

Waste water in pond inside reserve forest hazardous, says forest dept

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi forest department has told the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that a waterbody in Smriti Van has been filled with wastewater from neighbouring areas making it a threat to the flora, fauna and people. The department's reply came after clarity was sought regarding any violation in the Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, 1994, during a religious ceremony held last year in the pond known as Macchliwala Talab.

Last September, residents had told the NGT that religious ceremonies were held in the forest area. The department said the pond was being filled with wastewater from the Mehrauli and Kishangarh areas, creating a hazardous environment. The department also pointed out several anomalies to environment norms in Smriti Van, which included concrete bases on the forest area and an unauthorised sewage treatment plant.

The department said that Smriti Van was notified as a reserve forest and is under the ownership of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). An inspection was done in December last year during which no offence under DPTA, 1994, was detected on Chhath Ghat in Smriti Van, it stated.

It, however, pointed out the polluted water in the pond, among other violations.

"A waterbody exists in Smriti Van, namely Macchliwala Talab, spread over 5 acres. This waterbody is used for discharge of wastewater coming from residential areas like Mehrauli and Kishangarh, creating a hazardous situation for flora and fauna inside the waterbody. It can also give rise to water-borne diseases," the department said.

It added that for the sewage treatment plant, no prior approval was taken from the central government.



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