

# Bengaluru: IISc professor tears into minister for Bellandur remark

By Tushar Kaushik | Express News Service | Published: 05th February 2018 02:48 AM |

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Bellandur Lake has been in the news for frequent fires and frothing | Express

**BENGALURU:** Member of the expert committee for Bellandur lake Professor T V Ramachandra has lambasted Bengaluru Development Minister KJ George for blaming the committee for the fires in the lake.

The Minister said the committee stopped the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) from clearing the grass which caught fire. Professor Ramachandra, head of the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), said George was playing the blame game and the reason for the fires had nothing to do with the grass.

George, along with officials from Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and BDA, inspected the lake's clean-up process on Sunday. Following the inspection, he said the pollution control board's analysis had found the level of methane in the lake to be at 0.01 per cent. "Such a small quantity of methane cannot cause fire, it just increased the fire's intensity," he said.

Alleging the role of miscreants in causing the fires, he said, "Why does the fire only occur when an National Green Tribunal hearing approaches?" Blaming the expert committee, he said, "We had issued directions to remove all the grass, but the monitoring committee, who are criticising us today, asked not to remove them." Speaking on the next steps for the lake's clean-up, he said the civic agencies would remove all the grass, scientifically treat the water using hyacinth at the entry points, install aerators on a trial basis, and install a sluice gate. In addition, he assured that all encroachers would be ordered to move, and alternative arrangements would be made to relocate industrial sheds in the catchment area.

"Before making any statement, people should know the science behind it. And it is not one person's view, it is nine people on the committee. He can not be more intelligent than nine experts," said Prof Ramachandra, responding to George's comments.

He said the committee had asked the authorities not to remove grasses on the shoreline as they treated water when it passed through them. The fire was caused by solid waste dumped over the grass and not the grass itself, he said. "It only highlights the irresponsible behaviour and the blame game. They were earlier blaming the previous government, and now the scientists," the professor said.

## **Prof Ramachandra's Explanation On Generation Of Methane:**

Grass are terrestrial plants and grow in stagnant water. The problem is water hyacinth. It forms a thick layer, below which an anoxic (low oxygen) condition is formed and hence methane is generated. When organic matter decays, hydrogen sulphide and then methane is produced. This happens when a material with higher carbon and nitrogen content is present in the water.

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