

Toxic Foam Flows into Bangalore's Streets after Monsoon Rains

By Pam Wright | Jun 1 2017 12:00 AM EDT | weather.com

Story Highlights

The foam is loaded with harmful nutrients that enter Varthur Lake through untreated sewage.

It has become a yearly occurrence that has angered residents.

Residents living near Bangalore's Varthur Lake in southern India are dealing with a nasty and potentially dangerous problem — toxic foam.

Heavy monsoonal rain and thunderstorms have triggered a new episode of [frothy foam loaded with toxic chemicals](#), according to the Bangalore Mirror. The foam is rising from the lake and onto the streets of the capital city, known locally as Bangaluru, in India's southern state, Karnataka.

KJ George, the development minister of the city, met with angry residents to reassure them that the government was doing all it could to alleviate the problem. Residents believe otherwise and have taken to social media to mock the government and its perceived inability to address the problem that occurs annually with the seasonal monsoon.



"The sorry state of Varthur and Bellandur lakes only attains prominence when there is frothing," an angry resident from the city known for its numerous lakes told the Mirror. "The issue then goes viral on social media. Those residing in the area also have to suffer mosquito bites and stench that emanates from the lake. But every year, complaints to the authorities yield no result."

TV Ramachandra, a coordinator for the Energy and Wetlands Research Group at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, [told CNN](#) the new episode of frothing at the lake "clearly shows there is mismanagement."

"There is a sustained flow of untreated sewage and industrial waste going into the lakes," he said.

Ramachandra noted that the foam is loaded with nitrogen and phosphorus that gets into the lake from untreated sewage released into the water.

"The nitrogen is taken by the plants in the water, while the phosphorus gets trapped in the sediment. The rainfall and the high wind velocity churn the lakes, and the phosphorus that is trapped in the sediment is released, creating the foam," Ramachandra said.

Nitrates are known carcinogens and the other nutrients in the foam can cause skin irritation and respiratory issues, Ramachandra said.



"We are taking proactive measures to solve the issue at the earliest. Senior officials have visited the spot and soon, we will come up with a solution for the lake," a senior Bangalore Development Authority official told the Mirror.

India is famous for having the most pronounced monsoon in the world, said weather.com meteorologist Chris Dolce. Southwest winds from the Indian Ocean feed moisture into the country from late spring through summer, fueling heavy rains at times. The other months of the year, winds are typically from the northwest, off the dry continent.

Large areas of western and central India receive more than 90 percent of their total annual precipitation during the period, and southern and northwestern India receive 50 to 75 percent of their total annual rainfall, Dolce noted, citing NOAA.