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Water tanks being converted into residential plots

BHANDARA: At a time when protection of water bodies is given a top priority, old water bodies in Bhandara are being destroyed by the owners allegedly with the support of some municipal councillors to use their land for residential purposes. Neither the revenue officials nor the municipal authorities have raised any objection to it nor sent notices to the parties concerned.

A case in example is the Nav Talao, an old irrigation tank in Shastri Nagar. The tank is owned by Sayyad [Abdul Ali](#) and Sayyad Bakar Ali of Bhandara. The total area of the tank is 26.88 hectares. It irrigates 15.86 hectares of land. It is a perennial source of irrigation for the land in its command area. As per revenue records, the tank is more than 200 years old and is known as one of the oldest water bodies. Till now, it was an irrigation tank. But in June, the owners cut the size of

the bank and drained out water.

When asked, the owners of Nav Talao said stagnant water was getting polluted, resulting in the death of fish and hence the tank was emptied. However, sources said the motive behind emptying the tank could be to use land for residential purposes. Sources claimed that if a layout is laid and plots are sold, it could fetch more than Rs200 crore.

Though Nav Talao is a privately owned tank, sources said the person behind the exercise is a senior municipal councillor. In the recent past, many water bodies have been converted into residential areas. This is despite the Supreme Court ruling that water bodies cannot be destroyed nor its land use purpose be changed. Earlier, three water bodies of the city were destroyed. Nav Talao would be the fourth one to be used for other purpose. Housing colonies have come up in place of three other water bodies.

When contacted, SDO (revenue) Vinod Harkande said he was unaware of it. He said the patwari of Bhandara will inquire into the matter and submit a report. After verifying the report, action would be taken against the parties concerned.

