

Buffer zone of Bengaluru's breach-hit Hulimavu Lake eaten away by encroachers

BDA and BBMP officials are unclear about the extent of encroachment; marshals say many high-rise apartments are located close to the lake



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According to BDA guidelines, at least a 30-metre buffer zone should be maintained around all water bodies, which is missing in Hulimavu Lake

By [Bosky Khanna](#)

Express News Service

BENGALURU: Since the Hulimavu lake breached on Sunday, authorities have been at loggerheads and playing the blame game. Now, it has been found that the buffer zone of Hulimavu Lake was not maintained by Bangalore Development Authority (BDA).

The lake was handed over to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), recently.

According to BDA guidelines and master plan, at least a 30-metre buffer zone should be maintained around all water bodies. However, that's not the case in Hulimavu Lake.

To make matters worse, the BDA and BBMP officials are both uncertain of the extent of encroachment.

Mayor N Goutham Kumar on Tuesday had informed Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa that 18 acres of the 148-acre water body, was encroached upon.

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However, no one is sure of the buffer zone.



Indira Canteen staffers serve meals to the residents of Krishna Layout, which is near the lake. Most of them lost their ration and belongings due to the breach on Sunday |

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Ward marshals on duty in Bommanahalli and those working on the lake since Sunday, said that the buffer zone in most places is absent.

It is not just economically weak that have encroached upon the buffer zone, but many high-rise apartment complexes can also be seen in close proximity to the lake.

Any layman can clearly say that 30-metre distance has not been kept from the lake boundary.

“In fact, water has gushed into most of the houses of those people who have not maintained the buffer and most of them are illegal constructions. It is the fault of the BDA and BBMP officials who have turned a blind eye to this,” a marshal, who did not want to be named, told TNIE.

Prof T V Ramachandra, from Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc said: “The 30-metre buffer zone is absent around this lake and most of the lakes. This was also pointed out in the report handed over to the government in 2016, but the government did nothing about it. It is a crime under the Water Act, 1974, and it is also contempt of National Green Tribunal orders, to construct anything on the buffer zone and the wetland. But the BBMP, BDA and even Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) have ignored this.”

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He added that in 2016, the researchers had pointed to the government, with maps, of the 9.25-acre encroachment in Hulimavu Lake.

This in fact, according to the government itself, has doubled. This explains that BDA and BBMP officials turned a blind eye to all encroachments.

Experts say it is also ironical that, on one side, the government has announced Rs 50,000 as immediate cash compensation and has announced to spend Rs 5 lakh to construct homes, but on the other hand, it has also announced to clear encroachers.

D Randeep, Zonal Commissioner, Bommanahalli, admitted that a 30-metre buffer zone should be maintained and added that the maps need to be studied. He assured to check it and clear all encroachments.

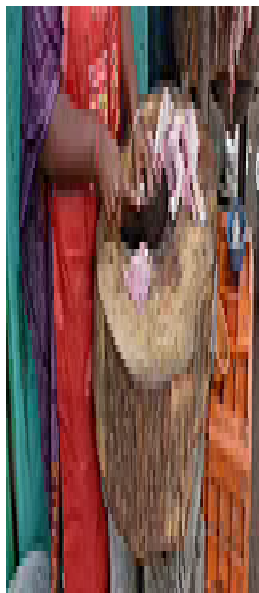
“Lake stability and safety is very important. The legal stand will also be checked,” he said.

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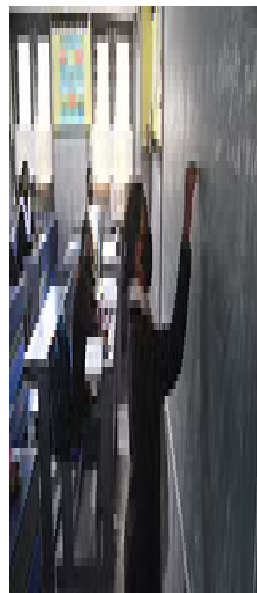
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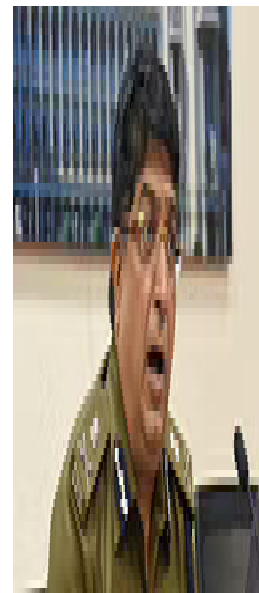
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