



Varthur lake in Bengaluru catches fire again, migratory birds at risk

Activist Reddy said the fire could have been triggered by the presence of chemicals in it. He said that the presence of "illegal migrants" near the lake is also a reason behind the fire as they "segregate whatever they see of value in the waste and dump the rest into the lake".



Nolan Pinto 

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Garbage catches fire near Varthur lake in Bengaluru. (Photo: ANI)

HIGHLIGHTS

Varthur lake caught fire at three different spots

The fire destroyed nearly 20 acres of land of a small island in the lake

Exact reason that led to the fire has not been ascertained

A month after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) imposed Rs 50 crore penalty on Karnataka for neglecting two lakes, one of them Varthur lake - again caught fire around 2 pm on Sunday. People living in the vicinity spotted thick smoke billowing over the Varthur lake and informed police and fire fighting services. The lake is located in Bengaluru.

Locals said Varthur lake caught fire at three different spots and the fire started spreading quickly. The thick plumes of smoke could also be seen some two kilometers away from the lake. When India Today TV reached the lake, the fire brigade personnel were present and were trying to find ways to douse the flames.

The fire destroyed nearly 20 acres of land of a small island in the lake. The fire incident comes at a time when migratory birds flock to the lake. Sunday's fire reportedly destroyed many nests on the islands.

Jagadish Reddy, an environmental activist from Varthur, said, "This is another black day in the history of Varthur lake. I feel pained to see the lake's present situation.

Reddy said despite the lake being already polluted with sewage, effluents, construction and demolition waste, people continue to dump garbage and debris into it.

Meanwhile, the exact reason that led to the fire has not been ascertained yet. Reddy said the fire could have been triggered by the presence of chemicals in it. He said that the presence of "illegal migrants" near the lake is also a reason behind the fire as they segregate whatever they see of value in the waste and dump the rest into the lake.

In March 2017, Varthur lake caught fire after some people burned garbage near the lake's inlet. In January 2018, another lake in Bengaluru--the Bellandur lake--caught fire and the operation to douse it went on for over 10 hours. The Bellandur lake caught fire 11 times in 2018 alone and once in January 2019.

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Following the incidents, the NCF imposed Rs 50 crore penalty on the state for neglecting Bellandur and Varthur lakes.