



Environment

# Bellandur Lake frothing grabs Centre's attention: Ban sought on phosphorus in detergents

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The Union government has outlined measures it has taken in a letter to Bengaluru Central MP PC Mohan.

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The frothing Bellandur Lake has finally caught the attention of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

In the wake of research proving the high levels of phosphorous in the lake's water, which is causing the growth of water weeds, the Union government is now focusing on the phosphorous content in detergents, laundry soaps and industrial cleaners.

According to a report by the Times of India (<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31806&articlexml=Soon-detergent-packs-may-have-to-disclose-phosphorous-19092017002018>), the ministry has sought inputs from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and other stakeholders on the issue.

The ministry has also requested the Bureau of Indian Standards and Central Drugs Standard Control Organization to look into the phosphate content in detergents and the appropriate labelling of detergent packets.

With this move, activists hope for better transparency as detergent manufacturers will have to specify the quantum of phosphorus content on the packets.

The Union government has outlined measures it has taken in a letter to Bengaluru Central MP PC Mohan, who had demanded a ban on phosphorous in detergents.

MP Mohan cites an IISc study which states that phosphorous is damaging water



ies. His constituency, comprising of Bellandur, Varthur and Rampura lakes, have been frothing and foaming for years now.

It is not just sewage, but the prevention of phosphorous inflow into the water bodies, which has to be checked, the report states.

Mohan reiterated the urgent need to educate industries and cap phosphorous content at 2.2% in every bottle and sachet of detergent.

The MP has cited IISc Professor TV Ramachandra and various others from the Centre for Ecological Sciences Department, who have conducted several studies on the factors leading to pollution of the water bodies.

The study states that phosphorous is used in chemicals and fertilizers. It helps in the growth of algae and water hyacinth, which leads to foaming.

“Why waste money on phosphate when there can be alternatives? It should be banned immediately. From Yamuna to Bellandur, our waterbodies are frothing. But no government official is willing to accept this fact, despite there being scientific evidence. Instead, officials argue that the froth is because of filamentous bacteria. However, even these bacteria would need food to survive and they consume carbon and phosphates present in the lake. It's said that the same industries produce detergents without phosphorus for exporting, as phosphorus is banned in some western countries. However, in India, they sell detergents with phosphorus content,” Ramachandra was quoted as saying, by TOI.

The ministry's move has inspired hope in many, who are working to save the lake ecology. This has brought a modicum of relief to the residents, who are now calling for a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban Development to inspect the Bellandur Lake.

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