

Now, KSIIDC wants to be nodal agency to develop Bellandur lake



Eighteen-member expert panel finds “too many parastatal agencies and lack of coordination”

Is this a case of too many agencies wanting a slice of the lucrative pie?

As the froth in Bellandur and Varthur lakes evoke shock and disgust from citizens, an 18-member expert committee formed to chalk out a solution had noticed that there were “too many parastatal agencies and lack of coordination”.

Though the committee report sought to regulate the work of eight government departments to handle the lake, one more agency wants to throw its hat in the ring. Armed with a proposal from a British company, the Karnataka State

Industries and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (KSIIDC) wants to be the nodal agency to develop Bellandur lake.

“I have written to the Chief Minister to make KSIIDC the nodal agency to rejuvenate the lake. The corporation has the technical expertise to clean up the lake, and will provide a single-window system to expedite the rejuvenation,” said C.M. Dhananjay, chairman, KSIIDC.

Presentation and plans

During a presentation on Friday, Richard Haddon, executive chairman of UK-Based Company Bluewater Bio, said a plan had been devised to construct a 200 MLD sewage treatment plant and use “advanced” filtration techniques such that “high quality reusable” water could be provided from the lake. The presentation notes that the UK government and the company were willing to give 85% of the project cost as loan, which could be repaid six months after commissioning of the plant at an interest rate of 2.36%.

However, Minister for Large and Medium Scale Industries Minister R.V. Deshpande expressed reservations about the plans, saying a company can take up work only if a global tender is called; while, loans could be taken only with the permission of the Centre.

The meeting highlighted the growing confusion over Bellandur lake. A government official, who was part of the expert committee, said this was an “insult” to the committee and would be taken up at the next meeting scheduled for March 27. “The committee was set up by a Government Order and made recommendations after thorough discussions,” he said.

Similarly, T.V. Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Sciences at Indian Institute of Science and a member of the committee, said these attempts were an indication of the growing fragmentation in governance that exasperated the problem in the first place.

“This is all just to make money and loot resources. If KSIIDC was interested, why didn’t they pitch these plans when the committee was formed. The solutions are already chalked by the committee and they need to be implemented,” he said.