

Waste management: Forest department issues notice to Munnar panchayat

The demand of the department is to immediately take steps to manage the waste at the panchayat-owned waste treatment plant at Kallar, near Munnar.

May 16, 2023 07:42 pm | Updated 07:42 pm IST

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The Forest department issued a notice to the Munnar panchayat demanding immediate steps to manage the waste at the panchayat-owned waste treatment plant at Kallar, near Munnar.

Munnar Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ramesh Bishnoi told *The Hindu* that the Forest department had issued a notice to Munnar panchayat secretary asking the local body to take immediate steps to manage the plastic waste.

According to officials, tusker Padayappa and other wild animals had entered the premises of the waste treatment plant. Last month, Padayappa broke into a waste treatment plant run by the Munnar panchayat at Kallar and ate vegetable leftovers. After repeated attacks, the panchayat fixed a grill in front of the waste treatment plant. But the tusker destroyed the gate and ate waste that was stored inside the plant.

Later, the panchayat began segregating edible vegetables from the waste and kept them apart for the tusker. According to sources, the tusker initially reached the spot, ate the separated vegetables, and left peacefully. But later, the tusker returned to the plant premises at night and tried to destroy the plant and eat all the waste including the plastic.

Following repeated incidents, the Forest department directed Munnar panchayat to stop giving vegetables to the tusker.

Munnar panchayat secretary K.N. Sahajan said that the panchayat would take steps to clear the plastic from the ground of the waste treatment plant at Kallar within a month. “We have now stopped giving the segregated waste to the tusker,” said Mr Sahajan.

“The panchayat fixed a strong grill and gate for the plant to prevent the entry of the tusker and other wild animals,” said Mr Sahajan.

