



Goldman Environmental Prize 2024

Source: IE

Alok Shukla, a forest and tribal rights activist, has been awarded the prestigious [Goldman Environmental Prize 2024](#) for his successful campaign that saved **4.45 lakh acres of biodiversity-rich forests** from 21 planned [coal mines in Chhattisgarh's Hasdeo Aranya region](#).

- The forest of the Hasdeo Aranya is spread over 1.70 lakh hectares across the districts of Korba, Surajpur, and Surguja in Chhattisgarh, known as the **"lungs of Chhattisgarh"**, with rich biodiversity and home to **25 endangered species**, 92 bird species, and 167 rare and medicinal plant species.
- The **Hasdeo River**, which flows into the [Mahanadi River](#), is fed by these forests and supplies water to the **Hasdeo Bango reservoir**, irrigating 741,000 acres of farmland.
 - Chhattisgarh, where 44% of the land is forested, has the **third largest forest coverage in India**.
 - Furthermore, nearly 15,000 Indigenous peoples rely on the Hasdeo Aranya forests for their livelihood, cultural heritage, and food.
- The Goldman Environmental Prize also known as the **Green Nobel Awards** awarded by the Goldman Environmental Foundation. The Prize was founded by **Richard and Rhonda Goldman in 1989**.
 - It recognises grassroots environmental leaders from six regions (Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, South and Central America) and lastly, islands and island nations.
 - The winners are selected by an international jury and awarded USD 200,000 as prize money.

Read more: [Protests in Chhattisgarh Over Coal Mining](#)

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