



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# Supreme Court Orders Removal of Encroachments from Agasthyamalai Ecological Landscape

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The Supreme Court of India has directed the preparation and implementation of a time-bound eviction plan to remove encroachments from the Agasthyamalai Ecological Landscape spread across Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Court also ordered disciplinary and legal action against government officials found to be encroachers.?

## **Key Highlights:**

The Supreme Court ordered a time-bound eviction plan for removing encroachments from the Agasthyamalai Ecological Landscape.

Disciplinary and legal action has been directed against 118 serving and retired government servants identified as encroachers.

The Court observed that encroachments have continued for decades despite previous judicial directions.

Illegal resorts, tourism establishments, and commercial structures operating in protected forest areas have been ordered to cease operations and be dismantled according to law.

The Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has been tasked with monitoring compliance and submitting periodic reports.

The Court stressed the constitutional duty of the State to preserve ecologically sensitive regions, forests, and wildlife habitats for future generations.

## **About Agasthyamalai Ecological Landscape:**

Located in the southern Western Ghats across Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Covers approximately 3,500 sq. km.

### **Kamaraj IAS Academy**

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Recognized by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve.

One of India's most important biodiversity hotspots.

Home to thousands of plant species, many of which are endemic to the Western Ghats.

Inhabited by indigenous communities such as the Kani Tribe.

### **Protected Areas within the Landscape:**

Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR)

Kanyakumari Wildlife Sanctuary

Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve

Several reserve forests and wildlife habitats.

### **Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve**

Declared a Biosphere Reserve in 2001.

Part of the Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Named after Sage Agastya (Agastya Muni).

### **Known for high levels of:**

Endemism

Biodiversity

Medicinal plant diversity

### **Supports species such as:**

Bengal Tiger

Asian Elephant

Lion-tailed Macaque

Nilgiri Langur

Great Hornbill

Central Empowered Committee (CEC)

### **Constituted by the Supreme Court to assist in matters relating to:**

Forest conservation

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Wildlife protection

Environmental governance

Monitors implementation of Supreme Court directions concerning forests and protected areas.

### **Constitutional Provisions Related to Environmental Protection:**

Article 48A: Directs the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.

Article 51A(g): Makes it a Fundamental Duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment.

Article 21: Right to Life has been interpreted by courts to include the right to a healthy environment.

### **Relevant Environmental Laws**

Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

These laws provide the legal framework for protecting forests, wildlife, and biodiversity in India.