

Eco activists oppose ‘illegal’ road construction in dense oak forest

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Mussoorie: Environmentalists in Mussoorie are vehemently opposing the construction of a motor road within a dense oak forest, labelling endeavour as “illegal”. They are calling for an immediate halt to construction and urging authorities for action against those responsible.

Lalit Mohan Kala, an environmental activist, expressed dismay, saying, “A 3 to 4 metre wide and 200 metre long road is being constructed in Cliff Cottage estate in Mussoorie. In the past, wanton tree felling has also been done here and we have complained to the forest department but to no avail.” Vipin Gupta, a prominent environmentalist who has planted numerous trees in the area, while condemning the road construction as completely “illegal”, said, “I have sent written complaints to the PCCF, HoFF and the conservator Yamuna circle but no action has been taken so far.”

Sources said that Cliff Cottage estate, previously owned by Hampton Court school, was sold a few years ago. Around March, the new owners commenced construction of a motor road from the cottage to connect it with NH 707A, citing records from the Mussoorie Municipal Council (MMC) dating back to before 1980 as evidence of its existence. Based on this, the forest department purportedly issued a NOC to new owners.

However, members of the environmentalist lobby asserted that no road existed at the site according to old maps. “I have taught at Hampton Court school for decades and there was no road at Cliff Cottage. The builders are causing irreparable damage...,” alleged Vipin Kumar. Meanwhile, DFO Mussoorie, Amit Kanwar, remained tight-lipped and said that the matter was under probe by the department’s sub-divisional officer.

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