

Bellandur lake deweeded, dewatered but Bengaluru agency behind schedule to desilt

The lake has been in the news since February 2017 after it caught fire for a second time.



news Environment Friday, January 10, 2020 - 18:26

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The de-weeding and dewatering process as part of the National Green Tribunal-monitored rejuvenation of the infamous Bellandur lake in Bengaluru has been completed. Now, lake activists and experts say, that the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), the custodian of the lake, has to hurry with the desilting process.

It may be recalled that the second fire had prompted the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2016 to take suo motu cognisance and pull up the state government, BBMP and other civic agencies. Despite this, the state government was fined two years down the line for not complying with the NGT's orders. Following this, a panel, headed by former Lokayukta and Supreme Court judge-Justice Santosh Hegde, was formed to oversee the restoration process.

Speaking to TNM, Justice Hegde said, "I am chairing a meeting with the BDA and other officials concerned to maintain the deadline with regard to desilting. I am duty-bound to follow the court's orders. If the officers don't comply with the same, I will write to the NGT."

According to an analysis by the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre, the lake area was 906 acres 25 guntas in 1973, which has now been reduced to 322.85 acres. An Indian Institute of Science (IISc) monitored survey in 2017 said the lake currently has around 6.6 million cubic metres of sediment, which had reduced the water holding capacity of the lake to only 5 million cubic metres.

"With effective sewage diversion, Bellandur lake has been dewatered and is dry now. We are two months behind schedule. The silt is till the surface," Sonali Singh, a Bellandur resident and activist claimed. "We understand BDA has called for a tender for desilting. We hope that the process for desilting will be completed before the next monsoon. For that, the government top brass should also ensure that work continues on a war footing," she added.

"Desilting should start by the end of March. Before that, BDA needs to complete the process for calling of tenders, evaluation and selecting the best vendor. They have two months to complete the process."

BDA Superintendent Engineer Shivanand told TNM that they have already floated the tender.