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'By 2025, 95% of Bengaluru will be just concrete'

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BENGALURU: Reiterating that the city is becoming an urban jungle, experts on Saturday estimated that nearly 95% of the city will be just concrete if the unchecked urbanisation was allowed to continue. Experts debated a host of issues, ranging from depleting green cover and poor solid waste management to inability of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) Act in solving problems.

At least 500 people representing various residents' welfare associations took part in the event that saw experts dissect issues plaguing

representational purpose only

the city. "The lakes in Bengaluru are dying due to mushrooming of apartments. The builders and the government have encroached all small lakes in the city," said TV Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science.

V Ramprasad, co-founder of Friends of Lakes, a city-based environmentalist group, said lakes have become garbage dumps as the BBMP has a poor collection system. "The Swachh Survekshan for the current year has begun, but the BBMP's ignorance towards it is frightening. The BBMP uses the lack of collectors and dysfunctional auto tippers as shield to cover its flawed management," he said.

Malleswaram MLA CN Ashwath Narayan urged corporates to adopt lakes as part of their social responsibility. "...There are so many organisations today, and even if each of them adopt two lakes, we will be able to restore them," he said. His comments came close on the heels of deputy chief minister G Parameshwara calling upon corporates to manage lakes.

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Pointing out that people are keen on buying properties through loans - with monthly payments of Rs 30,000 to Rs 1 lakh, but many of them may never own these properties, advocate and RERA expert H Sharada warned. "The buyer falls prey to traps set by the builders and contractors. If RERA is efficient, then these frauds might stop. But in the absence of this, many people are still being cheated," she said.

"The government needs to wake up, and establish a RERA committee, which will ensure that the buyers and owners of the properties receive the money along with the interest based on the date of purchase till the date of complement, in case of violations

by the builder," she said.