

## 36,102 ha Forest Land in Dist. Encroached: Study:

SHIMOGA: Around 36,102 Hectares of forest land has been encroached in the district, says a study conducted by Vriksha Laksha Andolan and Indian Institute of Science.

Karnataka Vriksha Laksha Andolan President and former chairman of Western Ghat Task Force Ananth Hegde Ashisara submitted the study report to Deputy Commissioner Vipul Bansal at the latter's office here on Mondy.

According to the report, Shimoga district had 43 per cent of forest area in 1973.

But, the area of forest in the district slipped to 22.33 per cent in 2012. Around 20 per cent forest area has been encroached in various parts of the district. About 36,102 hectares of forest area has been encroached.

The encroachment of forest area is likely to disrupt ecological balance in the region. Besides, the encroachment of forest area has posed a threat to the survival of endangered species, the report added.

Bhadravathi tops the list of taluks in the district with encroachment of 9,517 hectares of land. Shikaripur - 6,776 hectares of land Shimoga - 5,567 hectares of land, Sagar 5,027, Sorab 4,210,



Hosanagar-3015 and Theerthahalli-1,990.

The report said that forest land has been used for the implementation of huge power projects including Sharavathi Hydroelectric Project.

Around 36,000 hectares of forest land has been developed in the district, the report added.

Indian Institute of Science Scientist T.V. Ramachandra, Vriksha Laksha Andolana members Kalagodu Venkatesh and B.H. Raghavendra and others were present on the occasion.