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As rain gods blessed Bengaluru over the weekend, residents of the city living near Varthur lake witnessed toxic 'chemical snowfall'.

By: [FE Online](#) | Updated: May 29, 2017 5:39 PM

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Toxic Varthur lake foam spills onto Bengaluru road. (Video grab/ANI)

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As rain gods blessed Bengaluru over the weekend, residents of the city living near Varthur lake witnessed toxic 'chemical snowfall' – not literally the snowfall from the sky but from the surface as lake water frothed once again and spilled on to the roads. Even the wire mesh around the periphery of the lake failed to stop the froth from spilling into nearby areas, affecting the traffic. With the expected onset of Monsoon soon, people living nearby the Varthur lake are demanding measures from the government to prevent the frothing of the lake water.

However, this is not the first time when Varthur lake water has frothed due to the presence of toxic chemicals. Experts believe that most of the lakes in Bengaluru have turned toxic due to industrial

pollution, dumping of toxic debris and solid wastes in the lakes, that are also lifelines of India's IT capital.

In March this year, mild rain in the IT city had caused frothing in the Varthur lake, forcing residents nearby Varthur to move to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for finding an early solution to the problem.

In December 2016, the Varthur lake was in news because of the toxic foaming when rain gods descended over the city due to Cyclone Vardah, which had first hit Chennai. An

the lake water. The official said the lake was polluted for decades and BWSSB couldn't solve this problem in one or two months.

Apart from Varthur, other lakes in the city, Bellandur and Yemalur, also froth whenever there is a spell of rain.



There are around 600 small and large water bodies in Bengaluru. Almost all of them have been victims of the city's rapid expansion since 2001. According to the Census data, the IT capital witnessed around 50% rise in population between 2001 and 2011. The mismatch in the rising population and the administration's preparedness to deal with untreated waste has taken a toll on the water bodies of the city.

According to a report by Mirror Now on March 15 this year, around 15,000 tons of weed is



In February this year, the 900-acre Bellandur lake was covered with fire and firefighters had to be summoned to control it. NDTV reported on March 27 that experts from Britain and Israel visited Bellandur lake on the invitation of the state government.

The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board has taken some steps, such as closing down a number of industries around the lakes and to set up new treatment plants, which are yet to come up, to solve the issue. But it hasn't pursued it with the required urgency.

A report by Scroll.in had quoted S Vishwanath of Bengaluru-based Biome Environmental Solutions in May 2015 as saying that frothing in the lake was just the "symptom". The real problem was the flow of untreated sewage and effluents in the lakes.

In a March 1 report by The Guardian, scientists feared Bengaluru will become inhabitable by 2025 due to severe water crisis and require the residents to be evacuated. Dr TV Ramachandra, coordinator of the Energy and Wetlands Research Group at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) told The Guardian that an estimated 400-600 million tonnes of untreated sewage was released into the lake catchment daily, "creating a toxic environment fertile for disasters like the fires and foam."