

Bengaluru: NGT says govt report incomplete, forms panel to inspect city lakes

TNN | Apr 12, 2018, 07:04 AM IST



BENGALURU : Not convinced by the Karnataka government's status report on reviving Bellandur, Varthur and Agara lakes, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday formed a commission for inspection. The commission comprising a senior advocate, expert from IISc and officials from civic agencies will inspect these polluted lakes to study all the fire incidents that happened till April 10 and the progress of their revival. The commission will also check whether apartment complexes around the lakes have occupancy certificates from the municipal corporation. Apart from senior advocate Raj Panjwani, a junior advocate, an IISc professor, the BBMP commissioner, a senior scientist from the Central Pollution Control Board, CEO of Karnataka Lake Conservation and Development Authority and member-secretary of the Karnataka State Pollution Control

Board will be part of the panel.

Action not enough

The bench noted that the state government is not taking enough action for preventing fire in the lake and cleaning the waterbodies. It went through the government's report on removal of macrophytes and cleaning the three lakes, and observed the same is bereft of material information and details on action taken on the ground. "The information is insufficient and incorrect. It does not answer the status of compliances of the tribunal's directions," the bench said.

Pulled up for recent fire

The tribunal questioned the state on the recent fire incident at Bellandur Lake. However, Nagaraj, superintendent engineer, BDA, claimed there wasn't any such incident in the lake since January 19, 2018. His statement was recorded and the tribunal directed the state to verify it. The BDA, which is the custodian of the lake, has been told to deposit Rs 5 lakh towards the cost of the commission. The commission will conduct inspection on April 14-15. The matter has been posted to May 11 for consideration of the commission's report.

Times View

This is not the first time the government is being rapped on its knuckles for apathy in protecting lakes. The government has submitted a half-baked report to NGT, forcing it to form another panel. The BDA's claim that the lake hasn't seen fires in the recent past was proved hollow as the water body was unleashing toxic foam yet again. Such incidents are not unforeseeable as claimed and the government must pull up its socks. A wholehearted, sincere effort is needed by all agencies and citizens to rid the city of this dangerous toxin.