

## Vigil residents wake up BDA to Varthur lake encroachment

Bharath Joshi, ET Bureau May 12, 2016, 11.53AM IST



(A 25-member Varthur Lake...)

BENGALURU: If it was not for residents who spent sleepless nights keeping a watch, the Bangalore Development Authority ( [BDA](#) ) would not have issued notices to builders who were dumping construction debris into the [Varthur lake](#) , one of the city's largest water bodies located on the IT corridor.

A 25-member Varthur Lake Group team, under Whitefield Rising, followed trucks dumping debris into the lake on Balagere Road, clicked pictures for proof and lodged a formal complaint with authorities.

"We are issuing notices to the builders, and a police complaint will be filed," said Mallikarjuna, assistant engineer (east), BDA. One of the violators under the scanner is a prominent builder. Protection of lakes is completely taken over by volunteer-activists even as the development in the IT corridor threatens lakes such as Varthur, Bellandur, Kundalahalli and Kaikondarahalli lakes. Watchful resident groups such as the Varthur Lake Group are keeping a tab on any and every activity that could affect these lakes. Nagavara lake too now has a Facebook page started by an anonymous resident group.

The Bellandur Lake Group, an independent association of 35 residents, has photographed lorries dumping [garbage](#) into the lake near Yemmlur. "BBMP can't keep 24-hour vigil, but we can," said Sonali Singh, a senior leader at Cognizant. "We've been waiting a long time for the government to take action."

The recent National Green Tribunal definition of buffer zone as 75 metres from the lake and 50 metres from the storm water drain came as a boon to the Kundalahalli lake. Following the NGT's verdict, revenue authorities cleared illegal constructions and issued a notice to the builder of an upcoming construction, last week.

Community organiser Arvind Keerthi, who has been leading efforts to protect the Kundalahalli lake, said there are at least 15 residents who will show up at any given time. "I feel blessed for such support. We're also supported by Friends of Lakes, United Way, Whitefield Rising, urban expert RK Misra and the BBMP," he said.

The new Karnataka Lake Development and Conservation Authority was the result of civic society's efforts, said [Biocon](#) chief [Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw](#), who has thrown her weight behind lake rejuvenation through B.PAC. "There were too many agencies involved, but now there is a single authority," she said. The KLDCA, which will have regulatory control over all lakes, is yet to swing into action however. "We await filling up of 96 sanctioned posts, including an enforcement wing comprising policemen," its CEO Ajai Misra said.