

Water level plummets 4ft in 2 months at Devarabisanahalli Lake

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URBAN DANGER: Activists say demolition of an under-construction structure caused water to seep out of the lakebed

BENGALURU: [Water level at Devarabisanahalli Lake](#) has receded by 4 feet over the past two months and the [waterbody](#) might be on its way to a slow death, [lake activists](#) said on Thursday.

They were speaking at a discussion, 'Urban lakes: Water security and people's livelihood', organized by the Karnataka Environment Research Foundation, Energy and Wetlands Research Group and the Centre for Ecological Studies and the Indian Institution of Science (IISc).

Shalini Susheel, a volunteer incharge of conservation of Devarabisanahalli Lake, pointed out how demolition of an under-construction structure adjacent to the lake caused the water to seep out of the lakebed.

“After successful completion of Phase 1 of the rejuvenation project, we're now concerned about the health of the lake. In January and February, [water level](#) is down more than 4ft due to a large construction footprint which has come up very close on the side of the lake. Due to this, there has been a steady drop in water levels and we're afraid that over 30,000 fish released into the lake post rejuvenation may fail to survive. The non-availability of

an efficient sewage treatment plant (STP) is also a cause for concern. Right now, sewage is simply diverted downstream to Varthur Lake,” said Shalini.

“Dumping of domestic and solid waste right near the lakebed in Varthur is a problem that must be tackled on a war footing,” said Elangovan, member of Whitefield Rising and volunteer working on the Varthur Lake rejuvenation project.

“The Jakkur Lake model of rejuvenation must be followed for conservation of both Bellandur and Varthur lakes. The lake must be desilted and instead of diverting sewage downstream to other waterbodies, it must be properly treated using an STP,” said TV Ramachandra of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc.

Ramachandra also stressed the need for a buffer zone for lakes and urged the authorities not to allow any construction activity in the ‘valley zone’ between Bellandur and Varthur.

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Solid waste management expert Almitra Patel said: “The government should mandate detergent companies to disclose the phosphorous content in their products on their labels so that consumers can make an informed decision.”

“There is an urgent need to integrate various agencies during conservation of a lake. Lake preservation and ensuring that the ground water table is replenished and of good quality can go a long way in solving Bengaluru’s problems. Proper water governance is the need of the hour,” said CJ Jagadeesha, chairman of the Karnataka Environment Research Foundation. “We’ll submit a list of our concerns and recommendations with the National Green Tribunal soon,” he added.