

KERE HABBA DISCUSSION FLAGS CONSTRUCTION PERIL

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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On Republic Day, the Kere Habba (lake festival) of Yalahanka Pattenahalli Lake was held virtually after a hiatus of two years due to the pandemic and contrary to the conventional practice of holding it physically where citizens, officials,

politicians and others gather to discuss the importance of water bodies and measures to protect them.

One of the most sought after festivals to count and observe the presence of birds at the first Bird Conservation Reserve Pattenahalli Lake, only a handful of research students was present, taking notes re-

garding the condition and biodiversity of the two water bodies. They also conducted a dragonfly survey.

During the discussion, one of the vital issues was the concretisation of the wetlands connecting the two water bodies. The members of Yalahanka Pattenahalli Lake and Bird Conservation Trust and resi-

dents, who organised the festival, expressed their concerns over government bodies' apathy towards lake conservation. They pointed out: "The natural wetland system between the two lakes is now being taken over and concretised, the impact of which can already be seen in the water quality"

Romyna N Dayakar, joint

managing trustee of the Trust, said that the inflow side of the wetland has been taken over for works, but it is still open. However, construction can happen any time soon and then it will be closed.

At the meeting, the plans for the next five years were also discussed and one of the highlights was fencing the lake to

prevent roadside vendors from setting up stalls on Doddaballapur Road and throwing garbage into the lake. They also discussed raising funds for lake protection. Officials from the forest department also participated in the event to share their experience on water conservation and steps to improve the bird conservation habitat.