Proposed bauxite mine in Odisha's Balda hills threatens the rare Jeypore ground gecko

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News

The Hindu (15 Oct 2026) reported that the Endangered 'Jeypore ground gecko' (Cyrtodactylus jeyporensis) – four individuals – was recorded in the past year in the Balda hills of Nageswari reserve forest, Koraput district, Odisha – inside the site of an opencast bauxite mine planned by Kalinga Alumina, an Adani group firm. The 4-million-tonne-a-year mine is feared to destroy the gecko's rare habitat; villagers have alleged that gram sabha consent was forged.

Key facts

Species	Jeypore ground gecko – Cyrtodactylus jeyporensis (formerly Geckoella jeyporensis)
Location	Balda hills, Nageswari reserve forest, Nandapur tehsil, Koraput district, Odisha
Mine	Kalinga Alumina (Adani group) – 'Ballada Bauxite Block', 4 MTPA
Status	IUCN Endangered; Wildlife Act Schedule I; CITES Appendix II (CoP19, 2022, India's proposal)
History	Described by Beddome in 1877–78; rediscovered in Koraput in 2010 after about 130 years

Background

- Habitat: Eastern Ghats forests above about 1,000 m; nocturnal, about 9 cm long. Also recorded on Galikonda hill (Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh).
- Bauxite is the main ore of aluminium. Odisha has India's largest bauxite reserves; NALCO's mining and refinery complex is at Damanjodi, Koraput district.
- CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (1973, Washington); CoP19 was in Panama, 2022. Gram sabha consent comes from the Forest Rights Act 2006; Odisha's Niyamgiri case (2013) is the landmark precedent.

Tamil Nadu link: the Eastern Ghats extend into Tamil Nadu – the Javadhu, Shevaroy (Yercaud), Kolli and Pachamalai hills. Bauxite deposits occur in the Shevaroy hills of Salem district.

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