

Task force sought to check sand mining

'It should comprise officials of key departments'

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BANGALORE: District officials have expressed their difficulty in stopping sand mining in Bangalore Rural and Bangalore Urban. They have sought a task force comprising officials from Revenue, Police and Mines and Geology departments to check it.

The officials articulated their views before R Suresh, Principal Secretary, Personnel and Administrative Reforms (Public Grievance Cell). Mr. Suresh chaired a meeting to review the handling of public grievances by the offices of Deputy Commissioner, Chief Executive Officer, and Superintendent of Police of Bangalore Rural district, here on Saturday.

The issue came up when Mr Suresh asked officials about the steps being taken on complaints about sand mining in Channapatna and Kanakapura.

The officials said it had become difficult to check the lifting of sand from tank beds in the area.

An official alleged that a powerful lobby was behind this illegally activity.

Referring to the activity in and around Kanva Reservoir, an official said, "People have removed sand that was twice the quantity permitted by the Mines and Geology Department. We took action on the day of our visit by stopping it. But it resumed after we left the place. We neither have the time nor the staff to make

regular visits to the areas," the official said.

Removing sand from tanks and reservoirs had made the ground weak, causing damage to houses and the Channapatna-Ramanagaram road. The offenders were not being dealt with firmly, the official said.

To stop sand mining, the officials stressed on the need for a task force, which should be given adequate security, personnel and equipment to dismantle the machinery used for sand mining.

Mr. Suresh said officials of Bangalore Urban district voiced similar views "I will bring this matter to the notice of the Government," Mr. Suresh told *The Hindu* after the meeting.