

ENVIRONMENT | 6 min read

Large Forest Cover Lost to 23,716 Industrial Projects in India

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Over the last 30 years, forests nearly two-thirds the size of Haryana have been lost to encroachments (15,000 sq km) and 23,716 industrial projects

[data](#). ARTIFICIAL FORESTS cannot be replacements, as the government recently [acknowledged](#).

The government's auditor has said conditions under which these projects are given forest land are widely violated, and experts said government data are under-estimates.

It (government figure) is just the tip of the iceberg. Our study shows dense forest areas in northern, central and southern Western Ghats have decreased by 2.84 per cent, 4.38 per cent and 5.77 per cent respectively over the last decade.

- TV Ramachandra, Associate Faculty, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science

Currently, up to 25,000 hectares of forests - 250 sq km, or more than twice Chandigarh's area - are handed over every year for "non-forestry activities", including defence projects, dams, mining, power plants, industries and roads, the government recently told parliament. The rate of "diversion", as the process is called, varies across states.