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Highrises, Houses, Complexes in Buffer Zone Likely to go Down

By Ashwini M Sripad, Published: 06th May 2016 03:15 AM, Last Updated: 06th May 2016
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• Left: Highrises near the Bellandur Lake and the Symbiosis building at Veerasandra Lake | NAGARAJA GADEKAL, S Manjunath

With the National Green Tribunal directing the state government to lay down buffer zones for all lakeside projects and ordering the demolition of buildings within such zones, thousands of buildings including individual houses, commercial complexes and apartments are likely to be razed.

On Wednesday, the NGT had directed the state government to submit a proposal to demarcate its wetlands in four weeks. As per the tribunal order, for all developments around lakes in Bengaluru (and anywhere in the country), the buffer zone is of 75 metres. It was 30 metres in Bengaluru before this.

Buffer for Raja Kaluves

The tribunal also lays down the extent of buffer zones for raja kaluves (storm-water drains) in Bengaluru. It is 50mt for primary, 35mt for secondary and 15mt for tertiary raja kaluves. With the increase in the buffer boundary, more number of buildings constructed in the areas will fall under its purview.

L C Nagaraj, Assistant Commissioner, Bengaluru Urban, said that if the encroachment is within a lakebed, it can be demolished any time, even in a day or two. “We are verifying the documents and measurements now. If it falls within a buffer zone, the authorities that can cancel its registration or demolish the encroachment are BDA, BMRDA and BBMP. They have to demolish, and we will extend support,” he said.

BBMP Commissioner Manjunath Prasad said the Palike is yet to get a copy of the order. “I need to study the NGT order in detail,” he said. However, sources in the BBMP said thousands of constructions were razed after they were told that no construction is allowed on lakebed areas. “Now that a higher body has intervened and directed that it be done, more buildings and houses may be razed. But it might take some time,” a source said.

Nagaraj said that some of the buildings that fall within the new buffer zone including Keppel Puravankara near Sarakki Lake, Valmark at Hulimavu on Bannerghatta Road, the Symbiosis building on Veerasandra Lake in Electronics city, individual houses in Chikkalasangra lakebed and many more.

“We have read about the recent NGT order in the media. We will be in a position to comment only after the detailed order is released. The Keppel Puravankara project has been developed and handed over after all the requisite approvals/NOCs/OCs as per the prevalent bye-laws were obtained,” a spokesperson from Puravankara said.

DC office authorities have issued notices to around 15,000 encroachers, of which some have responded. Encroachers include government and private entities. “Some land has been utilised to build roads and schools. The Koliwad Committee (Legislative Committee) has asked our opinion on removing encroachments. If the encroachment is inside a lakebed area, there is no need to think twice. We are saying that to the committee too. We will reply to the Committee within a week,” he said.

Bengaluru Urban DC V Shankar said there are 837 lakes that fall under the administration’s jurisdiction. “A survey on these lakes is also completed and we have put a boundary around the areas too. We have issued notices and obtained responses from them. Around 4,000 acres of lakebed area has been encroached upon. We will not spare any encroacher if the encroachment is in lakebed area,” he said.

Encroached Space

Total tanks: 835

Area: 27,604 acres 16 guntas

Encroachment: 4,277 acres 25 guntas

Owned by government: 2,254 acres 21 guntas

Owned by private parties: 2,023 acres 4 guntas

Bengaluru rural

Total tanks: 710

Area: 29,972 acres 1 guntas

Encroachment: 6,195 acres 9 guntas

Owned by government: 1,032 acres 37 guntas

Owned by private parties: 5,162 acres 12 guntas

Source: Koliwad Committee Report