

# Bengaluru's Water Shortage

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## Context

Bengaluru is currently dealing with both extreme heat and a shortage of water caused by declining underground water levels and drought in the Cauvery basin.

## Key Points

- Bengaluru is on the brink of a water crisis similar to Cape Town's Day Zero situation.
- According to a report, the majority of taluks in Karnataka, including Mandya and Mysore districts, are facing drought, which could impact Bengaluru's water supply.
- A BBC report also warned that Bengaluru could potentially experience a drinking water shortage by 2031, ranking second after Sao Paulo, Brazil.

## Reasons for the water crisis in Bengaluru

- **Rapid Urbanisation:** The damage done to the environmental cost is literally by rapid urbanisation to the city, wherein 79% of its water bodies are lost, and 88% of its green cover is gone with the expansion of concrete-covered areas.
- **Overexploitation of Resources:** Over-exploitation of the resources has been noted from both the Cauvery River and groundwater.
- **Environmental Degradation:** The reduction of green areas has directly affected the natural rejuvenation of groundwater.

## Current Situation

- **Water Supply Shortage:** Bengaluru has a shortage of 1,680 million litres of water

supply per day, which is by far way above the supply potential of the Cauvery River, including its groundwater sources.

- **Heavy Reljson Tankers:** Since the supply given by BWSSB is not enough, a major section of the population relies heavily on private water tankers for their daily needs, especially people living in apartments and commercial establishments.
- **Price Hike in Tanker Water:** The cost price of water tankers has increased almost double, which becomes an economic burden for nearly all citizens of the city.

## Government Initiatives

- **Financial Allocation:** Karnataka government has allocated ₹556 crores for taking up the crisis, along with specific budgets allotted for MLAs of their constituencies.
- **Measures on regulation:** All these initiatives show constant effort in regard to the regulatory framework of private water tankers, including the standard fixing of prices and mandatory registration.
- **Infrastructure Development:** This will include plans related to the betterment of the water distribution network, rejuvenation, and redrilling of borewells along with the provision for greater use of treated wastewater.

## Challenges and Criticisms

- **Inequitable Distribution:** There are claims that the water tankers have been accused on many occasions of favouring those customers who pay them highly, hence leading to a disparity in the distribution of water.
- **Infrastructure Concerns:** Critics argue that simply drilling more borewells is not a sustainable solution and advocate for methods like aquifer recharge.

## Way Forward

- **Water Conservation:** Emphasising the need for water conservation measures among residents.
- **Aquifer Recharge:** Schemes to recharge aquifers through treated waste-water, especially in dry lakes like Bellandur and Varthur.

## Conclusion

The Bengaluru water crisis highlights the urgent need for sustainable urban planning and environmental stewardship. While government efforts are underway, a holistic approach involving conservation, efficient resource management, and community participation is crucial for a long-term solution. Addressing these challenges will require a concerted effort from both the government and the citizens to ensure water security for future generations.

Source: [livemint](https://www.livemint.com)

### UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Q. Discuss the factors contributing to the water crisis in Bengaluru. Evaluate the**

*measures that have been taken by the government and local bodies to address this issue, and suggest additional steps that could be implemented to ensure sustainable water management in the city. (250 words)*