

BENGALURU APARTMENT DWELLERS AGITATED OVER STPS

By SOWMYA RAJARAM, Bangalore Mirror Bureau | Updated: Apr 4, 2017, 10.42 PM IST



Hoping to start a public dialogue and to get experts to weigh in on the matter, the Bangalore Apartments Federation (BAF) is organising a panel discussion on April 8 on retrospective STP & dual-piping implementation. This, after groups of apartments came together to file writ petitions in the High Court of Karnataka against the BWSSB mandate to implement Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) and dual pipelines in apartment complexes with flats numbering over 20.

Bangalore Mirror had earlier reported on the matter (Residents' fight against STPs set to reach HC, Feb 12, 2017), which has been causing heartburn since February 2016, when BWSSB issued the notification. It said that September onwards, apartments which did not do so would be charged penalties at 25 per cent of the water bill for three months, which would increase to 50 per cent after six months, till the STP

is installed. BAF contends that this move is neither economically nor environmentally feasible, and that the imposition of such hefty penalties is unfair because when the apartments were constructed, they followed all the requisite norms.

Srikanth Narasimhan, governing council member, BAF, says the idea of the panel discussion is to generate awareness among the public among the issue, and gain knowledge from independent experts who have years of experience in the field. Importantly, he says they also want to discuss sustainable solutions to this as well as water shortage and lake pollution.

Speakers will include Dr Ananth Kodavasal, an experts in waste water management and author of The STP Guide which has been published by Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, who Narasimhan says will provide "a practical perspective". Dr TV Ramachandra, coordinator of Energy and Wetlands Research Group (EWRG) and Convener of Environmental Information System (ENVIS) at Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) at IISC, will provide an "academic perspective on the different solutions that civic agencies and citizens can work on together", while Nanda Kumar, former Chief Environmental Officer of Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), will address regulatory matters. Lastly, Latha Raman Jaigopal, architect and co-founder of Inspiration, a design group, which focuses on ecology and environment sensitive designs and constructions, can talk about solutions that can be decentralised.

BAF's contention has been that the BWSSB passed the notification without any dialogue with experts or the public, and without taking into account technical, practical or environmental realities. The discussion, they hope, will make things clearer and invite all the stakeholders involved to look for solutions. "At BAF we believe that citizens too have a role to play, and we can figure out what potential role we can play in finding a solution at the discussion. This is the first such attempt to create a public dialogue on the issue. Hopefully it will create a momentum towards finding a solution," Narasimhan says.

The discussion will be held from 11am – 12.30pm on April 8 at Hotel Ajantha (Rohini Hall) on MG Road.