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## SC reserves judgment on Niyamgiri

The Supreme Court on Thursday concluded hearing in Niyamgiri mining case. But the court has reserved its judgment.

The apex court has concluded hearing on Thursday. All parties have been asked to submit their written arguments by Monday. The court is expected to pronounce its order in few days, said Saswat Mishra, chairman-cum-managing director (CMD) of Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC), which had challenged the revocation of forest clearance of the Niyamgiri mine.

On August 24, 2010, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) cancelled the Stage II forest clearance for mining of bauxite at Niyamgiri in Kalahandi district based on N C Saxena panel recommendation which said the mining in the area would severely affect the ecology as well as the primitive tribal group of Dongria Kondhs. Earlier, the OMC had obtained stage-I forest clearance for the mine.

This bauxite mine is critical for the Lanjigarh alumina refinery of Vedanta Aluminium Ltd (VAL), which had entered into a joint venture agreement with OMC for operation of the mine to feed its project. VAL has shut down its one million tonne alumina refinery since December 5 citing acute shortage of bauxite to run the plant.