests and hills for survival

Concerns over environmental degradation

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Allegations of improper Gram Sabha consent

### **Legal & Governance Issues:**

Forest Rights Act (2006) ? Requires consent of Gram Sabha

Supreme Court (2013 – Niyamgiri case) ? Empowered Gram Sabhas to decide mining projects

Conflict reflects issues in implementation of PESA & FRA

### **Environmental Concerns:**

Deforestation and biodiversity loss

Water source depletion (hill ecosystems)

Pollution from red mud waste

Impact on tribal cultural identity

### **Important Case: Niyamgiri Hills**

Inhabited by Dongria Kondh tribe (PVTG)

Mining project rejected after Gram Sabha opposition (2013)

Landmark case in tribal rights & environmental governance