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Bengaluru's Ulsoor Lake flooded with dead fish, garbage dumping to blame

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Residents criticize authorities for not taking action.

By Sreekanth A. Nair



There is more evidence of growing levels of pollution in Bengaluru: thousands of fish were found dead in and around Ulsoor Lake in the city, Monday morning.

Residents and morning walkers were shocked to see thousands of fish floating in the lake on Monday morning. They alleged that the authorities didn't take any steps to clean the lake though they informed them soon after noticing the dead fish.

India Today, however, reported that the authorities had collected about 200 kg of dead fish on the same day itself.

“We got scared as some of the fish were very large. The incident seems to have taken place on Sunday night. Sewage water enters the lake and plastic and other garbage is dumped here every day. This might explain the fish kill,” Kalidas Reddy, a resident, told Deccan Herald.

Thousands of fish were killed in a similar incident that happened on March 7.

Residents and activists alleged that dumping of waste and flow of waste water are the reasons that caused the fish to die.

“Due to pre-monsoon showers, sewage entered the lake through storm water drains...as did a lot of garbage that has been the primary reason,” one of the officials told India Today.

Karnataka State Pollution Control Board said that dissolved oxygen levels in the lake were much lower than the standard limit and that led to the fish being killed. Dissolved oxygen levels were below 1mg/liter, and the limit set by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) is 4mg/liter. Along with this waste, dumping increases the level of ammonia in the water.

Though Ulsoor Lake in the central part of the city is one of the better-maintained lakes in the city, waste dumping and sewage water inflow are posing a threat to it.

“The BBMP’s (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) higher officials need to take strong action against the Fisheries Department and ban fishing. Ministers and MLAs have visited the lake and promised to take up steps to preserve the waterbody, but nothing has happened,” Ulsoor ward corporation, Mamatha Saravana, was quoted as saying by Deccan Herald.

According to a recent study conducted by T.V. Ramachandra and a team from Centre for Ecological Sciences of the Indian Institute of Science, dumping solid bio-degradable waste and concentration of ammonia and other nutrients in the water when it is coupled with the sewage water.

A recent report by Indian Institute of Science (IISc) said that irrational urbanization will make Bengaluru unlivable in five years.