

Bengaluru cannot handle any more rain

Most lakes in Bengaluru full, drains not desilted; Concretisation not letting rainwater percolate underground, say experts



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Heavy rain overnight has left roads close to Yelahanka lake submerged in knee-deep water, in Bengaluru on Monday | shriram bn

By Bosky Khanna

Express News Service

BENGALURU: Not just citizens, but now even experts, urban planners and government officials are saying that the city cannot handle any more rain. This is not just because the city lakes are near-full, or the drains are not fully desilted, but also because the city's infrastructure is not equipped to take more rain.

A senior government official admitted, “The inlet and outlets of lakes are at gradients and not in sync in most places. This is one of the reasons for flooding as there is improper flow of water. Though a similar situation exists in Patna and Goa, the municipal corporation keeps pumpsets ready to pump out water. In Bengaluru, even pumpsets are not available.”

In Agara lake, the level of the storm water drain’s inlet and outlet are not aligned, which causes flooding, he added. Prof T V Ramachandra from the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, said that 85 per cent of the city’s landscape is concretised. There is little or no space for water to percolate underground. Most of the lakes are full and they are still not interconnected. Despite the government’s tall claims, there are encroachments. The width of the drains in most areas has been reduced from the required 8 ft. The city is now unable to handle even low-intensity rain.

“We were never prepared to handle such a prolonged monsoon. While we boasted that the city can handle 44 mm rainfall in one hour, we cannot even manage rain that falls through the night. This is because the drains are full, lakes are full and water bodies in neighbouring Kolar and Chikkaballapur are also full,” the government official said.

Rakesh Singh, additional chief secretary, urban development department, admitted that everyone failed in handling the rain situation this time. Even as the drain network is cleared, the rain showed that a lot more needs to be done. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has said that smooth flow of rainwater should be ensured. If there is no rain for the next 10-15 days, the situation will improve, he added.

Citizens, AAP hold stir over civic woes

Residents of Junnasandra, Kasavanahalli and Halanayakanahalli gathered on Sunday to protest the lack of action by MLA Aravind Limbavali and the local authorities. Every year, the residents face major flooding around their locality, and they allege that the reason for it stemmed from a residential layout built over the local storm water drain. In this regard, AAP volunteers also organised a protest march, led by the party’s Mahadevapura president, Ashok Mruthyunjaya.

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