Gadchiroli: Mining, Displacement and Resistance







Briefing Note for InSAF India Session # 12, 'Beyond the Deadline: Bridging International Solidarities with Adivasi Resistance to Ongoing Developmental Violence' (9 October 2026)

This note is a factual briefing for Session 12 of InSAF India's series *Deadline or Death Sentence: State Violence and Indigenous (Adivasi) People's Resistance in India*. It covers mining, iron ore processing, displacement and Adivasi resistance in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra.

Figures come from news reports, government documents and civil society reports, cited in the Sources section.

1. Mining and iron ore processing projects

As of now only one large iron ore mine operates in Gadchiroli today, Lloyds Metals and Energy Ltd (LMEL) at Surjagarh, but it is being expanded nearly 18-fold and a chain of processing plants, steel plants and further mines is planned around it. Gadchiroli holds about 178.61 million tonnes of iron ore reserves (NewsClick). By 2017 there were 25 sanctioned and proposed mines in the district (Korchi study).

Iron and Surjagad is not the only target of the corporate-state extraction nexus. Iron ore is also found at Bande, Damkondawahi, Besewada, Wadvi (Etapalli), Agri-Masheli and Zendepar (Korchi), Gogaon and Adapalli (Gadchiroli) and Deulgaon (Armori). The district also has granite (Gadchiroli, Kurkheda, Armori talukas), coal near Wadsa, copper at Murumgaon (Dhanora), zinc at Malewada (Kurkheda), quartz at Ghot (Chamorshi), dolomite in Aheri and Sironcha, and mica around Kurkheda, Etapalli and Kasansur (Poinkar, Kartavya Sadhana; 2016 booklet of Visthapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan).

1a. The Extractive Exploitation: Mines (operating and proposed)

Project	Location	Company	Area	Status (latest known)
Surjagarh iron ore mine	Surjagarh hills, Etapalli tehsil; whole lease inside Bhamragad Reserve Forest	Lloyds Metals and Energy Ltd (MDO: Thriveni Earthmovers)	348.09 ha lease, within a Surjagad hill area of 811.16 ha	Operating. Lease 2007 for 20 years; extended to 50 years (to May 2057) in 2018 under the amended MMDR Act. Regular operations only from 2021 (Hindustan Times). Capacity raised 3 → 10 MTPA (EC March 2023) → 26 MTPA hematite + 45 MTPA BHQ, "55 MTPA" (EC, June 2025). Total excavation up to 60 MTPA. Land Conflict Watch counts 3,736 affected households

Project	Location	Company	Area	Status (latest known)
Six new Surjagarh hill-range blocks (details in table 1a-ii)	Surjagarh and Damkonda-wahi pattis, (Etapalli Block)	Omsairam Steels & Alloys, JSW Steel, Sunflag Iron & Steel, Universal Industrial Equipment & Technical Services, Natural Resources Energy	4,684 ha (composite licences)	Auctioned 12–17 May 2023 as composite licences (prospecting first, then mining). Company filings show Letters of Intent, not executed leases; news reports calling them "leased" overstate the legal stage. Overlap CFR lands already titled. Companies are reported to plan about ₹20,000 crore of investment. Local study estimates at least 40,900 people will get displaced (The Wire). Mining not begun as far as reported; JSW says its 25 MTPA steel plant waits on securing mines (SSMB, May 2026)
Zendepar and Korchi cluster	Zendepar, Agri, Masheli, Sohale, Bharritola; Korchi tehsil	Five lease holders at Zendepar (e.g. Nirmal Eng., M.K. Ajitsaria)	46 ha at Zendepar; about 1,017 ha across the cluster	Proposed; repeatedly stalled by gram sabha opposition and a 2012 poll boycott (LCW, Adivasi Lives Matter)
Surjagad Wooria Hill (Gopani)	Surjagad, Etapalli; Bhamragad forest	Gopani Iron & Power (India) Pvt Ltd	153.09 ha forest land	Forest-clearance proposal kept in abeyance from 2017 pending a ruling on the validity of Gopani's Letter of Intent; MoEFCC later ordered a site inspection under the 2023 forest rules (MoEFCC letter, 2018; MoEFCC letter, later)
Puser Pahadi	Pavimuranda gram panchayat, Chamorshi tehsil (~50 km from Gadchiroli)	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Proposed; 22 gram sabhas resolved against it on 23 May 2026 (Pudhari)
Six further iron ore mines sought from Centre	Gadchiroli district	State (MSMC) for steel-hub users	Not disclosed	Maharashtra asked the Union mines ministry for six more mines in June 2026 (Deccan Herald)

1a-ii. The six Surjagad composite-licence blocks: what official filings confirm

Block	Company	Area	Villages	Stage (from company filings)
Surjagad-1	Natural Resources Energy Pvt Ltd (JV: Sarda Energy 51%, Shyam Metallics promoter Dorite Tracon 49%)	1,526 ha	Angudra, Ramunkal Meta, Puske Meta, Negal Meta	Tender notice 3 Feb 2023; Letter of Intent March 2024, valid one year; bid 126.35% of IBM price (Business Standard)
Surjagad-4	JSW Steel	Not disclosed in filing	Not disclosed	Preferred bidder 15 May 2023 after 12 May auction; bid 131.05% (SteelOrbis)
Surjagad-6	Sunflag Iron & Steel	658 ha	Ramunkal (near Nandwadi)	Preferred bidder 18 May 2023; Letter of Intent 14 Dec 2023; bid 118.45% (Sunflag filing)
Remaining three blocks	Omsairam Steels & Alloys; Universal Industrial Equipment & Technical Services; one further block	About 2,500 ha together (by subtraction)	Not verified	Not verified; these companies are unlisted, so no exchange filings exist

Filings confirm 2,184 ha of the 4,684 ha.

1b. Processing plants, steel plants and land acquisition

Project	Location	Company	Area / scale	Status
Iron ore beneficiation plant and allied facilities (45 MTPA BHQ)	Hedri (near Surjagarh), Etapalli	LMEL	937 ha (9.4 sq km) forest diversion; 1.23 lakh trees to be felled	In-principle forest clearance 12 May 2025, in three phases (300 + 200 + 237 ha); compensatory afforestation in Chiplun, Ratnagiri (Infrakeys / Indian Express). Final forest clearance 15 Apr 2026; environment clearance 12 May 2026. On 13 May 2026 the state exempted it from wildlife clearance, saying it is not in a tiger corridor, yet 8 of

Project	Location	Company	Area / scale	Status
				its 9 forest compartments (196, 197, 273–276, 298, 301) lie in the NTCA-approved Tadoba–Indravati corridor (Indian Express, 1 Jun 2026). MPCB held the public hearing (MPCB)
Crushing and processing plants	Hedri, Mallampadi, Bande	LMEL	Not disclosed	Allowed under the March 2023 10 MTPA clearance
Grinding plant + slurry pipeline	Hedri → Konsari	LMEL	5 MTPA grinding; ~85 km pipeline, 10 MTPA	Inaugurated 22 July 2025 (Hitavada)
Pellet plant	Konsari, Chamorshi tehsil	LMEL	4 MTPA	Inaugurated July 2025
Integrated steel plant	Konsari	LMEL	4.5 MTPA plus a 483 MW captive power plant (488 MW total), 2×4.5 MTPA grinding, 2×4 MTPA pellet; promised 20,000 jobs (MPCB). Public hearing held about June 2023	Foundation stone July 2025; 30-month target (The Week)
Sponge iron (DRI) plant	Konsari	LMEL	100 acres bought from 37 farmers	Operating
Lloyds steel complex expansion	Chamorshi tehsil	LMEL	4,500 ha sought from MIDC; ₹45,000 crore	Proposal with MIDC (SSMB, March 2026)
JSW integrated steel plant	Chamorshi tehsil, 14 villages	JSW Steel	25 MTPA; ~3,000–3,700 ha (~9,100 acres); ₹1 lakh crore	MIDC acquisition under way; objection period extended 90 days after June 2026 protests (National Herald, Swarajya)

Project	Location	Company	Area / scale	Status
Surjagad Ispat integrated steel plant	Gadchiroli	₹10,000 crore, at Wadlapeth village (Hindustan Times)	Under development per district collector (Deccan Herald)	
All MIDC steel-hub applications	Mainly Chamorshi	About a dozen firms	11,000+ ha; ₹1.88 lakh crore	Pending MIDC "pass-through" acquisition (SSMB)
Gadchiroli airport	Hirapur, Gurwala, Rakhi, Shirpur Chak	State	311 ha; ₹77 crore compensation	Approved 12 May 2026; paused after protests

Supporting infrastructure includes the Wadsa–Gadchiroli railway, four-lane roads into Etapalli, and the proposed Shaktipeeth Expressway to Goa, which locals call a "conveyor belt for minerals" (National Herald).

Indirect impact: the state promises over ₹2.6 lakh crore of investment and 70,000 jobs. No consolidated estimate exists of total land, forest or people affected by the whole steel-hub plan.

2. Impacts on environment, livelihoods, culture and jobs

The Surjagarh mine has already turned streams red, buried paddy fields under silt and cut people off from their sacred hill, at only a fraction of its planned capacity. Gadchiroli is about 76% forest (National Herald) and holds over 70% of Maharashtra's forest cover (Counterview).

Forests, trees and wildlife

- **1.23 lakh trees** on 937 ha are cleared for felling for the Hedri beneficiation plant alone. Compensatory afforestation is sited in Chiplun, Ratnagiri, on the opposite side of the state (Infrakeys).
- The mine and plant sit on the **Tadoba–Indravati tiger corridor**, linking Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh forests. The NTCA raised questions about the approvals, without effect (National Herald).
- The 3 → 10 MTPA expansion alone meant about **800–1,000 ore trucks a day** (Ground Report). At 55–60 MTPA the excavation will be roughly six times larger again.
- Further expected effects: groundwater drawdown from beneficiation, topsoil loss, river sedimentation, more floods and more human–wildlife conflict (Counterview).

Water pollution and crop damage downstream

- Red iron oxide, chemical effluent and debris run off the hill into streams. Fresh water has turned red and unusable; fields are covered in silt (The Wire).

- **Mallampadi** (4 km from the mine): about 22 of 42 families have had farmland ruined by mine tailings. Affected families report losses of ₹2.5–3 lakh a year. Paddy that once stood waist-high is now replaced by waist-high silt. Villagers now rely on company borewells (Scroll).
- Compensation from Lloyds was typically about **₹8,000** per affected family. Families without land titles or ST certificates (mostly Oraon migrants from Chhattisgarh) were refused state compensation.
- **Ajay Toppo**, an Oraon farmer of Mallampadi, died by suicide on 31 August 2022, the night he was told at a jansunwai (public hearing) that he was not eligible for compensation for silt-damaged fields (Scroll).
- **Mine-worker deaths:** three mine workers died on 6 August 2023; the deaths of other local and migrant workers go unreported (The Wire, 15 Aug 2023).
- **Health complaints**: swollen eyes, fevers, body aches; livestock and poultry deaths (one villager lost about 146 of 150 chickens). Iron ore dust is linked to metal fume fever and siderosis.

Livelihood loss

Forest produce (tendu, mahua, bamboo, fish, herbs) and rain-fed paddy are the base of the local economy. Tendu income under CFR is substantial, though figures differ: reports cite ₹400 crore earned by 160 gram sabhas in 2017 (Scroll), while TISS researcher Geetonjoy Sahu found 162 villages earned ₹23.36 crore in 2017–18 (FACAM report via SabrangIndia). The lower, research-based figure is safer to quote. Madia Gond uses at least 79 native plant species to treat 34 ailments, knowledge tied to the forest. Mining converts self-provisioning farmers into low-wage workers; in Mallampadi “almost every family” now has one member working at the mine.

Culture and sacred sites

- **Surjagarh hill** is the seat of Thakurdeo (“god of gods”) of the Madia Gond Tribe. A yatra of three to four days in the first week of January draws thousands of Adivasis and other communities from Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, with music, dance and offerings. Local tradition holds that Veer Baburao Shedmake rested and planned his 1857 revolt against the British on this hill (Poinkar, Kartavya Sadhana).
- **Living landscape:** Madia Gond belief holds that hills are home to the *Khodk* and streams to the *Kaniyam*; cutting hills or polluting water invites drought and disease. Ancestral memorial sites (*gumiya*) mark the forests. The Madia are a PVTG of only about 62,000 people (2011), found only in Gadchiroli. Since mining restarted, people can reach the hilltop shrine only during the yatra (Ground Report).
- The river by the shrine at the foot of the hill runs reddish-brown from tailings (Scroll).
- Other threatened sites include Damkondawahi, Bablai Mata and the sacred groves of Zendepar (Round Table India).
- The influx of outsiders and security forces has increased harassment of women, as documented in the 2023 report *Mining, Repression and Resistance* (BehanBox).

Jobs: promised versus delivered

The gap between headline job promises and documented local, permanent jobs is large, and there is no public source on exact information about jobs by locality and permanent or contract status.

Villagers say Adivasis get "lowly work" while outsiders take skilled posts. Activists say locals are pushed into security-guard and unskilled labour (Counterview).

3. The Todgatta anti-displacement movement (2023)

From 11 March to 20 November 2023, Madia Gond villagers held a peaceful, rotating sit-in at Todgatta for about 255 days, until police broke it up and arrested its leaders. It is the longest continuous Adivasi occupation against mining in Gadchiroli's recent history.

Where and who. Todgatta lies in Wangeturi gram panchayat, Etapalli tehsil, near the Chhattisgarh border, about 80 km from the Lloyds mine and about 150 km (six hours) from Gadchiroli town. The movement ran under two banners: *Damkondawahi Bachao Sangharsh Samiti* and *Surjagarh Patti Paramparik Gotul Samiti* (Ground Report). Madia Gond are a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). The Damkondawahi Bachao Samiti was formed by about 100 gram sabhas: 70 of the Surjagad traditional ilaka (area) and about 30 from across the border in Chhattisgarh (Poinkar).

Why it began. The trigger was news of a four-lane road from Chhattisgarh and a Jio tower through Todgatta, which villagers read as groundwork for the six new mines. Demands were:

1. Cancel the six Surjagarh/Damkondawahi blocks (4,684 ha) and all proposed mines.
2. Cancel the Lloyds expansion and crushing/processing plant.
3. Stop new police stations and camps built without gram sabha consent (Pipli Burgi, then planned at Todgatta, Morewada, Gardewada, Jharewada).
4. Respect PESA and FRA: gram sabha consent and full CFR recognition.
5. Drop cases against protesters.
6. Treat the traditional gram sabha's decision as final, recognise resource, cultural and habitat rights, and scrap the Forest Conservation Amendment Act 2023 (from the demands adopted with the Community Network against Protected Areas).

How it was sustained. Each village sent representatives in turns of three days, each standing for about ten people back home, so no family lost its farm or forest work (Ground Report). Around 30 bamboo huts (*deras*) stood at the site. Each morning in the gotul, protesters honoured Birsa Munda, Baburao Shedmake, Rani Durgavati, the Phules, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh, then read the Preamble of the Constitution translated into Madia. Attendance was logged daily. Lalsu Nogoti called it "an educational centre" in politics (Scroll).

Crackdown, 20 November 2023. It came the day leaders were in Delhi for a FACAM press conference releasing *Report on Mining, Repression and Resistance*:

- Police and C-60 commandos surrounded the site after two days of drone surveillance.

- Eight leaders were flown out by helicopter: Mangesh Naroti, Pradeep Hedo, Sai Kawdo, Gillu Kawdo, Laxman Jetti, Mahadu Kawdo, Nikesh Naroti and Ganesh Korea (some reports add Dulsa Kawashi). About 25 more were taken in trucks, which the Samiti says belonged to the company.
- Huts were wrecked and burnt; phones seized; women lathi-charged by male police, some losing consciousness (Maktoob).
- 21 were charged under IPC 353 (FIR 0074/23, registered only on 21 November) and jailed in Chandrapur. The remand plea alleged attempted murder of police, explosives and Maoist funding; the Samiti called these fabricated (Front Line Defenders).

4. Forest Rights Act and PESA: success and subversion

Gadchiroli is India's showcase for community forest rights, yet in the mining belt the state has under-recognised CFR, bypassed gram sabha consent and now legislated to shield the mining authority from courts.

Status and success stories

- **First in India.** India's first CFR title was recognised in Gadchiroli district in August 2009 (Down to Earth).
- **Scale.** Gadchiroli has the highest number of CFR claims in India (Scroll). A 2022 presentation lists about 1,438 CFR villages in the district (CSE, *figure to verify*). Maharashtra had 11,07,487 ha under CFR by November 2022 (WRI India).
- **Legal base.** Maharashtra's Scheduled Areas were notified on 2 December 1965; the state's PESA Rules came on 4 March 2014.
- **PESA coverage.** 1,311 of Gadchiroli's 1,567 villages fall under PESA, so no mining should proceed without gram sabha consent (Counterview).
- **Tendu self-governance.** Gram sabhas earned about ₹400 crore from tendu in 2017. Korchi's 87-village Maha Gram Sabha (formed 2017) runs its own tendu auctions over 17,514 ha of CFR forest (ISB Forest Governance).
- **Negotiating as rights-holders.** Korchi CFR villages won compensation from PGCIL for trees cut for a power line, valued by gram sabha methods.
- **Electoral power.** In 2017 gram sabha-backed anti-mining candidates won a three-quarters majority on Bhamragad Panchayat Samiti.

How state action violates FRA and PESA

1. **Under-allocating CFR around the mines.** In 2015 the state granted CFR *suo motu*, without gram sabha consultation, to 13+ villages on both sides of Surjagad hill. It covered about half their traditional area and none of the hill itself; some villages got nothing. Boundary documents were not given to every village and used technical notation villagers could not read (The Wire, 15 Aug 2023; BehanBox). Zendepar's customary forest is 395 ha but CFR was recognised on only 117 ha. Earlier, villages got a third to three-quarters of what they claimed.

2. **Leasing over titled CFR land.** All six 2023 blocks overlap CFR already granted (The Wire).
3. **No gram sabha consent.** The 2007 Surjagarh lease and later expansions went ahead without consent of affected gram sabhas, as PESA and FRA require (Front Line Defenders). Zendepar's forest was reserved for mining by the collector without gram sabha consent.
4. **Public hearings far from affected villages.** The 10 MTPA hearing (27 Oct 2022) was at the Gadchiroli collectorate, about 150 km away, under heavy police guard. Entry required Aadhaar; activists and journalists were refused. Villagers allege buses of paid outsiders filled the venue. The Bombay HC dismissed the challenge.
5. **Policing built without consent.** New police stations at Pipli Burgi, Wangeturi and elsewhere were placed without gram sabha approval.
6. **Legal immunity for the mining authority.** The 16-member GDMA, chaired by the Chief Minister, was created by ordinance on 2 June 2025 and the Act of July 2025. It states that no suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding lies against its members, or its nine-member executive committee under the Chief Secretary, for anything done in good faith. That committee approves tenders for mine developer-operators and the authority can frame its own regulations. The Additional Chief Secretary (Mining) said the clause was meant only to protect government resolutions from challenge (Hindustan Times, 16 Jun 2025; India Code).
7. **Wildlife safeguards bypassed.** The state exempted Lloyds' 9.4 sq km project from wildlife clearance on 13 May 2026, against NTCA corridor maps (Indian Express).
8. **Habitat rights for the Madia PVTG not recognised.** FRA allows PVTGs habitat rights; activists say the district administration has not moved on them, and separate gram sabha meetings have not been held in all proposed mining areas (Poinkar).
9. **Pass-through acquisition.** MIDC acquires land for private steel firms, sidestepping direct negotiation with gram sabhas (SSMB).
10. **Forest Development Corporation leases.** 51,823 ha leased to FDCM, mostly inside village traditional boundaries (Korchi study).
11. **Migrant Adivasis excluded.** Oraon families settled 50+ years are denied ST status and FRA titles, so they cannot claim compensation.

Critics expect forest to be reclassified as "wasteland" and CFR curtailed to clear land for the steel hub (National Herald).

5. Repression of villagers and the movement

The pattern is consistent: peaceful anti-mining protest is labelled Maoist, leaders get preventive notices, detentions and criminal cases, and new police stations follow the mines. A 2014 Ministry of Tribal Affairs committee (Xaxa report) flagged this criminalisation of Adivasis near projects in Scheduled Areas (Scroll).

Date	Incident	Who	Source
20 Nov 2023	Todgatta camp destroyed; lathi charge incl. on women; huts burnt; phones seized; 8 leaders flown out by helicopter; 21 charged under IPC 353 with allegations of explosives and Maoist funding; jailed in Chandrapur; FIR registered a day after detention	Mangesh Naroti, Pradeep Hedo, Sai, Gillu and Mahadu Kawdo, Laxman Jetti, Nikesh Naroti, Ganesh Korea and others	Front Line Defenders, The Wire
Nov 2023	Two days of drone surveillance of the protest site before the raid	Todgatta protesters	The Wire
30 Aug 2023	Chhattisgarh police surround Todgatta at night and detain shopkeeper Mithun Roy, a regular protester	Mithun Roy	Scroll
Feb–Jun 2023	Section 110 CrPC "habitual offender" notice calling him a Naxal supporter; ordered to report weekly to Hedri police station for four months, held for hours and abused	Mangesh Naroti; also Mangesh Holi and others	Scroll
2021–2023	Cases under IPC 110 and 353	Nitin Pada, Ramdas Jarate, Sainu Gota, Sheela Gota, Pattu Pottami, Jaishree Velda, Sushila Naroti, Rakesh Alam, Mangesh Naroti and others	Ground Report
Jun 2023	Police station built at Pipli Burgi without gram sabha consent; more planned at Todgatta, Morewada, Gardewada, Jharewada	Surjagarh villages	The Wire
2 Jun 2023	40–50 police and six forest officials arrive at Morewada to survey a police-station site; gram sabha turns them back	Morewada gram sabha (secretary Dasru Gota)	FACAM report via SabrangIndia
Oct 2022	Movement leaders kept out of the expansion public hearing by police; buses of outsiders brought in	Surjagarh Patti gram sabhas	BehanBox

Date	Incident	Who	Source
25–29 Oct 2021	10,000+ marchers at Etapalli; police claim Naxal involvement and break up the sit-in. ~300 police detain leaders at dawn; held at Aheri police camp even after court bail; charged under IPC and Epidemic Diseases Act; Sec 107 notices	Sainu Gota, Sheela Gota, Ramdas Jarate, Jaishree Velda, Nitin Pada, Amol Marakwar; Lalsu Nogoti, Prajwal Namulwar, Pramila Kudiyami named in FIR	SabrangIndia, HRDA
6 Jun 2018	Arrested under UAPA in the Bhima Koregaon case a day before filing a petition in Nagpur HC; 300 gram sabhas passed resolutions in his support	Mahesh Raut (PESA/FRA organiser, anti-Surjagarh campaigner)	The Wire
Feb 2018	Killed by C-60 while bird-hunting and declared a Naxal next day; family alleges fake encounter	Ramkumar Khess, Koindwarshi village	Scroll
2017	Booked under IPC 353 for protesting outside Gatta police station against the sexual assault of two Adivasi girls	Mangesh Naroti	FACAM report
2017	Adivasi women who accused C-60 of rape reportedly “kidnapped”; village elders and anti-mining activists arrested around ZP elections	Incl. Ramdas Jarate; attempt to arrest Sainu and Sheela Gota	The Wire
2016–2018	Security camps and extra battalions built around Surjagarh; CDRO finds company, administration and CRPF “work together”	Surjagarh region	CDRO report
Ongoing	28 armed outposts upgraded to police stations, taking the district to 57 (2023)	District-wide	Scroll

6. Timeline: Surjagarh and Developmental Violence in Gadchiroli

Two decades of resisted, stop-start mining (2005–2020) gave way after 2021 to rapid expansion, timed with the state's push to declare the district "Maoist-free". Listed in chronological order.

Date	Event
2005	25 mining projects proposed in Gadchiroli; first EC hearing for Surjagarh
2 Dec 1965	Presidential order declares Scheduled Areas in Maharashtra, covering Gadchiroli
2 Jan 2006	Zendepar (Korchi) iron ore lease granted by state
2007	Lloyds granted 348.09 ha Surjagarh lease, initially 20 years, later 50
Aug 2009	Mendha Lekha and Marda receive India's first CFR titles
2011	Mining starts at Surjagarh despite opposition
4 Mar 2014	Maharashtra notifies PESA Rules
2015	Suo motu CFR titles to 13+ villages around Surjagarh hill, covering about half the traditional area and none of the hill
Feb 2012	Korchi villages boycott ZP polls over Zendepar mining; administration gives assurance
2013	Maoists kill Lloyds VP Jaspal Singh Dhillon and two others
Apr 2016	Lloyds resumes mining after force majeure halt
5 Dec 2016	70-village assembly at Surjagarh resolves to halt mining and cancel all leases
24 Dec 2016	Maoists torch about 70–80 mining trucks; operations halt
Aug 2017	Zendepar public hearing held in Gadchiroli town despite gram sabha opposition
2017	Anti-mining candidates (Lalsu Nogoti, Sainu Gota) win ZP seats
2018	Lloyds lease extended from 20 to 50 years under amended MMDR Act
6 Jun 2018	Activist Mahesh Raut arrested under UAPA (Bhima Koregaon case)
Jan–Feb 2019	Mining halted after truck attack; some villagers rally for jobs at mine
2021	Lloyds restarts with Thriveni Earthmovers; full 3 MTPA by 2022. Four-lane highway work begins and is halted by local opposition

Date	Event
25 Oct 2021	10,000+ Madia Adivasis march to Etapalli SDO office against 25 proposed mines; indefinite sit-in follows
29 Oct 2021	~300 police break up the sit-in and detain leaders
Aug 2022	Ajay Toppo dies by suicide after compensation for silt damage is refused
27 Oct 2022	10 MTPA public hearing held at Gadchiroli collectorate, ~150 km from the 13 affected villages; Aadhaar checks, activists and journalists denied entry
Dec 2022	State clears ₹20,000 crore Lloyds project (incl. Konsari sponge iron)
3 Feb 2023	DGM tender notice for 19 blocks incl. six on Surjagarh hill range
10 Mar 2023	MoEFCC grants EC for 3 → 10 MTPA plus crushing plants
11 Mar 2023	Todgatta indefinite sit-in begins
12–17 May 2023	Six blocks (4,684 ha) auctioned; JSW (Surjagad-4) and Sunflag (Surjagad-6) declared preferred bidders
2 Jun 2023	Morewada gram sabha turns back 40–50 police and forest officials surveying land for a police station
11 Jun 2023	MLA Dharmaraj Atram visits Todgatta, promises to stop new mines
Jun 2023	Public hearing for Lloyds Konsari steel plant
6 Aug 2023	Three mine workers killed
8 Oct 2023	Nogoti raises Todgatta at UN Human Rights Council
20 Nov 2023	Todgatta camp destroyed; 21 arrested
14 Dec 2023	Sunflag receives Letter of Intent for Surjagad-6 (658 ha)
Mar 2024	NREPL receives Letter of Intent for Surjagad-1 (1,526 ha)
2024	Bombay HC (Nagpur) dismisses PILs against the expansion (date to verify)
Dec 2024	Public hearing for 10 → 26 MTPA + 45 MTPA BHQ
1 Jan 2025	CM inaugurates Lloyds units; declares north Gadchiroli “Naxal-free”
22 Jan 2025	JSW signs ₹3 lakh crore MoU for Gadchiroli
Apr 2025	Cabinet approves Gadchiroli District Mining Authority (GDMA)
2 Jun 2025	GDMA Ordinance promulgated with legal-immunity clause

Date	Event
12 May 2025	In-principle forest clearance: 937 ha, 1.23 lakh trees for beneficiation plant
25 Jun 2025	EC for 26 MTPA hematite / 55 MTPA total
18 Jul 2025	GDMA Act 2025 enacted, with courts barred from proceedings against its actions
22 Jul 2025	Pellet plant, grinding plant, slurry pipeline inaugurated; steel plant foundation laid
15 Oct 2025	Senior Maoist leader Bhupathi surrenders in Gadchiroli
Mar 2026	MIDC receives 11,000+ ha steel-hub requests; plans ~9,100 acres for JSW
31 Mar 2026	Centre's "Maoist-free" deadline
15 Apr 2026	Final forest clearance for Lloyds 9.4 sq km mining-and-processing project
12 May 2026	Environment clearance for the same project; airport land acquisition (311 ha) approved
13 May 2026	State exempts the project from wildlife clearance, claiming it is outside the tiger corridor
23 May 2026	22 gram sabhas oppose Puser Pahadi mine
5 Jun 2026	~6,000 farmers march; airport acquisition paused
18 Jun 2026	State seeks six more iron ore mines from Centre
2 Oct 2026	Indefinite dharna against airport acquisition begins at Gurwala

Sources: Land Conflict Watch, Ground Report, Infrakeys, India Code (GDMA Act), Outlook Business, Navbharat, Indian Express, Hindustan Times, Poinkar, company filings in table 1a-ii.

7. Present status and the road ahead

Resistance has spread from the Surjagarh hills to the other forest areas of district and also to the plains of Chamorshi, where land for steel plants and an airport is being acquired, and it now joins Adivasi gram sabhas with non-Adivasi farmers. Meanwhile the Lloyds mine keeps expanding with little public scrutiny.

Where things stand (October 2026)

- **Surjagarh:** mining continues and is ramping up under the 26/55 MTPA clearance. Since the 2023 crackdown there has been no reported large occupation at the mine site.
- **Chamorshi land struggle:** about 6,000 farmers marched on 5 June 2026. The state paused airport acquisition and extended objections to MIDC acquisition by 90 days (Swarajya). Farmers have since held a weekly "Kheti Bachao Mangalwar", blocked roads in Ashti against drone surveys, met the Governor, and began an indefinite dharna at Gurwala on 2 October 2026 (Navbharat).

- **Gahubodi–Jamgiri:** Adivasi farmers demand cancellation of land agreements signed with a private company (August 2026).
- **Puser Pahadi:** 22 gram sabhas, district gram sabha president Nitin Pada, CPI(M) and Azad Samaj Party have vowed a mass movement against the proposed mine (Pudhari).
- **Korchi/Zendepar:** gram sabha federation remains organised and opposed.
- **State narrative:** "Maoist-free" Gadchiroli as India's "steel city"; surrendered Maoists employed by Lloyds; claims that mining touches under 0.5% of forest.

What lies ahead

The next two years will decide whether the six Surjagarh blocks, six more state-sought mines and 11,000+ ha of steel-hub land go ahead. Key pressure points: NBWL wildlife clearance for the beneficiation plant, MPCB consent to operate at 26 MTPA, MIDC acquisition hearings, and legal challenges to the GDMA Act's ouster of court review. Gadchiroli is a preview for Bastar and other post-insurgency mineral zones.

Points for the solidarity discussion

1. **Corporate accountability abroad.** Track Lloyds, JSW and Sunflag supply chains and investors; Lloyds' Curtin University (Australia) partnership is one international link.
2. **Document what the state does not.** Independent water and soil testing downstream of Surjagarh; a jobs audit (local, Adivasi, permanent vs contract); a census of CFR overlap with leases.
3. **Legal support.** Pending cases from 2021 and 2023; GDMA Act challenge; FRA and PESA consent claims.
4. **Amplify gram sabha alternatives.** Korchi Maha Gram Sabha and tendu self-governance show a development model the communities themselves chose.
5. **Academic freedom link.** Researchers and journalists face restricted access to Etapalli; InSAF can support safe field documentation and publication.

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For Sessions 1–11 of the InSAF India series see: Deadline or Death Sentence: State Violence and Indigenous (Adivasi) Peoples' Resistance in India (https://www.academicfreedomindia.com/deadline-or-death-sentence
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQ9WmWXLgHOq677X8JOktJIncdxqDq16h