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Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary

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Why in News

The **Assam** government has decided to **upgrade** Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary **into a National Park**.

The announcement comes just months after the **National Board of Wildlife (NBWL)** gave conditional clearance to a coal mining project by Coal India Limited (CIL) in the Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve.



Key Points

- As a national park, its importance will increase and new rules will bring increased vigilance to the area. While the first proposal to accord national park status to the region dates back to 1995, **Dehing Patkai was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 2004.**
- **Description:** Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary is located within the **larger Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve**, which spreads across the coal- and oil-rich districts of **Upper Assam (Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts).**
 - The Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary is also known as the **Jeypore Rainforest.**
 - Dehing is the **name of the river** that flows through this forest and **Patkai is the hill** at the foot of which the sanctuary lies.
 - The **oldest refinery of Asia in Digboi** and ‘open cast’ coal mining at Lido are located near the sanctuary.
 - It is famous for **Assam Valley Tropical Wet Evergreen Forests** bordering Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Fauna:** Rare fauna found in the region include **Chinese pangolin**, flying fox, wild pig, sambar, barking deer, gaur, serow and Malayan giant squirrels.
 - It is the only sanctuary in India which is home to **seven different species of wild cats** - tiger, leopard, clouded leopard, leopard cat, golden cat, jungle cat and marbled cat.
 - **Assamese macaque**, a primate found in the forest, is in the red list of **Near Threatened species.**
 - It has the highest concentration of the **rare endangered White Winged Wood Duck.**
- **Flora:** Dehing Patkai is a deciduous rainforest interspersed with semi-evergreen and lush green flora.
- **Sixth National Park:** Post upgradation, Dehing Patkai will be the **sixth national park in Assam** — the other five being **Kaziranga**, Nameri, **Manas**, **Dibru-Saikhowa** and Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park.

National Parks

National Park implies an area that is exclusively designated by the government for the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity due to its natural, cultural and historical significance.

Wildlife Sanctuaries

Wildlife sanctuaries refer to an area which provides protection and favourable living conditions to the wild animals.

National parks are highly restricted areas, which are not open to all the people.

Wildlife sanctuaries have lesser restrictions than national parks.

For example: To visit national parks, official permission is to be taken from the requisite authorities.

In contrast, no official permission is to be taken to visit a wildlife sanctuary.

Human activities are strictly prohibited in the National parks.

Human activities are allowed to a limited extent in the wildlife sanctuaries.

The national parks have clearly marked boundaries (fixed by legislation).

Boundaries of wildlife sanctuaries are not sacrosanct.

The International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has declared National Parks in **Category II of the protected areas.**

Wildlife sanctuaries are grouped in **Category IV of protected areas.**

Most of the national parks were initially wildlife sanctuaries, which were then upgraded to national parks.

A national park cannot be downgraded to a Wildlife Sanctuary.

Tourism is **allowed in both of them.**

Source: IE