

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1206
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.02.2018

Fire in Bellandur Lake

1206. SHRI B. SRIRAMULU:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of massive fire in Bellandur Lake of Bengaluru and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has received complaints from residents living nearby regarding emission of so much toxic foam from Bellandur Lake forcing people to stay indoors, if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard so far;
- (c) whether the Government had invested Rs. 800 crore to rejuvenate the lakes in Bengaluru, especially the Bellandur Lake and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has invited Experts from Britain and Israel to study the problem and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps being taken by the Government to prevent/avoid such type of water body fire incidents in future?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) Yes. The State Government has informed that an accidental fire incident in Bellandur Lake took place on 19.01.2018 around 9.30 am at few locations within the lake bed mainly around Defence area adjacent to tank bed, towards Iblur and Ejipura side. The fire flaring with Orange flames and dense smoke engulfed the Defence area which belongs to ASC Center, Bengaluru. The defence personnel, State Fire Force Department in coordination with Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) Officers reached the spot at 11.00 am and all efforts were made to extinguish the fire immediately, but as the fire locations were within the water spread area of the tank, the fire force and Defence personnel struggled to reach the fire spots. However, the team could restrict the spreading of fire to different parts of the civil and Defence land. The team could stop the major fire havocs duly by extinguishing the fire in ground area and restricting the same in the water spread area of the tank.

The Commissioner, BDA and ASC Center officer jointly supervised the operations. Further, even at 6.00 pm the fire flaring with orange flames and dense smoke was live at two locations. All efforts have been made to control and restrict the fire spreading to adjacent living areas and round the clock watch and ward is arranged by deploying the security personnel. It has been observed that dense smoke was releasing from the grass with organic sludge (Muck). Since long it is a

common practice of grass cutting in the lake area by the neighbouring villagers to use it as a fodder for their cattle. In such time, while they smoke, there may be chances of accidental fire in the grass and this could be the reason for the accidental fire in Bellandur Lake. Further, it may also be due to igniting debris of Biomass, dry plants, solid waste (consisting of predominantly dry grass and waste plastics etc.) and aggravated by methane generation in the lake.

(b) Yes. The State Government has taken all preventive measures to address the froth issue at Bellandur Lake waste weir points. The measures include fixing of wire net mesh to a height of 20 feet (6 m) to prevent the air disbursement of froth all along waste weir length near Bellandur road crossing, ensuring that there is no froth in the lake anywhere and froth is occurring only at the waste weirs, dissipation of the froth by installing 106 numbers of water sprinklers on both sides of the waste weir banks at Bellandur to suppress the froth and the system is on round the clock, maintenance of the sprinkling system till the lake is cleaned up (one time cleaning) and restored/rejuvenated.

(c) As per Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), projects totalling to Rs.887.97 crore relating to sewerage system and STPs in Bengaluru have been approved/initiated under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) programme of Ministry of Urban Development. Apart from other benefits, these projects will help in rejuvenating lakes in Bengaluru by reducing the pollution load being discharged into them. Further, this Ministry has provided financial assistance of Rs. 2.63 Crore (Govt share) for conservation and management of Bellandur Lake under the National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP)/National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-Systems (NPCA).

In addition, the State Government has released an amount of Rs.371.00 crores to Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) since 2013-14 to 2017-18 for rejuvenation/restoration of lakes in Bengaluru and vide G.O. dated 02.02.2018 has released an amount of Rs. 50.00 crores to BDA for restoration/rejuvenation of Bellandur Lake. So far, BDA has incurred an expenditure of Rs. 8.00 crores for restoration of this lake from its own funds.

(d) No such experts from Britain and Israel have been invited by Government of Karnataka and this Ministry.

(e) The State Government has informed that the area of Bellandur Lake is about 917 acre. Presently around 350 acre of water surface is cleared from hyacinth and water plants in the lake. Fire incidences occurred in the grass area located on the outer periphery of the lake (ground region) and no water body fire incident has taken place in the lake. BDA has taken up fencing the balance leftover and damaged stretches of Lake Boundary for tight security of the lake and to erect solar electric fencing at critical sensitive stretches & to install CCTV cameras for monitoring the miscreants. BDA has taken strict and stringent steps to restrict the public and grass harvesters entry to the lake area by deploying the security personnel for round the clock patrolling.
