

BENGALURU'S VARTHUR LAKE IS DRYING UP

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By Nitindra Bandyopadhyay

**Pipeline work at Varthur lake has led to breach of the bund*

**Farmers in the area allege it is being done to drain water out*

**BDA claims project being undertaken to revive Kolar's lakes*

Residents living around Varthur Lake have alleged that despite several complaints being registered against the damage being done to the lake due to pipeline construction work being carried out by the minor irrigation department, the authorities concerned have failed to address the issue.

After 30 years, the lake bed of Varthur is visible despite the city receiving record rainfall. The residents in the area alleged that the pipeline work that is being carried out in the area has led to the breach of a bund on one side of the lake's waste weir, resulting in the drying up of the lake. Farmers

residing in the area alleged that it has been done to drain water out of the lake to assist the pipeline work.

Jagdish Reddy, a member of Whitefield Rising, said, "We have been keeping an eye on the activities taking place around the lake and have also filed complaints with both the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority and the Bangalore Development Authority about the poor condition of the lake, but no action was taken."

However, the BDA executive engineer of the area concerned refuted these claims and said the minor irrigation department is carrying out pipeline construction to facilitate carrying of grey water to Kolar to rejuvenate lakes there and hence, soil is being dumped by and it is in accordance with rules."

In 2015, the state government gave the nod to build a pipeline from Bengaluru to Kolar, so that the treated water can be used for reviving lakes in Kolar district, which is water scarce. This decision was taken after various attempts by the Karnataka Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) and BWSSB failed to generate enough demand locally, as transportation of recycled water within the city was a major hindrance in the project.

Under this project, around 400 MLD of treated water will be transported to Kolar to rejuvenate the dying lakes in the district. The project received the nod of the government in 2015 and now, the construction work for the pipeline has commenced and a part of this work has been taken up on the Varthur Lake bed.

However, residents living around the lake said the work that is being carried out is in violation to both the Justice NK Patil Report of 2012 and is also against the directives of the National Green Tribunal. Recently, even a team from the Indian Institute of Sciences visited the area and did a survey of the damage being done to the lake due to the ongoing pipeline work, but this has failed to deter the authorities.

The recent in lists of damage is the breach of the waste weir as a result of which lake water is flowing out.

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