

Minister Announces Committee to Fix Bellandur, Varthur Lake Pollution Woes

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BENGALURU: Bengaluru Development Minister K J George on Wednesday announced the setting up of an expert committee to find a solution to the problems dogging Bellandur and Varthur lakes.

George announced this at a workshop on ‘Rejuvenation and comprehensive development of Bellandur Lake’ organised by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) at Vikasa Soudha. The committee, under the leadership of the Additional Chief Secretary, will comprise representatives from the Lake Development Authority, Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bangalore Development Authority (BDA), NGOs and experts. “I request them to submit a final report within 15 to 20 days,” he said.

“Once they come up with a solution to revive the lakes, the government will call for tenders under the Swiss Challenge Method. An agency will be entrusted with the task of implementing it,” he said.

A pilot project is under way to recycle water at Anekal and Hoskote, George added.

BDA Engineer-Member P N Nayak said BWSSB is carrying out work on 10 treatment plants in K&C Valley, Kadubeesanahalli, Madiwala, Cubbon Park, Lalbagh, Bellandur Ammani Kere, Hulimavu, Chikka Begur, Sarraki and Agara, all of which lie in the catchment areas of Bellandur and Varthur lakes.

“Sewage treatment capacity in the catchment areas of the lakes stands at 305 Million Litres Per Day (MLD) presently. After completion of all these projects, the treatment capacity will increase to 660 MLD,” he said. Karnataka State Pollution Control Board chairman Lakshman said at present, only 43 per cent of sewage in the two lakes was being treated. “Nearly 53 per cent of sewage is let out untreated into the lakes.” One of the options is to construct a diversion canal to let out 25 to 30 million litres into wetlands.

“The KSPCB has inspected 257 apartment complexes out of the 598 on Bellandur Lake bed and issued notices to those not utilising STPs as mandated,” he said.

Environmentalist Yellappa Reddy said that many firms in the IT industry that occupy a large chunk of land do not dispose of e-waste properly. “This results in nano toxicity, which is highly hazardous.”

T V Ramachandra, professor, Indian Institute of Science, made an appeal for freeing rajakaluves of all encroachments. “Land, water and waste mafia are destroying Bengaluru. Let us recreate the model at Jakkur in all lakes in the City. This revolves around restoration of wetlands,” he said.

“Due to restoration of the Jakkur Lake, a carcinogen-like nitrate present in the water in 300 borewells of the surrounding areas were removed,” he added.

Sridhar Pabbiseti of Namma Bengaluru Foundation called upon the government to ensure that the landmark judgment by the National Green Tribunal in New Delhi on Wednesday be implemented around all lakes.

Proposed solutions for revival of Bellandur/Varthur lakes

1. Priority desilting and removal of sludge
2. Stopping untreated sewage from entering the lake
3. Ensuring 100 per cent sewage treatment and stopping inflow of sewage in SWDs
4. Discharge of treated sewage downstream
5. Follow the Jakkur Lake model