

Green rules to save greying LONAVLA

City Agency Suggests Steps To Protect The Hill Station From Ecological Disaster

Pics: K K Choudhary

Nauzer K Bharucha | TNN

Mumbai: Rampant constructions in Lonavla over the past two to three decades had led to loss of large tracts of forest land and pollution of water bodies and rivers, said a report on the region.

The environmental and hydrological survey of the region, which was conducted by the Mumbai-based Grass Roots Research and Consultancy, submitted its report to the municipal council last year. The agency has recommended certain "remedial" measures for the ecologically frail area, such as no development within 20 metres of a river and 10 metres of a stream and desilting of lakes to increase the capacity to avoid waterlogging. "Reconstruction of the Lonavala dam, along with the desilting of the lake, should be proposed to increase their capacity to hold water. The bed of Tungarli lake should also be desilted and dredged," the report stated.

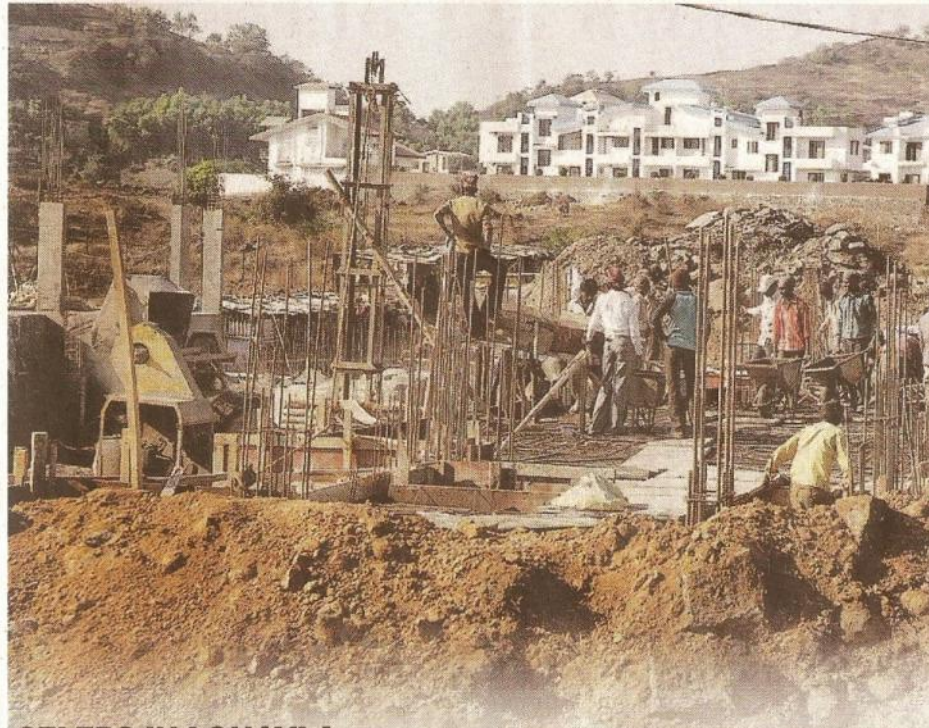
According to the surveyors, the green cover on the slopes as well as hill tops in the lake catchment areas should be increased. "With five rivers originating from the hill range, Lonavala town and its surroundings are extremely ecologically sensitive. The area has many heritage and archaeological sites that need to be maintained as well as promoted," it said. The members of the agency also suggested that the practice of using forest land for non-forest purposes should be stopped immediately and it would be better if forests, agricultural areas and other green patches are demarcated.

Besides making recom-

mendations for the green zones, the survey has also laid down certain rules for buildings. "Private and public properties should keep 40% of their land open for the absorption of rain water. Every property must have a well and by using proper method for groundwater recharge, rain water should be flown into the well. Proper guidelines should be drafted to maintain the green cover on the premises of the buildings," said the report.

When Lonavla municipal council chief officer Yogesh Godse Patil complained that some of the tourists-they converge on the hill station during the rains-create a mess, the agency had a solution. "They throw garbage everywhere. The locals are fed up with them," Patil said. To that, the surveyors suggested that an efficient solid waste management plan to segregate dry and wet garbage, generate bio-gas by composting wet garbage and recycle plastic bags and foils should be set up to check the ecological assault on the area.

And while talking about tourists, the agency also came up with the idea of developing eco-tourism in the catchment areas of Lonavla and Tungarli lakes and told the local councils about it. "Eco-tourism should be promoted in the area and watershed management of lakes should be started," it said. "And, the area should have bays for demarcated for pedestrians and vehicles. For tourist buses, a proper traffic management plan should be drafted."



CELEBS IN LONAVLA

Ambanis

Keshub Mahindra

Nasser Munjee of Development Credit Bank

Nusli Wadia (his grandfather Ness was a regular visitor)

Gulu Mirchandi of Onida

Former CM Manohar Joshi. His Kohinoor Institute is next to his bungalow

Actress Tanuja

Ex-corporate honcho Keki Dadiseth

Senior advocate K K Singhvi



LOWDOWN ON LONAVLA

Areas in the hill station used for different purposes

Residential	842
Commercial	99
Industrial	107
Public and Semi-Public	533
Public Utility	17
Transport and Communication	676
Gardens and Playgrounds	34

(figures in acres)