

# B'luru steps out to push back BWSSB's STP plan

Apartment dwellers say diktat poses safety issues | Threaten to intensify protests

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Perhaps for first time ever, the city witnessed a series of protests wherein residents, under the aegis of Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF), hit the streets to protest the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board's (BWSSB) directive to install Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in apartments with more than 50 flats. As many as 10,000 dwellers formed human chains in over 40 different locations, registering their strong opposition to what BWSSB calls a mandatory move.

The stir was peaceful, and the protestors were careful not to disrupt traffic or create trouble for the public. Later in a press meet, BAF general secretary Srikanth Narasimhan appealed to civic agencies and the government to stop harassing apartment dwellers.

"Mandatory installation of STPs in older apartments is unsafe. It's impractical as well. Remember, only apartment owners pay all the taxes/charges properly to the BBMP or even the BWSSB. Hence, we should not be treated as "bulk consumers". What were the officials doing till now and why are they



About 10,000 residents formed human chains across 40 locations in the city on Saturday

pressuring us to establish STPs now? We have no space for the same and several technical reports suggest establishing SPTs in apartments poses threat to the building," Srikanth said.

He said Saturday's protest was just a warning. "We will intensify our protest if the government or the civic agency fail to take back the notices issued to many apartments," he said.

"If the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) can withdraw its notices issued to apartments around Bellandur Lake, why can't the BWSSB do the same? About 175 apartments have registered under BAF so far. Residents of non-BAF also took part in the rally to express their solidarity to the

## NO CHANGE IN DECISION, ASSERTS BWSSB

Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has no exact numbers of apartments which have already installed STPs or the ones which are yet to install. At a hurriedly convened press meet on Saturday afternoon, HM Ravindra, chief engineer, maintenance, BWSSB, said he didn't have the details when the media quizzed him about the specific numbers. He said the numbers would be made available only after January 2018.

When the media persisted with their queries [like how

did you issue notices without knowing details], Ravindra kept mum. Engineer-in-chief M Kemparamalah said there was no question of withdrawing notices issued to apartments which have above 50 flats.

"The board has given December 31, 2017 as deadline for the same. If they failed to obey, the board will start imposing fine from January 2018, he asserted. When asked why the government and civic agencies failed to build drainage systems keeping the growing city in mind, he said, "All major cities are like this."