

Kappattagudda must be preserved: Seer

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Dharwad: Shivakumar Swami of Gadag Kapothagiri has called upon people to protect and conserve the Kappattagudda region, the Sahyadri of North Karnataka.

Delivering a lecture on 'Protection of Kappattagudda forest,' as part of Basayya Shivayya Shirol's 83rd birthday endowment programme, at Karnataka Vidyavardhak Sangha (KVS) in Dharwad, he said rare forest wealth has been lost in Ballari and Sandur, due to iron ore mining, and now Kappattagudda is the only area that provides lung space to the region.

"We must protect and conserve this at any cost," he said.

The seer said Kappattagudda was rich in medicinal and aromatic plants, fruits and forest products. "Officials and politicians have shown negligence in maintaining this rare natural wealth. There were more than 340 rare medicinal plants, which were on the verge of extinction, but we failed to protect this green gold. Instead, we are running behind the yellow gold," he added.

The pontiff said Kappattagudda had remained intact so far, because of a sustained effort by Gadag Tontadarya Mutt Siddaling Swami, along with people and environmentalists. "It is sad that officials and politicians who were visiting Kappattagudda, were still asking villagers to show places where they could get manganese ore. Big companies, and those who are involved in stone quarrying, are still waiting for an opportunity to loot Kappattagudda," he said. The seer wondered how the government could allow people to do mining in the reserved forest area.

The seer said that Kappattagudda had been declared a reserved forest in 1890.

"Some people attempted to mine gold in the past. The government still is in two minds over permitting mining. People living there fear whenever officials and politicians visit the area, as they apprehend exploitation," the seer said.