

# Forest department stops illegal felling of eucalyptus trees

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UDHAGAMANDALAM: A day after TOI reported about large-scale felling of eucalyptus trees in a patta land, the forest department on Monday stopped the illegal act at Kappachi under the Thummanatty revenue village in the district. The cut logs kept in the land have been brought under the custody of the forest department.

According to activists, at least 15 loads of logs were cut and transported. The revenue department officials turned a blind eye even after the issue was brought to their notice, they said.

Saravanakumar, assistant conservator of forest, Nilgiris division told TOI, "Forest officials inspected the land where the trees were being cut. There was no permission granted to cut trees in the land. We have stopped the activity of tree felling there." He said, "We have initiated an inquiry in this regard. The cut logs kept in the land are brought under our custody."

According to a forest department official, there was a dispute between two people on the ownership of the land. The forest department is in the process of collecting revenue records in connection with the land.

Of the total 15 acres, at least eight acres have grown eucalyptus trees.

"In the meantime, we have asked one of the owners, who is not involved in the tree cutting activity, to approach police and lodge a complaint," Saravanakumar said.

He added, "We will take action for illegal cutting of the trees."

Permission for large-scale tree cutting is granted at the district level committee headed by the district collector after a recommendation from the forest department with a report of due field inspection.