

NGT report says Bellandur lake has become largest septic tank of Bengaluru; blames Karnataka govt, its agencies

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Bellandur blunder: NGT report claims Bengaluru's largest lake has become a septic tank

HIGHLIGHTS

- NGT report claims pollution in Bellandur lake is at its peak
- NGT commission says state govt miserably failed to discharge their duties
- The commission said the directions of the NGT have not been followed in "letter and spirit"



Bengaluru lake froth on streets | Photo: Getty Images

In a stinging report submitted on May 31, the commission set up by the National Green Tribunal to inspect the lakes in the Bengaluru has lambasted the state government and its various agencies who have "miserably failed to discharge their obligations to the society and their duties".

The commission stated that the "biggest lake of the beautiful city of Bengaluru by sheer callousness and indifference of the authorities has become the largest septic tank of the city".

The report further added that -

According to material collected, water holding capacity of the Bellandur Lake has rapidly shrunk due to indiscriminate dumping of construction and demolishing waste, municipal solid waste and due to vast spread of hydrophytes and microphytes in the waters.

Members of the commission also noticed during an inspection that the "Storm Water Drain outlets near the lake were discharging nothing but sewage and effluents and the same was being released into the lake".

The report also states the commission was shocked to find a road that was constructed in the Varthur lake by dumping C&D waste under the pretext of laying a pipeline.

The commission said that the directions of the National Green Tribunal have not been followed in "letter and spirit".

A bench headed by NGT acting chairperson Justice Jawad Rahim has reprimanded Karnataka government saying that the report submitted by the government was "incorrect and misleading".

The bench said, "We are not here just to read files and close them. Compliance of the order has to be done; do you want us to call the Army for compliance?"

Hence, a commission comprising of Chairperson Raj Panjwani, Senior Advocate and two members Rahul Chaudhary and Sumeer Sodhi was formed. A professor from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, the Commissioner of BBMP, one Senior Scientist from Central Pollution Control Board, Member Secretary of State Pollution Control Board and CEO of Lake Development Authority were assisting the commission in inspecting the Agara, Bellandur and Varthur lakes on April 14 and 15.



Photo: Getty images

Sridhar Pabbisetty, CEO, Namma Bengaluru Foundation, says this report only reiterates that the state government is not serious about the Bellandur problem. "They have only been toying around with futile exercises and that too in a demeaning way," Sridhar said.

Sridhar said the report dwells on the inadequacy of actions by BWSSB, BDA as well as the BBMP.

It shows the apathy that the water bodies of the city are suffering and in turn affecting public health. "I don't think we can place our hope anymore on the administration of the city," Sridhar told India Today.

Sridhar reiterated that it is the need of the hour to hold each of the civic agencies accountable and so that hat the new Deputy CM G Parameshwara listens to the expert committee members this time.

On Monday, G Parameshwara along with senior officials visited the lake to take stock of the situation. G Parameshwara, who also holds the Bengaluru Development ministry, said that necessary steps will be taken to make sure lakes are properly maintained.

IMPORTANT FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION

Today the present area of the lake comes out as 895 acres and 19 guntas. On the basis of a certificate dated 19/04/2018, issued by Tahsildars, the extent of the lake was about 906 acres and 19 guntas.

According to IISc, water storage capacity of the lake in 1973 was 19.67 ml/cubic metre. The current capacity is 5.50 ml/cubic metre.

The balance 13.16 ml/cubic metre of storage capacity consist of 6.60 ml sediment deposits and 6.56 ml/cubic metre of slush deposit.

Storage capacity has diminished by 71.45 per cent, only 28.55 per cent of the storage capacity of the lake is available.

More than 60 per cent of the lake area is covered with hydrophytes.

Commission was of the unequivocal view that de-weeding cannot be completed in the near future.

Commission noticed glaring defects in the disposal of compost by BDA.

A large number of illegal immigrants had encroached upon the buffer zone of the lake. Encroachers were evicted prior to the inspection of the commission and are now back at the same location.

There are 100 families and construction is in full swing with support from local goon politicians and officials.

As of today, 183 mld (millions of litres per day) of untreated sewage is flowing into the Bellandur lake.

Bellandur Lake receives about 480 to 500 mld of treated and untreated sewage.

279 mld of sewage is being treated and 207.5 mld capacity of STPs are under different phases of construction.

There are 873 residential apartments/commercial establishments in the catchment area of the lake, only 496 projects have their own STPs.

Commission found there was no appropriate arrangements made in the residential and commercial areas for proper segregation and disposal of solid wastes.

A committee set up by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to inspect the lakes in Bengaluru has lambasted the Karnataka government and various state agencies for "miserably" failing to discharge their duties.

According to a report by India Today, the committee, in its report submitted on May 31, said that Bellandur, the biggest lake of Bengaluru, "by sheer callousness and indifference of the authorities has become the largest septic tank of the city."

It has also blamed indiscriminate dumping of construction and demolishing waste, municipal solid waste and vast spread of hydrophytes and microphytes in the waters for pollution in the Bellandur Lake.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) had in April formed a three-member committee to inspect the lakes in the city. The commission led by Chairperson Senior Advocate Raj Panjwani was asked by the NGT to inspect Agara, Bellandur and Varthur lakes.

A professor from Indian Institute of Science- Bangalore, a senior scientist from Central Pollution Control Board, the commissioner of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike assisted the commission in the inspection.

They noticed during an inspection that the "Storm Water Drain outlets near the lake were discharging nothing but sewage and effluents and the same was being released into the lake". The report said that the committee was shocked to find a road that was constructed in the Varthur lake by dumping C&D waste under the pretext of laying a pipeline.

In April, a bench headed by NGT acting chairperson Justice Jawad Rahim had reprimanded Karnataka government saying that the report submitted by the government was "incorrect and misleading" and was bereft of the actual action taken on the ground.

The green panel, which stopped short of imposing a fine on the state and its instrumentalities, then formed a committee to inspect the lakes.

The committee in its report has submitted that the directions of the NGT have not been followed in "letter and spirit".