NEWS LETTER

October 2026

JUSTICE IN MINING NETWORK (JiMN)

SOUTH ASIA

Message

Dear Readers,

Johar!

In the month of October several concerning issues occurred in the areas of Adivasi rights, mining, displacement, environmental degradation, and democratic struggle throughout the country. These issues serve as a reminder that the fight over natural resources is not just about rights over property but for survival, identity, , and self-determination. Therefore despite being arrested, intimidated, and subjected to police repression, Adivasi villages in Niyamgiri and Sijimali continue to resist mining operations.

The detentions and incarceration of tribal rights activists Dr. Randall Sequeira and Laxman Naik have generated major concerns about the on-going criminalisation of democratic dissent. Meanwhile, Dhinkia villagers' fights against alleged violations of the Forest Rights Act throughout the land diversion process for the Jindal South West (JSW) Steel project demonstrate the relevance of Gram Sabha's authority and community forest rights. The proposed MMDR Amendment Act of 2026, notably Section 9D, has aroused concerns regarding the financial autonomy and constitutional powers of mineral-rich states like Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh. The dispute is about more than just taxation and investment; it is also about federalism and states' rights to benefit from natural resources within its geographical territories.

In Madhya Pradesh, the death of an Adivasi lady Vimla Kol after a four-day *JalSatyagraha* against a proposed nuclear power facility exemplifies the human cost of resistance as well. Farmers in Bihar's Pirpainti are concerned about the proposed Adani thermal power plant, which could result in the loss of hundreds of thousands of mango trees, agricultural land, and other sources of livelihoods. These protests highlight the inconsistencies of a development strategy that prioritises corporate investment over environmental degradation, displacement, and community rights.

Through this newsletter we are in solidarity across movements defending nature and people's rights. Dispossession cannot be synonymous with development. Let us come together to safeguard Jal, Jangal, Zameen, and everyone's democratic rights.

With solidarity,
Budhan Singh Sinku
P. M. Tony

Vedanta's Threat to Niyamgiri Is Part of a Larger Plan

The article by Felix Padel and Malvika Gupta, published in *The Wire* on October 30, 2026, examines the renewed threat of mining in Odisha's Niyamgiri hills and situates it within a broader corporate-driven extractivist agenda. Vedanta's proposed investment of ₹1 lakh crore, accompanied by promises of employment and industrial development, is presented as an attempt to secure access to bauxite reserves despite the Supreme Court-backed community opposition in 2013. The authors highlight the arrests, intimidation and repression of Adivasi and Dalit activists resisting mining in Niyamgiri, Sijimali and other sacred mountains. They argue that Odisha's expanding aluminium, rare-earth and defence industries are increasingly connected to global supply chains and military production, turning Adivasi territories into resource frontiers. The article challenges the dominant development narrative, exposing its consequences for indigenous livelihoods, ecological systems and cultural identities. It calls for community consent, indigenous self-determination and resistance to corporate-led extractivism.

To read more click here:https://m.thewire.in/article/rights/vedantas-threat-to-niyamgiri-is-part-of-a-larger-plan-selling-odishas-resources-to-feed-global-wars/amp

Reliance plans ₹1 trillion investment in Andhra Pradesh, says Anant Ambani

Reliance Industries has announced plans to invest ₹1 trillion in Andhra Pradesh to establish compressed biogas (CBG) plants, according to Executive Director Anant Ambani. The proposed investment is expected to generate over three lakh jobs and contribute approximately ₹60,000 crore in revenue to the state over the coming decades. The initiative aims to promote clean energy by converting agricultural residues, animal dung and organic waste into renewable fuel. Reliance is also investing in clean-energy projects in the Rayalaseema region and exploring opportunities in advanced manufacturing. The announcement highlights the growing involvement of large corporate groups in agricultural and energy sectors, raising questions about land requirements, resource utilisation, environmental implications and the long-term impact of large-scale industrial investments on rural communities.

To read more click here: https://www.business-standard.com/companies/news/reliance-plans-1-trillion-investment-in-andhra-pradesh-says-anant-ambani-1261002

KSPCB Schedules Public Hearing for Vedanta's Jantakal Iron Ore Project

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) has scheduled an environmental public hearing for October 16 regarding Vedanta Limited's proposed ₹10-crore Jantakal iron ore mining project in Karnataka. Vedanta was declared the preferred bidder for the 71.16-hectare iron ore block in July 2025. The public hearing is an important stage in the environmental

clearance process, allowing local residents and other stakeholders to raise concerns and submit objections. The proposed mining project raises questions about environmental degradation, land use, community participation and the potential impact on local livelihoods. Meaningful public consultation is essential to ensure transparency and protect affected communities' rights.

To read more click here: https://www.deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/kspcb-sets-oct-16-public-hearing-for-vedantas-rs-10-cr-jantakal-iron-ore-project-4168714

At Niyamgiri, Policing Is Paving the Way for Mining

The article by Ranjana Padhi examines how police repression and the criminalisation of Adivasi leaders are being used to weaken resistance against bauxite mining in Odisha's Niyamgiri hills. It highlights the arrest of Dongria Kandha leader Lada Sikaka on September 10 and the repeated use of UAPA and other criminal charges against activists defending their land and forests. Despite the historic 2013 Supreme Court judgment, in which all 12 Gram Sabhas rejected Vedanta's proposed mining project, security operations, police camps, surveillance and arrests have intensified. The article argues that these measures are facilitating corporate access to mineral-rich Adivasi territories while undermining constitutional protections, community self-governance and democratic dissent. It exposes the growing nexus between state power and corporate interests in advancing mining projects.

To read more click here: https://thewire.in/rights/at-niyamgiri-policing-is-paving-the-way-for-mining

Until the Last Ton: The History of Coal in India – From Empire to the Climate Crisis

Matthew Shutzer's book *Until the Last Ton* examines the historical development of India's fossil-fuel economy, tracing its origins from British colonial rule to the present climate crisis. It explores how the coal-rich forests of eastern India, particularly the Chotanagpur region, became major centres of colonial investment and extraction. The book highlights how colonial laws governing underground mineral ownership transformed traditional land relations, facilitated corporate control over natural resources and contributed to the dispossession of Adivasi communities. It further examines how independent India inherited and continued these extractive structures in the name of industrialisation and energy development. By connecting capitalism, colonialism, land alienation and ecological destruction, Shutzer exposes the historical roots of India's dependence on fossil fuels and the continuing struggles over resource sovereignty and mining-induced displacement.

To read more click here: https://frontline.thehindu.com/books/until-the-last-ton-matthew-shutzer-india-coal-history-review/article71533272.ece

Why Are States Divided Over the Mining Amendment?

The article examines the differing responses of Indian States to the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2026, which restricts States' powers to impose taxes on mineral rights and mineral-bearing lands. The amendment has triggered a debate over fiscal federalism, constitutional authority and the financial autonomy of mineral-rich States. While the Centre argues that uniform taxation will reduce the financial burden on mining industries and encourage investment, States fear substantial revenue losses, particularly through the cancellation of previously imposed but unrecovered dues. Jharkhand has expressed concerns over the impact on public welfare schemes, while Kerala, Telangana and Himachal Pradesh are considering legal challenges. Odisha's response remains divided. The controversy highlights growing Centre-State tensions over natural resource governance and the distribution of mineral wealth.

To read more click here: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/why-are-states-divided-over-the-mining-amendment/article71547351.ece/amp/

UCIL Claims Cancer and Skin Diseases in Jharkhand Are Due to 'Backwardness', Not Uranium Mining

The article reports controversial remarks by Kacham Anand Rao, Chairman and Managing Director of Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL), dismissing allegations that uranium mining in Jharkhand's Singhbhum region causes cancer, skin diseases and congenital disabilities. He attributed these illnesses to local conditions and the region's socio-economic backwardness, claiming that at least ten scientific studies found no direct connection between mining and health problems. UCIL operates seven uranium mines in Jharkhand and has announced plans for a fresh health-impact assessment. However, local communities and rights activists have raised longstanding concerns about radiation exposure, contaminated mining waste and serious health consequences. A 2025 study on Jaduguda documented respiratory illnesses, cancers, reproductive health problems and congenital disabilities among residents. The controversy raises critical questions about corporate accountability, independent scientific investigations, environmental justice and the right of Adivasi communities to health and a safe environment.

To read more click here: https://www.telegraphindia.com/amp/india/cancer-skin-disease-due-to-backwardness-not-mines-in-jharkhand-claims-uranium-corporation-of-india/cid/2183373

Forest Rights Act under pressure in Madhya Pradesh

The article examines the struggle for recognition of Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, in Madhya Pradesh. It highlights concerns over attempts by the state Forest Department to interfere with the statutory authority of Gram Sabhas in receiving and processing community forest rights claims. A controversial departmental directive sought to involve forest officials in collecting claims, raising questions about the violation of the FRA's provisions. Following objections from the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, civil society organisations and activists, the directive was put on hold. The article underscores the central role of Gram Sabhas in forest governance and community-led conservation. It also exposes the continuing bureaucratic resistance to recognising Adivasi rights over ancestral forests, highlighting the wider struggle for self-governance, democratic participation and protection of community resources.

To read more click here: https://frontline.thehindu.com/environment/forest-rights-act-mp-cfr-rights/article71546199.ece/amp/

FCRA Amendment Bill 2026: Is the Social Sector a Soft Target for Rights-Based Work?

Dr Deepak Kumar Nanda critically examines the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, questioning whether increased government control over foreign funding is intended to regulate financial contributions or restrict rights-based civil society work. The article highlights the proposed creation of a Designated Authority empowered to take control of assets belonging to NGOs whose FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered or not renewed. It argues that these provisions grant excessive discretionary powers to the Ministry of Home Affairs and create concerns about administrative arbitrariness and the separation of powers. The author contrasts the strict regulation of NGOs with the lack of transparency surrounding political donations. He warns that organisations working on anti-caste struggles, women's empowerment, social justice and marginalised communities may face growing institutional pressure. The article questions the evidence behind the amendments and their implications for democratic freedoms and civil society.

To read more click here: https://ddinsights.in/2026/10/fcra-amendment-bill-2026-is-the-social-sector-a-soft-target-for-rights-based-work/

Niyamgiri: Vedanta's Renewed Mining Push and the Rights of Adivasi Communities

The article examines renewed attempts to revive Vedanta's bauxite mining project in Odisha's Niyamgiri hills, despite the historic rejection of the project by 12 Gram Sabhas in 2013. It highlights the conflict between corporate mining interests and the Dongria Kondh community's rights over their ancestral land, forests and sacred landscape. The renewed mining push raises serious concerns about the violation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, community self-governance and the constitutional protections available to Adivasis. Niyamgiri represents a larger struggle over control of natural resources, where corporate interests and industrial development threaten indigenous livelihoods, cultural identity and ecological sustainability.

To read more click here: https://frontline.thehindu.com/environment/niyamgiri-mining-vedanta-tribal-rights/article71587372.ece

What Does an Odia Mine Teach the Management School?

Dr. Vikram Keshari Jena examines Samarendra Das's doctoral research, *Following the Iron Ore Trails of India for a Global Epistemology of Extractive Capital*, to question the limitations of conventional management education. The article argues that business schools often focus on markets, investment, efficiency and corporate profits while overlooking the historical, ecological and social costs of resource extraction. It highlights how mining connects local landscapes and Adivasi communities with global capital, raising questions about displacement, environmental destruction, ownership and unequal distribution of wealth. The author calls for an interdisciplinary approach integrating economics, history, sociology, politics and environmental studies. It also emphasises the need to produce knowledge grounded in community experiences rather than treating them merely as research subjects.

To read more click here: https://theeasterntimes.com/opinion/odia-mine-management-school-iron-ore

Will You Stand With These Families?

The campaign by Jhatkaa.org highlights the plight of families facing displacement due to a development project that threatens to submerge their ancestral land and homes. These families have cultivated their land for generations but now face the loss of their homes, livelihoods and community ties. The campaign raises concerns about their displacement without adequate compensation, despite their legal entitlement to it. It calls upon citizens to stand in solidarity with affected families and demand accountability from the authorities responsible. Through a public petition and email campaign, Jhatkaa seeks to mobilise public support and pressure decision-makers to ensure fair compensation, protect land rights and uphold the dignity and

livelihoods of displaced communities. The campaign draws attention to the human costs of development and the need for justice-centred rehabilitation.

To read more click here: https://sign.jhatkaa.org/campaign/will-you-stand-with-these-families

Odisha: Dr. Randal Sequeira and Laxman Nayak arrested; repression continues

The article reports the arrests of Dr. Randall Sequeira, a doctor and public health activist, and Laxman Nayak, a Dalit activist associated with the Maa Mati Mali Suraksha Manch and Samajwadi Jan Parishad, in Bhawanipatna, Odisha, on the night of 16 October 2026. Both have supported Adivasi and Dalit movements opposing mining, industrialisation and displacement in southern Odisha. According to a statement issued by the Concerned Citizens Committee, the arrests were carried out without a warrant or prior information, and the two were kept in police custody without access to their lawyers or families. They were subsequently charged in connection with an April 2026 police action in Kantamal, although neither was named in the relevant FIR. The statement alleges that serious criminal charges are being used to intimidate activists and suppress resistance to corporate mining interests. It calls for solidarity with affected communities and the withdrawal of cases against them.

To read more click here: https://junputh.com/voices/repression-continues-in-south-odisha-with-arrests-of-randall-sequeira-and-laxman-naik/

As Odisha's Adivasis Resist Mining Despite Arrests and Coercion, We Must Listen to What They Say

The article highlights the continuing resistance of Adivasi communities in Odisha against mining projects despite arrests, police action and coercive measures. It draws attention to the struggles of people defending their ancestral lands, forests, hills and natural resources from corporate exploitation. The resistance is not merely opposition to mining but a demand to protect their livelihoods, cultural identity, community rights and relationship with nature. The article questions the use of state machinery to suppress democratic dissent and intimidate those who oppose projects imposed in the name of development. It emphasises that Adivasi voices and decisions must be respected, particularly their right to determine the future of their territories. It calls for listening to affected communities rather than treating their resistance as an obstacle to economic progress.

To read more click here: https://thewire.in/environment/odishas-adivasis-resist-mining-despite-arrests-and-coercion

St. John's Academy backs arrested doctor and tribal rights activist

St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru, has expressed solidarity with its alumnus, Dr. Randall Sequeira, following his arrest in Odisha amid protests against mining projects. The institution recognised his contribution to healthcare among underserved Adivasi communities, particularly through medical services in remote areas of Kalahandi and neighbouring districts. His arrest, alongside tribal rights activist Laxman Naik, has raised concerns among civil society groups about the targeting of individuals supporting Adivasi struggles for land, forests and constitutional rights. The Academy's support highlights the importance of standing with humanitarian professionals and defending democratic participation and the rights of marginalised communities.

To read more click here: https://indiancatholicnews.com/2026/10/20/st-johns-academy-backs-arrested-doctor-and-tribal-rights-activist/

Centre plans MMDR Act overhaul, to draft comprehensive new mining law

The Centre is considering a comprehensive overhaul of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, to create a new mining law aligned with ease of doing business, technological changes and India's mineral requirements. An inter-ministerial committee, chaired by the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Mines, will review the existing legislation, examine international practices and propose structural and substantive reforms. The committee will also seek stakeholder inputs, including from state governments. The proposed overhaul aims to simplify regulations, improve enforcement and efficiency, and support the government's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

To read more click here: https://www.business-standard.com/industry/auto/centre-plans-mmdr-act-overhaul-to-draft-comprehensive-new-mining-law-126101800210_1.html

Who Owns Odisha

The discussion examines the struggle over ownership and control of natural resources in Odisha, particularly in mineral-rich regions such as Gandhamardan, Niyamgiri and Sijimali.

Social activist Lingaraj highlights the historical resistance of Adivasis, Dalits and farmers against mining projects, recalling how people's movements forced the withdrawal of earlier projects. He emphasises the importance of PESA and the Forest Rights Act in protecting community rights and Gram Sabha authority over natural resources. The discussion criticises the MMDR amendments for undermining these rights and state powers, while facilitating corporate access to minerals. Despite repression, Adivasi communities continue defending their constitutional rights and territories.

To watch more click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBkeTdfd3UM

Tribal woman loses her life while protesting against a nuclear plant; she had been participating in a 'jal satyagraha' (water-based protest) for four days. Her husband asks, "Can you bring my wife back?"

The article reports the death of Vimla Kol, an Adivasi woman from Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh, amid protests against a proposed Tata nuclear power plant in the Sarai Kala and Rojauhi areas. She had reportedly participated in a four-day Jal Satyagraha, with villagers standing in a pond to oppose the project. Her health deteriorated on Wednesday night, and she died in hospital the following day. Her husband, Jamuna Kol, expressed profound grief, asking whether the administration could bring his wife back to life. Villagers fear that the proposed project will threaten their land, water resources, environment and health. They have also questioned the legitimacy of the Gram Sabha's alleged consent and demanded scrutiny of the project's clearance. Despite discussions with government officials, opposition continues. The precise medical cause of Vimla's death and its direct connection with the protest remain officially unconfirmed.

To read more click here: https://thelens.in/tribal-woman-loses-her-life-while-protesting-against-a-nuclear-plant-she-had-been-observing-a-jal-satyagraha-water-based-protest-for-four-days-her-husband-asks-can-you-bring-my-wife-back/

Dhinkia Gram Sabha and Sarpanch Demand Retraction of 2010 Forest Clearance Certificate, Citing FRA Violations in Land Diversion for JSW Project

The article reports that the Dhinkia Gram Sabha and Sarpanch in Odisha have demanded the withdrawal of a 2010 forest clearance certificate used to facilitate land diversion for the POSCO project, subsequently transferred to JSW. They allege that the certificate violated the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, by falsely claiming that forest rights had been settled and that

no eligible tribal or other traditional forest dwellers lived in the project area. Citing findings of government-appointed inquiry committees, they point to fabricated Gram Sabha resolutions, lack of quorum, absence of informed consent and procedural violations. Despite a Ministry of Tribal Affairs directive issued in July 2026, the district administration has allegedly failed to act. The Gram Sabha demands withdrawal of the certificate, recognition of community and individual forest rights, and restoration of affected villagers' legal rights.

To read more click here: https://countercurrents.org/2026/10/dhinkia-gram-sabha-and-sarpanch-demand-retraction-of-2010-forest-clearance-certificate-citing-fra-violations-in-land-diversion-for-jsw-project/

‘Today I only see denuded land’: Mango orchards give way to Adani’s power plant

The article examines the environmental and social costs of Adani Power’s proposed 2,400 MW thermal power plant in Pirpainti, Bhagalpur, Bihar. The project has led to the destruction of mango orchards and tree cover, acquisition of agricultural land and loss of livelihoods for hundreds of farmers. Residents allege inadequate and unequal compensation, unpaid land dues and failure to compensate for fruit-bearing trees. Farmers also claim that dissenting voices were prevented from participating in the mandatory public hearing through police action and detention. A petition before the National Green Tribunal raised concerns about construction and tree felling before environmental clearance, as well as the absence of a cumulative impact assessment. The article highlights discrepancies in official tree counts and questions the transparency of land acquisition and environmental approval processes. Adani Power denies violating applicable laws.

To read more click here: https://www.newslaundry.com/2026/10/28/today-i-only-see-denuded-land-mango-orchards-give-way-to-adanis-power-plant

Justice in Mining Network looks forward to your solidarity and feedback. Write to us justiceinminingnetwork@gmail.com

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