

### **1.77 lakh acres of forest land encroached in Karnataka: Report**

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More than 1,77,997 acres of forest land has been encroached across Karnataka, as per a state forest department report. The report, accessed by [The Indian Express](#), states that there are 1,01,017 instances of forest land encroachment in the state, categorised into two; those below three acres and those above three acres.

It is leant that no action has been taken against these encroachments. Forest officials say that due to political pressure, not even an inch of land has been retrieved from the encroachers over the years.

There have been 38,012 cases of encroachment of forest land (50,579.53 acres) below three acres in the Shivamogga circle in Sagar forest division which comes under this circle has recorded 34,030.25 acres of encroachment.

Kanara forest circle has recorded 18,334.8 acres of encroachment followed by Chikkamagaluru with 10,688 acres.

As for encroachment above three acres, the department has recorded 14,016.62 acres of encroachment in Chikkamagaluru forest circle, 27,918.06 acres in Shivamogga circle and 9,287.17 acres in Kanara forest circle.

Over 7,928.52 acres of forest land have been encroached in the Bengaluru forest circle in cases below three acres and 5,087.77 acres in cases above three acres.

In 2015, the Karnataka government ordered the forest department not to evict encroachments of less than three acres.

A letter dated July 30, 2020 by principal chief conservator of forest (head of forest force) Sanjai Mohan to the additional chief secretary (forest, ecology and environment department) stated that based on the government order, encroachments that occurred after April 27, 1978, whose extent is not more than three acres, should not be evicted until rehabilitation and rearrangement packages are prepared for the consideration at government level.

Mohan requested the additional chief secretary to identify any suitable external agency or to move the appropriate level of authority to carry out and facilitate rehabilitation and rearrangement packages for enabling the forest department to take action on the encroached lands. He mentioned in the letter that the forest department does not have additional land or the funds to carry out the process on its own.

The Supreme Court in its 1998 judgement in TN Godavarman Thirumulpad vs Union of India directed the Karnataka government to evict encroachment which happened after April 1978.

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