The **NEWS** Minute

Environment

No trees planted by BDA in Bengaluru in 2 years: Green cover to reduce to 2.96% in 2020

(/article/no-trees-planted-bda-bengaluru-2-years-green-cover-reduce-296-2020-96655)

There has been an 88% decline in green spaces from 1973 to 2017, states a study by IISc.

Soumya Chatterjee (https://www.thenewsminute.com/author-articles/Soumya-Chatterjee)
Follow @CSoumya21 (https://twitter.com/CSoumya21)

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As successive governments (both state and local) show little interest in revitalising the lost green cover in Bengaluru, the future of the city looks grim with temperatures rising, ground water tables depleting and urban flooding becoming a common occurrence. A recent RTI reply shows that in the last two years there have been no addition to the number of trees in Bengaluru due to government action. TNM has accessed the RTI reply by the Bangalore Development Authority which shows that it has not planted a single sapling for 2017-18 and in 2018-19.
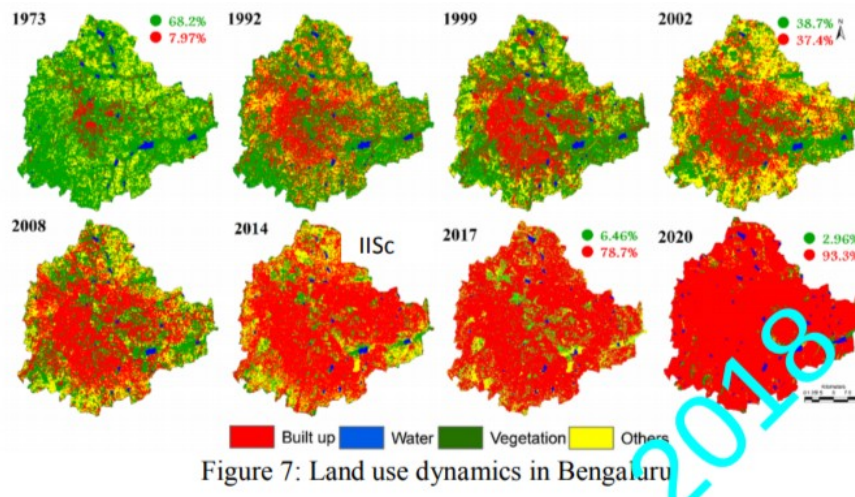
truck terminals by the Department of Transport & Road safety Department.

Sl. No.	Action points	BDA
26.	Blacktopping of metalled roads including payment of road shoulders	
27.	To increase the green cover by planting trees in Bangalore city where empty spaces available on road sides, industries premises, public parks, etc.	
28.	To establish truck terminals on all major highways leading to Bangalore	
29.	To create separate bus bays in new proposed BBMP, BDA layout and Private layouts	
30.	To construct flyovers/under pass at congestion / highly traffic intersection of BBMP Area	
31.	To Create water fountains in the traffic intersections like Upparpet Police stations, Corporation circle, M.G.Road, Cauvery bhavan, Vidhansoudha, K.R.Circle, Majestic, Railway stations etc to reduce the Air pollution in the traffic intersections and also it increase the aesthetic look of that place.	

Sl. No.	Action points	Food and Civil Supplies Department
32.	To curb adulteration of fuel with cheap oils and solvent	
33.	To ban on sale of un-scientifically reprocessed oil in the street vendors	
34.	Periodic check all petrol Banks established in Urban and Rural District of Bangalore and initiate action against the violators.	

Sl. No.	Action points	BMRCL
35.	To complete Metro Rail Route (Reach 2 & 3) as per schedule.	
36.	To sweep the street using Mechanical suction vacuum cleaner, where the metro construction work is under progress and sprinkle water to suppress the dust emission	
37.	To take action to cover the construction and demolition debris carrying through trucks and create/approve facility for re-processing of C and D waste.	
38.	To remove the C & D waste this is already dumped in the lakes (Ex.Kengeri and other lakes).	

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The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahaangara Palike (BBMP) also (https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/bbmp-to-restart-tree-planting-drive/article26172157.ece) had also stopped planting trees for the last two years after it was criticised for lack of transparency and low survivability of its saplings. Even the free sapling distribution by the tree bank run by the BBMP, started in 2017, has been called off.

All this, as citizen activists are crying foul over the call to further reduce green cover as trees are being felled on a daily basis for road widening, metro projects.
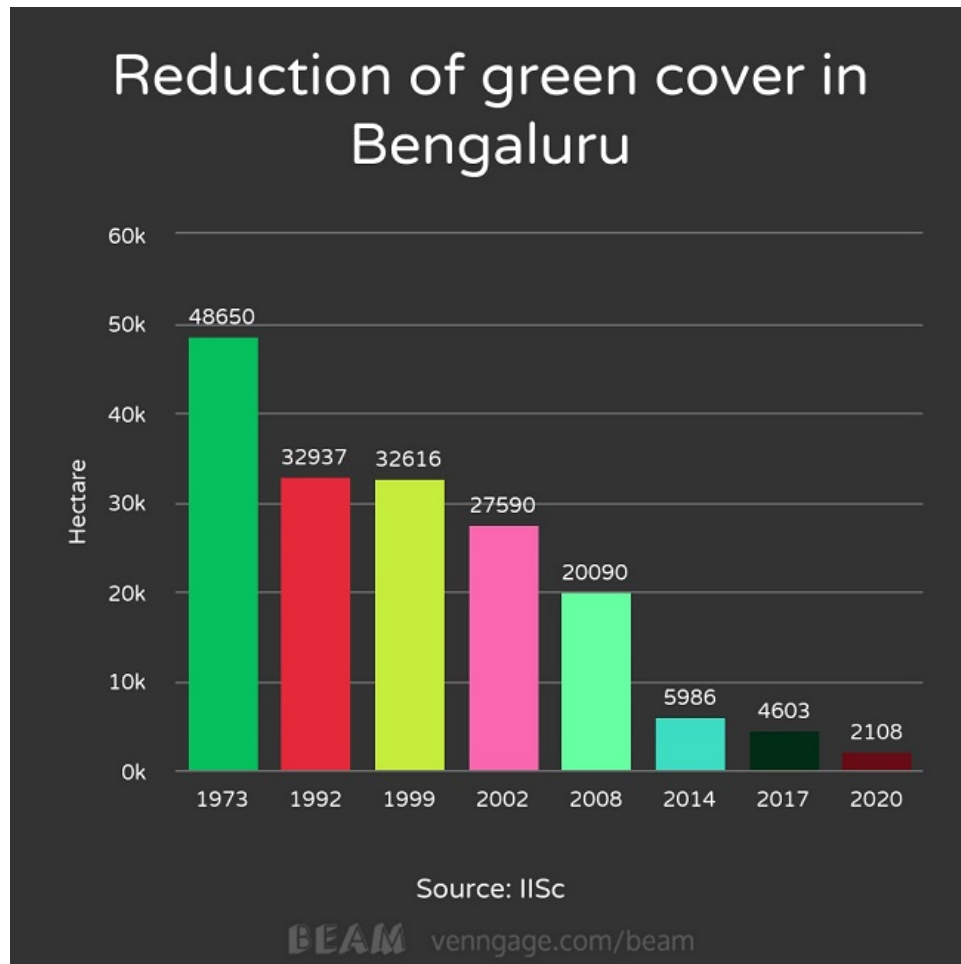
Satellite imagery, remote sensing data and analysis by scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) paint a frightening picture. There has been an 88% decline in green spaces from 1973 to 2017, while groundwater table has also witnessed a sharp decline along with the deterioration of air quality, reveals a study by IISc.

Figure 7: Land use dynamics in Bengaluru

The study reads, "Urbanisation during 1973 to 2017 (1028% concretization or increase of paved surface) has telling influence on the natural resources such as decline in green spaces (88% decline in vegetation), wetlands (79% decline), higher air pollutants and sharp decline in groundwater table."

The study using multi-criteria decision-making techniques have predicted that by 2020, only a green cover of 2.96% will remain in Bengaluru compared to 45.77% in 1999. This would make the region greenhouse gas rich, water scarce, non-resilient and unlivable, depriving the city dwellers of clean air, water and environment."It adds, "Quantification of number of trees in the region using remote sensing data with field census reveals that there are only 1.5 million trees to support Bangalore's population of 9.5 million, indicating one tree for every seven persons in the city. This is insufficient even to sequester respiratory carbon (ranges from 540-900 g per person per day)."

Vijay Nishanth, an urban eco-conservationist, said, "This shows why people don't believe the government when they say there will be compensatory forestation for big infrastructural projects like the steel bridge and elevated corridor. While there is enough money to spend thousands of crores on steel bridge, why can't Rs 5 crore be spent on planting trees. This city was made of trees, people used to come here for the good weather but now look how the weather has changed over the last few years alone."

He added, "We can see how little importance the political class gives for the trees. For an entire city of Bengaluru, we only have 12 officers in the BBMP tree cell. We hear that tree cells of both the BDA and BBMP do not get the financial sanction to carry out their plantation programs. If the trees disappear like this, not only will there be no good weather but no rain also. The BBMP has been saying that it will start its tree census but we don't know when."