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Members of the newly formed court committee to inspect Mantri Techzone near Bellandur lake have sought police protection.

Prof T V Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, who is appointed as the committee member, told DH that in view of the recent incidents, the government should provide security when they visit the site.

NGT on Friday gave a written order constituting a committee comprising Shivanna, chief executive officer, Lake Development Authority; N K Thippeswamy, additional director of Town and Country Planning, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP); Dr S P Rai, Scientist-E, Hydrological Investigation Division, National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee; Dr Sidharth Kaul, Retd Advisor, MoEF; Brijesh Sikka, Advisor (NRCD), MoEF and CC; T V Ramachandra; Naganna, chairman, SEAC-Karnataka and Vijay Kumar, member secretary, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board.

Ramachandra said that during the last hearing, NGT had directed a team comprising locals and petitioners to visit Mantri TechZone but private builders had denied them entry.

'Targeted in past'

"I too have been targeted in 2013, then 2015 and in 2016. Private builders and their associates had ill-treated my students and locals accompanying me when I was conducting my study and following NGT orders surveying the areas. The study instruments were also damaged. Now, since the NGT has again directed me to visit the site, the least the state government can now do is give us police protection when we visit the site," he said.

In the last five years, the IISc team has pointed out to the government that the land on which the survey has been ordered, is wetland and all encroachments should be evicted.

"My stand is very clear that all encroachments on wetlands and catchment areas should be evicted. Mantri TechZone is on the wetland allotted by the KIADB. Now, the state government should shift them elsewhere," he said.

Additional chief secretary and Bangalore Development Authority commissioner had assured the expert committee members in the last meeting that Coremind and Mantri TechZone would be given land elsewhere so that treatment plants can be constructed, wetlands safeguarded and lakes are rejuvenated.

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