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kicker: Bellandur Lake has 6.60 million cubic metres of silt, according to an IISc study. DH FILE PHOTO

The cash-strapped Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) seems to have identified a new source of money to fund infrastructure works. BDA is apparently sitting on silt worth Rs 2,000 crore, but is yet decide what to do with it.

The BDA's search for a place to dump the silt from Bellandur and Varthur lakes has intensified. So has the search for potential industry buyers for the silt.

The search, in fact, gathered momentum after the BDA learnt the silt's worth. According to an IISc report - Bellandur and Varthur Lakes Rejuvenation Blueprint - Bellandur Lake has 6.60 million cubic metres of silt and at Varthur Lake, 3.87 million cubic metres.

Professor T V Ramachandra of the Centre of Ecological Sciences, IISc and the co-author of the report said if the silt is converted into sand, it can fetch the BDA at least Rs 1,944 crore. According to the professor, if the silt is utilised by the brick industry it can fetch Rs 2,061 crore.

BDA's interest in the silt further rose after the report was discussed by the members of National Green Tribunal Expert Committee and the Bellandur Lake Expert Committee recently. The members pointed out that it is high time the BDA found a mechanism to dispose of the silt.

"Improper silt management plan is slowing the process of desilting and rejuvenating the two lakes," echoed the committee members.

Meanwhile, BDA sources said the authority has planned to auction the silt to take up infrastructure works including partial funding of the Peripheral Ring Road or the renovation of the Hebbal flyover.

However, the authority does not know where to take the silt at the moment. Recently, Mineral Enterprise Limited (MEL), a mining firm came forward to desilt a part of the Varthur Lake. But, the company agreed to remove the silt and dump it along the lake bed itself. At Bellandur Lake, nothing has transpired yet.

BDA Commissioner Rakesh Singh told *DH* that a search for places on the outskirts of the city to dump the silt is on. He also said that the location would be identified within a few days as there are many abandoned quarries which can be utilised.

At Sarakki Lake, silt is being used by the farmers as manure and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike is quite happy about it.