

Bengaluru may become first Indian city to run out of water

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Pic: Pixabay

Bengaluru: India's Silicon Valley Bengaluru has been under water crises, as people are completely dependent upon supplies of water shipped in by tankers, that have caused groundwater levels to be steeply dropped. There have been arisen predictions that Bengaluru could become the first Indian city to run out of water.

The new construction in the city is on a rise, even when those who already live there don't get enough water. "There is a severe scarcity of water here," says Nagraj, 30, who moved to the

suburban neighbourhood of Panathur a decade ago and has seen the area transformed by rampant construction.

“The future will be very difficult. It is impossible to imagine how they will find water, how they will live. Even if we dig 1,500 feet (450 metres) down, we are not getting water.” The area is located next to Bengaluru’s biggest lake Bellandur, that can be seen as an alarming call. Once known as India’s garden city due to a number of parks, the city was built around many lakes created to form rainwater reservoirs.

Condition of lakes:

Many lakes have been transformed into concrete, filled with apartments with names such as ‘Dream Acres’ and ‘Strawberry Fields’ to house those who settled here during India’s outsourcing boom. The remaining lakes have become so toxic that they catch fire at any time and start emitting white froth.

“The city is dying,” says TV Ramachandra, an ecologist with the Indian Institute of Science who has predicted the Karnataka state capital could be the first Indian city to follow Cape Town in running out of water.

“If the current trend of growth and urbanisation is allowed (to continue), by 2020, 94 percent of the landscape will be concretised.”

Ramachandra further says the city has enough annual rainfall to provide water for its estimated 10 million people without resorting to borewells or rivers — if only it could harvest the resource more effectively.

“If there is a water crisis, we should not think about river diversion. We should think about how to retain the water,” he said, blaming “fragmented, uncoordinated governance” for the crisis.

Meanwhile in the same city, Shivakumar and his family have not used a single drop of mains water in the 23 years they have lived at their home in Bengaluru. With the help of rainwater harvesting, they collected water through gutters and stored in large tanks under the house, which Shivakumar designed with water efficiency in mind. Even the cement used to build it was made with recycled water.

“This crisis will force everyone to take up measures like rainwater harvesting and water conservation measures,” he said.