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GHMC to build 600 houses on Hussainsagar bed

TNN 18 August 2009, 03:49am ISTHYDERABAD: Despite clear orders from court against putting up permanent structures on the Hussainsagar lake bed and catchment areas, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has proposed to construct 600 houses in the restricted area.

A housing project, proposed by the corporation, would come up near Prasads on the Hussainsagar lake area.

A month ago, chief minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy had directed the GHMC to construct houses for weaker sections under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) scheme replacing slums abutting the lake.

The slums--BJR Nagar, Mahabharat Nagar, Budagajangambasthi and other slums on about four acres--had come up on the encroached land a few years ago. Since there is no government land left in the city and residents of these areas have been demanding houses, the CM asked officials to construct houses at the same place.

The officials have also proposed to accommodate some other beneficiaries along with the local residents. Under JNNURM, each house costs about Rs 2.67 lakh. While the beneficiary has to contribute Rs 5,000, the rest is being provided as [bank loan](#), state government and the Centre's contribution under the JNNURM scheme.

Since the land belongs to the revenue department, the GHMC has asked the district collector to hand over the land. GHMC special officer and commissioner SP Singh on Monday held a meeting with the district collector. But the revenue officials informed that the proposed land was part of tank bed of Hussainsagar.

Hussainsagar was originally a sprawling 1,300-acre lake, but after encroachments and illegal constructions it has shrunk to a mere 900 acres.

But, the municipal authorities want to go ahead with the project by seeking the opinion of the advocate general.

"Already, there are G+3 houses in the Hussainsagar lake area. Also, it is far from the actual lake. However, we will take the opinion of the advocate general on the issue," GHMC engineer-in-chief P Panduranga Rao told TOI.

Environmentalists have been opposing encroachment and constructions on the lake bed. In 1995, a public interest litigation was filed by KL Vyas of Save the Lake Campaign demanding protection of 170 lakes in the city, including Hussainsagar. In 2000, Forum For A Better Hyderabad approached court against encroachments around the lake. The AP High Court directed the state government to stop construction of any permanent structure on or near the water body or the catchment area of the lake. The Supreme Court also appointed a three-member committee headed by former IAS officer R Rajamani on the encroachment of the lake and

other related issues.

Ironically, a House committee was also constituted on land allotment to Prasads near the lake area.

Despite this, the GHMC wants to take up the project as it is the `wish' of the chief minister.