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Bellandur lake revival: Suggestions flood BDA

BY AKSHATHA M, ET BUREAU | JAN 29, 2018, 11.59 AM IST

BENGALURU: While the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has set the January 29 deadline for the state government to furnish an action plan on how it intends to save [Bellandur lake](#) — Bengaluru's largest water body spread over 750 acres in the vicinity of several technology parks — confusion still prevails.

The NGT is firm that the government submit a plan that sticks to a timeline and will not go the way several other plans have in the past. Last year, the government handed over the custody of the lake to the [BDA](#) from the Lake Conservation & Development Authority. The BDA, a cash-starved urban regulator, would require about ₹400 crore to infuse life into the lake but is clueless how it would raise so much of funds in the absence of any assistance from the government.

The BDA has come under further stress after flames erupted out of the water body due to the unabated flow of pollutants leading to further decay. Bengaluru development minister [KJ George](#) last week discussed the revival of the lake with officials and prominent citizens.

Another meeting was convened by chief secretary K Ratna Prabha on the issue. Those who were part of both meetings said some of the solutions discussed and consensus drawn at the minister's meeting were overturned at the chief secretary's meeting.

"With too many stakeholders involved in the process, we are not sure about the outcome and where it will all lead to. There is a lot of disagreement amongst the stakeholders," a person who attended the meeting said.

A case in point is how the authorities allowed a Mumbai-based waste management consultant to purify the lake water by releasing microbes into it.

Though both the Energy and Wetlands Research Group from IISc headed by Prof TV Ramachandra and an expert committee on Bellandur lake chaired by UDD additional chief secretary Mahendra Jain have recommended the harvesting of macrophytes as the first step towards cleansing the lake, the authorities also allowed the consultant to experiment with enzymes in August last year, a member of Bellandur and Varthur Lake Citizens Group said objecting to the latter experiment.

As far as the authorities are concerned, there are too many solutions and plans coming up and the groups and officials seem to be working in silos rather than with a sense of common purpose.

After the minister's and chief secretary's meetings, the Pollution Control Board held its own meeting on Thursday. The participants suggested that the board give one year for apartments around the lake to build sewage treatment plants.

BDA commissioner Rakesh Singh told ET that he has communicated with all stakeholders and the timebound action plan is ready. "We will submit an affidavit before the NGT on Monday (January 29)," he said.



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