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BDA to de-water Bellandur, Varthur lake in a month

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Restoration targeted to finish before monsoon; cost of rejuvenation estimated to be Rs 500 cr

The Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) is in the process of drying up highly-polluted Bellandur and Varthur lake entirely. While about 80% of the Bellandur lake is de-watered, officials plan to pump out water from the Varthur lake in fifteen days. The move is part of the effort to rejuvenate both the lakes.

“The construction of diversion channel around Varthur lake is almost ready. We will start dewatering the lake in two weeks. The lake water is pumped to Dakshina Pinakini river. Once the dewatering is over, we will be able to start the rejuvenation work,” an executive engineer of BDA, who is in-charge of the project, told BM. Both the lakes will be completely dry in a month, he added.

The Justice Santosh Hegde committee, constituted by the National Green Tribunal to monitor the rejuvenation of the lakes, has set a target to bring life back into the lakes before the oncoming monsoon. The BDA, which estimates the cost of rejuvenation could come up to Rs 500 crore, has only a few months left to de-water, de-silt the two massive lakes.

Last month, the BDA had invited bids for the restoration and development of Bellandur Lake. The scope of work included clearing the weeds, excavation and removal of silt and construct walkway earthen embankment all along the periphery of the lake boundary as well as the wetlands. With last date to submit the bids going to be by January-end, officials expect the work to begin by the end of March.

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–Executive engineer,BDA

“The rejuvenation of the lake should be done scientifically,” said Prof. T.V Ramachandra, part of the NGT-appointed committee and faculty at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. “As per the plan, the lake will be decontaminated after the two lakes are free from silt. The sewage entering into the lake too will be arrested,” he said. He also wanted the government agencies to ensure the dumping of waste and lake encroachments are cleared.

The BDA plans to dump the silt, which is around 10 million cubic metres in both the lakes put-together, in about nine locations identified by the committee. Even the farmers are allowed to freely take the silt. Prof. Ramachandra believes the silt could mop up a revenue of Rs 1,500 crore if it is converted into bricks.

A sewage treatment plant, having a capacity to treat 150 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage, is under construction near the lake. The plant, targeted to be ready by mid-2020, is expected to send treated sewage to the lake after the rejuvenation process is over.