


Contractor penalised Rs 5 lakh for littering Bellandur Lake

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BBMP has warned of action against those dumping garbage in Bellandur Lake | Pushkar V

BENGALURU: Despite the National Green Tribunal order fixing a penalty of Rs 5 lakh for dumping in Bellandur Lake, there seem to be no deterrence among contractors.

Now, BBMP has sprung into action and it has levied its first penalty. It has not only slapped a fine of Rs 5 lakh on contractor for dumping trash but also suspended the health officer concerned. BBMP plans to bring down the dumping menace with the five cameras installed, six security guards and two Prahari vigilance vehicles.

However, the group of residents who have been keeping a close vigil on all the activity opine they hardly see of any these guards or the vigilance vehicles. In fact, they plan to meet the Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority (KLCDA) CEO Vidyasagar to discuss the further course of action.

Sarfraz Khan, BBMP Joint Commissioner (solid waste management), said, "We are going to take strict action against anybody found dumping garbage or debris in the lake."

Realising the magnitude of the task, Vidyasagar said, "These people who have been dumping debris or garbage are a smart lot. They know where the cameras are installed and hence dump in other areas around the lake. This happens especially at night. I have directed BBMP to charge them under the KLCDA Act which makes dumping of debris a cognizable offence which can lead do to three years of imprisonment."

Considering past experiences, residents are taking the promises of authorities with a pinch of salt. Seema Sharma, a resident of Bellandur, said, "We have formed a team of residents who have been monitoring the work. However, whenever we have been to the spot, we hardly see any work happening. All we see are some high-profile visits. All these seem like an eyewash to show the people and the court that they are doing some work. Announcing the measures are not enough, we want to know who is monitoring it and who is accountable for all these works."

Meanwhile, three excavators were seen working on Thursday for de-weeding. Professor T V Ramachandra of IISc, who is an expert on lake issues, visited the lake on Wednesday to check on the de-weeding work and was highly disappointed. He claims the contractor lacked ecological and technical know-how and vested interests still might be playing a big role in the clean-up process as well.

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"They lacked basic idea as to from where to start the de-weeding. I will be pointing out the issues in our next meeting," said Ramachandra, who also acts as an advisor to civic agencies. As for the wetland developments, Ramachandra has submitted his wetland designs. The KLCDA CEO has to now take a call on it.

On April 19, NGT issued strict directions to the Urban Development Department to clean up the lake in a month's time, bringing civic agencies to their knees. Sustained inflow of untreated sewage and effluents from apartments and industries have contaminated the lake to the point where the inflow of pollutants has surpassed the lake's assimilative capacity.

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