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## How much longer before BBMP smells the dead fish here?

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Over the past one week, residents of the area have noticed dead fish floating on the surface of the Devera Bishlahalli Lake near Marathalli Ring Road. Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials, however, say that they have no clue.

The lake, which covers an area of 4.64 hectares, has been certified as polluted by the Palike. It falls within the Belanduru ward, Mahadevapura zone.

Residents say the water has been polluted as sewage has been released into the lake.

Muniraju, who has a tender from the fisheries department to fish in the Devera Bishlahalli Lake, said that he had submitted several complaints about the pollution of the lake to the fisheries department as well as officials concerned at the BBMP, to no avail.

BBMP medical health officer, Mahadevapura, Basavaraj, said that he did not know about the death of fish. "I have no information. I will visit and verify this," he said. Environment engineer responsible for the area, Mamatha, said, "I look after garbage clearance in the zone, nothing else."

Bellandur corporator BP Babu Reddy said that he had visited the lake after receiving complaints. "As far as my knowledge goes, sewage water is first treated before being released into the lake. There are reports that hundreds of fish have died, but we are yet to ascertain the cause of the deaths. A water sample has been sent to the laboratory, results are awaited," he said.

KS Saibaba, CEO of the Lake Development Authority said that maintenance of the lake had been handed over to the BBMP. He added that an official of the fisheries department would be sent to the site to take stock of the situation.

Dr TV Ramachandra, Energy and Wetlands Research Group of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, said that a study conducted by two students had shown that fish were dying in this lake even a couple of months back. The situation of Waderahalli Lake, Bangalore South, was also found to be similar. With the quality of the water changing, there is an increase in phosphates. The level of dissolved oxygen too declined. With pollution and the profusion of water hyacinth, lake water is unable to sustain fish, Ramachandra explained, adding that there is need for coordination between the different civic agencies responsible. Unless the BBMP, BWSSB, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board and the fisheries department work in tandem, the problem of cleaning the lakes and making them fit for a healthy fish population would be an impossible task. Unfortunately, civil engineering works end up destroying wetlands around lakes, threatening biodiversity.

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