

First Bellandur, now Varthur: Bengaluru lakes a big disaster

DECCAN CHRONICLE.

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Bellandur's water holding capacity reduced due to waste dumping.



Algae and garbage debris floating on Ulsoor lake (Photo: R. Samuel)

BENGALURU: The commission set up by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has in a 329 page report said the construction of the road on Varthur lake has seriously compromised its integrity and ecology and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is justified in talking about a nexus of the land mafia and builders. Also, based on an inspection of the Bellandur and Varthur lakes by the NGT team in April this year, the commission has concluded that the water holding capacity of the former lake has shrunk due to indiscriminate dumping of construction debris and municipal solid waste besides the vast spread of hydrophyte and macrophytes in its water.

Its report notes that the Storm Water Drain (SWD) outlets near the Bellandur lake are discharging nothing but sewage and effluents into it. "After an almost circumferential tour of the lake, it has been observed that it does not have even one millilitre of clean water and is filled with sewage,

effluents, solid waste, weed and debris,” it said. Meanwhile , responding to the NGT, the BDA has said that it will file a compliance report before the tribunal on the sluice gates, which would be installed soon.

Bellandur fire Referring to a report by the Fire Department and Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre, the commission notes that 53.16 acres of the Bellandur lake suffered due to the fire. “Municipal solid waste, in particular plastic embedded in hydrophytes and drybio-mass, aggravated by generation of methane gas, provides a fertile ground for a fire. The source of the spark could be unintentional or deliberate or accidental,” it said.

Encroachment of the SWD

Quoting the 2017 Indian Institute of Science’s (IISc.) report on the encroachment of rajakaluves , the commission has noted that the rajakaluves have narrowed in width from 35 metres to 8 metres and their buffer zones have reduced to benefit the construction lobby. “This reduction in size has had a major impact on the flow of sewage, and made the area prone to floods, besides reducing the recharge of groundwater,” it said, also observing that houses had been constructed on either side of the rajakaluves and the entire drain was filled with garbage.