

Encroachments back on Bellandur lakebed



A fortnight after the National Green Tribunal-appointed commission's observation that encroachment on the Bellandur Lake was temporarily cleared before its visit and had resumed later, there seems no change in the situation.

The observation made in the commission's report to the NGT on May 31 was also included in the report of the IISc researchers, who were also members of the commission. DH found that people continue to occupy the temporary sheds around the lake; a l...

DH found that people continue to occupy the temporary sheds around the lake; a large number of them were seen going about with their daily chores on the Yemalur side and near the Doddamma Devi temple road behind Sun City apartments.

The Bangalore Development Authority, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike and marshals (comprising of former servicemen) had evicted the encroachers from the Bellandur catchment near the temple before the commission's visit.

The temporary shanties have come back again a few feet away from where they were erected before. Marshals fear that they would return to their original space given the pace of their expansion.

"We had cleared only the temporary sheds, but some illegal occupants who constructed shelters with cement and brick continue to reside on the catchment area, opposite the temple. We are unable to vacate them," a marshal said.

Encroachers continue to litter the catchment area and the lakebed, while the area is also prone to open defecation and burning of garbage. The encroachments thrive as the BDA and the BBMP point fingers at each other regarding whose job it is to clear...

"It's the BBMP's job to clear the encroachment," said a BDA site official. "There seems to be some confusion on who should clear them. This would be sorted out soon."

The makeshift sheds were cleared 25 days ago and again a fortnight back when residents reported them.

Professor T V Ramachandra from IISc, a member of the NGT-appointed commission, said the government is unable to stop the sheds from coming back again, which is a great problem.

"People can report encroachments and they would be immediately cleared," BDA commissioner Rakesh Singh said.

Lake groups form federation

Several citizen groups involved in protecting and rejuvenating lakes have decided to form the 'Federation of Bengaluru Lakes'.

Sandeep Anirudhan, a member of the Pattandur Agrahara RWA Federation, which is fighting to save the Pattandur Agrahara Lake, said the new body was a collective platform for all the lake groups in the city.

"We have formed the federation after a meeting of citizen groups in the first week of May, where we have decided to support each other in policy making, advocacy, legal support and awareness programmes," Anirudhan said.

As of now, more than 30 lake groups are part of the federation.

