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Bengaluru: March 23, 2017, DHNS



Perennial problem: Froth flies on the road near Varthur lake. Citizens said the lake used to froth once in a while, but since last year, the problem persists. dh Photo

Varthur lake is frothing all the time, with citizens saying it becomes news only when someone puts up a picture on social media.

But since Wednesday, the scene has been particularly bad, with the state highway towards Whitefield being enveloped by flying foam.

On Tuesday, the Bangalore Development (BDA) had begun putting up a mesh.

The work began after officials were pulled up by Chief Secretary Subhash Chandra Khuntia on Sunday (March 20), when he visited Bellandur and Varthur lakes. He ordered them to show results within a week.

"The mesh will come up around the waste-weir area of Varthur lake, from where the froth spills onto the road. Work began on Wednesday and will be completed within a week," said Veda Murthy, Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) assistant executive engineer.

BBMP officials are saying they will clear the debris and garbage dumped in the channels connecting to the lake from Thursday.

Government apathy

Earlier, the lake used to froth once in a while, but since last year, the problem has never gone away, citizens say.

The froth assails the faces of children and lands on helmets of two-wheeler riders, some of whom lose balance and fall.

"People have no choice but to bear the stench," said Amarnath, a resident of Whitefield. Locals are also agitated by the callous attitude of government officials, but believe some action is finally afoot.

Nothing done

Over the past year, Upalokayukta Subhash B Adi has visited Bellandur and Varthur twice. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Additional Chief Secretary Mahendra Jain, and a host of officials from various agencies, have visited the area.

Prof T V Ramachandra of the Energy and Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, has written to the government about what needs to be done. Members of Whitefield Rising Group (WRG) said they had repeatedly met many government agencies.

"We have been told that every day 600 mld of untreated water is entering Varthur lake from different channels," a citizen said. Even at 9.15 pm on Wednesday, froth was found at the edge of Whitefield Main Road. "We have never seen froth so consistently for hours and days," a member of Whitefield Rising volunteers team said.

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Lakes' survey in progress

Lakshman, Chairman of the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, said a survey was in progress to identify all residential and commercial units letting out untreated water into Varthur and Bellandur lakes.

Whitefield Rising Citizens group:

Frothing makes headlines when someone uploads a photo on social media. But we are forced to live with the stench and froth every day.

Veda Murthy, Asst Executive Engineer, BDA: Adding sprinklers is only a temporary solution. It is risky and costly. Once the BBMP starts clearing garbage, weeding and aeration will also start.

Why are lakes frothing?

They are filled with effluents, sewage and detergents. About 40% of the city's untreated water gets