



## Uranium Mining in Nallamala Forest

---

 [drishtiias.com/printpdf/uranium-mining-in-nallamala-forest](https://drishtiias.com/printpdf/uranium-mining-in-nallamala-forest)

Recently **Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** has **granted** in-principle approval to the **Department of Atomic Energy to survey and explore for uranium** in 83 sq km of the **Nallamala Forest Reserve**.

The **Telangana State Legislative Assembly** unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Central government **not to permit** uranium mining operations in **Amrabad Tiger Reserve part of** Nallamala forests and other areas of Telangana.

### Background

---

- About 63 organizations, including political parties, several environment activists have come together to form the **'Struggle Committee against Uranium Mining'**
- This committee aims to strengthen and take forward the campaign **'Save Nallamalla Forest'** to stop mining in the tiger reserve.
- Uranium Mining in these areas also threatens the survival and livelihoods of **Chenchu tribals**, who live in the Amrabad forests.

### Legal Framework For Uranium Mining

---

- In pursuance to **entry at serial No. 54 of List I**, the Parliament has passed **'The Mines & Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957'**. However, with respect to minor minerals, the rulemaking powers have been delegated to the States through this act.
- Since **Uranium** is a **major mineral**, it is managed by the **Union Government** under provisions of **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957**.
- The policy and legislation relating to **Major minerals** are managed by the Ministry of Mines But Uranium being an **atomic mineral** is managed by the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)**.
- Many of these mineral deposits are found in rich forest reserves and thus approval of Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change becomes necessary.

## Uranium Mining In India

---

- In India, Uranium deposits occur in the **Dharwar rocks**.
- It occurs along the Singbhum Copper belt (**Jharkhand**); Udaipur, Alwar and Jhunjhunu districts of **Rajasthan**, Durg district of **Chhattisgarh**, Bhandara district of **Maharashtra** and Kullu district of **Himachal Pradesh**.
- Significant quantity of reserves were recently discovered in parts of **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana between Seshachalam forest and Sresailam (Southern edge of Andhra to Southern edge of Telangana)**.
- Uranium is used as a fuel for **nuclear power reactors for electricity generation**, in the manufacture of **radioisotopes for medical applications** and in **nuclear science** research.

## Impacts of Uranium Mining

---

- Drilling of **4,000 deep holes** will end up destroying the Amrabad Tiger Reserve which is home to a vast variety of wildlife.
- The exploration will expose and **pollute** surface water, groundwater and leech minerals, and dangerous chemicals into the **Nagarjunasagar Dam**.
- Construction of roads will **fragment and degrade the dry forests**, which may never recover after such a massive exercise.
- Rare, endangered and unique species of flora and fauna and overall biodiversity will be destroyed.
- **Radiations** from these mines will cause harm to the lives of people who live around them, which has been observed in Jharkhand's Jaduguda.

### Nallamala Forest Reserve

- Nallamala Forest Reserve is located in **Nallamala Ranges** of the **Eastern Ghats**.
- A part of the forest reserve belongs to the **Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve which is the largest Tiger Reserve in India**.
- **Amrabad Tiger Reserve** also lies in the Nallamala hills.

### Chenchu Tribe

- The Chenchus are Scheduled Tribe in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Odisha. But many Chenchus live in the dense Nallamala forest of Andhra Pradesh.
- They are an aboriginal tribe whose traditional way of life has been based on hunting and gathering.
- The Chenchus speak the Chenchu language, a member of the **Dravidian language family**.
- Chenchu's relationship with non-tribal people has been largely symbiotic.

**Source: TH**