

## Govt tries to save forest cover despite million hectares of encroachment

Governments, both at state and centre, are making efforts to achieve the target of India's 33% land under forest cover

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A file photo of a section of the Western Ghats in TamilNadu, Phot: Hemant Mishra/Mint

### ENCROACHMENT: TOP TEN STATES

States	Area (hectares)
Madhya Pradesh	370,484
Assam	317,215
Telangana	183,465
Maharashtra	183,171
Chhattisgarh	118,494
Karnataka	81,776
Odisha	78,505
Arunachal Pradesh	58,626
Andhra Pradesh	40,561
Gujarat	34,791

Source: Ministry of environment and forests

**New Delhi:** Even as the government strives to bring 33% of the country under forest cover, over 1.7 million hectares of forests across India has been encroached upon. As per records of the ministry of environment and forests, of the 1,717,272 hectares of encroached forest area, the highest is in Madhya Pradesh with around 370,000 hectares under unauthorised and illegal occupation. Madhya Pradesh is followed by Assam with 317,215 hectares, Telangana with 183,465 hectares, Maharashtra with 183,171 hectares and Chhattisgarh with 118,494 hectares.

“Protection and management of forests is primarily the responsibility of the concerned state governments. The (environment) ministry supplements the efforts of states through a centrally sponsored scheme—Intensification of Forest Management,” environment minister Prakash Javadekar was quoted as saying in a Parliamentary document. While efforts are being made by state governments to free this area from encroachment, they have

taken various measures like setting up of check posts, barriers, use of modern technology like remote sensing, global positioning Ssystem, improved mobility of field staff with more vehicles for patrolling, survey and demarcation of forests area including digitization of recorded forest areas. The state governments also take the help of local communities for the same. Governments, both at the state and centre, are making efforts to achieve the target of India's 33% land under forest cover. At present, 24% of India's land is under forest and tree cover.

**Source:**

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/dDdDIRWQjfDp8COyDmacXP/Govt-tries-to-save-forest-cover-despite-million-hectares-of.html>