

Bengaluru faces tough water rules: BWSSB makes aerators mandatory, bans drinking water for pools and other non-essential uses

BWSSB has announced strict water-saving measures in Bengaluru amid drought concerns. Aerators are now mandatory by July 31, drinking water cannot be used for swimming pools and other non-essential purposes, and violators face fines and water supply cuts.



With fears of an El Nino-driven drought and falling reservoir levels, BWSSB has introduced strict water conservation measures, including mandatory aerators, restrictions on potable water use, fines, and supply cuts for violators.

Amid growing concerns over the possible impact of the El Nino weather phenomenon on monsoon rainfall and Bengaluru's drinking water supply, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has announced a series of strict water conservation measures to reduce wastage and protect the city's water resources.

The new orders were issued on July 4 and come just two days after Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar warned that Karnataka could face a severe drought this year due to poor rainfall, weak reservoir inflows and rapidly declining water levels across major dams.

As part of the new rules, BWSSB has made it mandatory to install water-saving aerators or flow restrictors on water fixtures in residential houses, apartments, commercial establishments, government offices, hotels, restaurants, industries, shopping malls and public institutions. All installations must be completed on or before July 31.

According to BWSSB, aerators can reduce water consumption by 30 to 50 per cent without affecting user comfort. The decision follows recommendations from a study conducted by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), which highlighted falling groundwater levels in several parts of Bengaluru because of inadequate rainfall.

The Board has warned that consumers who fail to install aerators by the deadline could face a reduction of up to 50 per cent in their water supply. Under the provisions of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Act, 1964, BWSSB can also install the devices itself, recover the installation cost from consumers and impose additional penalties.

In another major step, BWSSB has prohibited the use of drinking water for activities that do not require potable water. These include washing vehicles, watering gardens, construction work, road cleaning, decorative fountains and other similar non-essential purposes. Residents and organisations have been advised to use treated wastewater or other alternative water sources for such activities.

The Board has also banned the use of drinking water to fill both private and public swimming pools with immediate effect. The only exception is for swimming pools used for state-level and national-level sports training. Operators of such facilities must obtain prior approval from BWSSB before drawing water.

To ensure compliance, BWSSB has requested citizens to report violations through its 1916 helpline.

Strict penalties have also been announced for those violating the new rules. Offenders will be fined Rs 5,000 under the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Act, 1964, while repeat violations will attract an additional Rs 500 per day. Apart from financial penalties, BWSSB may also reduce water supply by up to 50 per cent. In cases involving the illegal use of drinking water for swimming pools, complaints may also be filed with the jurisdictional police.

Explaining the reason behind these measures, BWSSB Chairperson N. Manjula said the objective is to promote responsible use of every drop of drinking water, prevent unnecessary wastage and strengthen Bengaluru's long-term water security.

The latest restrictions come against the backdrop of increasing drought concerns across Karnataka. After a recent Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said that inflows into major reservoirs such as Tungabhadra, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Narayanapura and Vanivilasa had fallen to nearly zero. He also

noted that water levels in Hemavati, Krishna Raja Sagara (KRS) and Kabini reservoirs are significantly lower than they were during the same period last year.

The Chief Minister urged farmers not to plan crop sowing based on reservoir water availability and directed officials to prepare for possible shortages of both water and electricity. He also instructed the Energy Department to develop an emergency action plan to address a possible decline in hydropower generation due to El Nino.

Appealing for public cooperation, N. Manjula said drinking water is a shared natural resource that must be protected by everyone. She urged citizens, institutions and organisations to install aerators, avoid wasting drinking water and actively participate in Bengaluru's water conservation efforts to help secure the city's future water supply.