

Bellandur cleaning possible only after 2020, NGT told

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Bellandur Lake

BENGALURU: The cleaning process, including desilting, of [Bellandur Lake](#) is possible only after 2020, the principal bench of the National Green Tribunal ([NGT](#)) has been told by a [panel](#) constituted to chalk out a plan to rejuvenate the waterbody.

In a report detailing the action plan submitted to the NGT on Thursday, the committee comprising various Bengaluru civic agencies said that while they have completed de-weeding, encroachment clearance and other tasks, the lake can be cleaned only when the sewage flow into the waterbody stops.

"About 180 million litre of sewage is entering the lake every day. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has taken steps to install sewage treatment plants (STPs) to stop waste from entering lake, and these projects will get ready by 2020. The cleaning will be taken up only after the sewage flow stops. Otherwise it would be a waste of money as the revival would cost us around Rs 500 crore. We have told the same to the tribunal," said P N Nayak, engineer-member, the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), which is the custodian of the lake."

The NGT on Friday gave permission for the Namma Bengaluru Foundation (NBF), the impleader in the case, to file objections to the report by October 4, the next date of hearing. The state has also been given an opportunity to file its rejoinder by the same day.

Additional advocate general Aditya Sondhi along with additional chief secretary (urban development department) Mahendra Jain, senior officials from the [Karnataka State Pollution Control Board](#) (KSPCB) and [Lake Development Authority](#) (LDA), were present at the hearing.

The NGT is hearing the matter after it took up a suo motu case on the sad state of the water body in February. After a blaze in the water body, thick clouds of white smoke persisted for several days. Since then the tribunal has taken to task the various government agencies associated with the lake.

Sridhar Pabbisetty, CEO, Namma Bengaluru Foundation, said, We have received the submission by the urban development department. We will go through the report, validate the claims made by the government and file our rejoinder shortly."

The tribunal has asked the panel, which includes IISc profesor Dr TV Ramachandra, to conduct an inspection of the project site and submit a report to it on October 5. The NGT is hearing the matter following an application filed by the Namma Bengaluru Foundation, Forward Foundation and others alleging illegalities in the execution of a large mixed-use project.

Last month, high drama prevailed at the project site when citizen activists went for an inspection following the earlier direction by the NGT. After the project proponent denied them access, NBF filed an application for appointment of a local commissioner, which came up for hearing on Friday.