

## Water Boils, Soil Catches Fire in Anekal

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Villagers showing the spot from where the gas was coming out from the landfill at Lakshmipura in Anekal taluk near Bengaluru on Monday. The spot where some gas was leaking is a BBMP garbage dumpyard | pti

BENGALURU: On Monday morning, residents of Lakshmipura in Anekal taluk were shocked to find stagnant water on the streets boiling and gas emanating from the ground, catching fire at many places.

Experts said the fire was due to methane gas emission from the nearby Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) landfill site.

Later in the day, BBMP officials inspected the site and decided to cap it with 2 feet of soil and plant 5,000 saplings.

In 2012, BBMP decided to send waste to an abandoned quarry spread across 7 acres and 29 guntas at Lakshmipura village, off Bannerghatta Road. A few months ago, the dumping was stopped.

BBMP authorities claim to have filled the top with soil. But with garbage beneath the soil, over a period of time, it generated methane gas, which percolated through the soil, spreading all over. This resulted in fire and the stagnant water is seen boiling at the surface. Some people are now using these noxious flames to cook food.

Narayanaswamy, a resident of Lakshmipura, said that they have been facing this problem for six months now. "There are many farmers who own land in and around this landfill site. Drilling a borewell within a 3-km radius of the landfill results in gas emission and fires. Water is contaminated and unfit to drink. Bengaluru's garbage dump is proving a health hazard for us," he said.

Naveen, chairman of Mantapa Gram Panchayat under which Lakshmipura falls, told Express that BBMP had been dumping waste for the past three-and-half years.

The disposal of garbage in an unscientific manner has resulted in the fires, he said.

Emission of harmful gas is because the authorities are not topping the garbage with soil as per the procedures. "We have complained to the tahsildar and the BBMP officials, but with no result," he said.

"It is affecting the health of the people living in the vicinity. Many complained of skin ailments. Farmers are suffering as groundwater is contaminated," Naveen said.

However, BBMP authorities denied receiving any complaints. Bommanahalli zonal commissioner Muniraju said, "It is an abandoned quarry. We used to dump a layer of waste followed by a layer of soil every time. Due to rain, one side of the dump cracked open causing emission of methane gas. Now, we have dug up the dump and placed a pipe so that methane can come out of it. We have also dug up at 12 places through which gas will evaporate. Organic solution is sprayed to absorb methane gas," he said.

'Can Happen in Any Landfill Sites'

Prof Ramachandra Mohan, Head of the Department (Geology), Bangalore University, told Express, "When unsegregated waste dumped in a landfill site comes in contact with water, bacterial fermentation takes place. During this process, methane gas is produced. When the gas comes in contact with air, it has the tendency to catch fire. Biogas and gobar gas produced from mixed waste is combustible. This can happen in any landfill sites, including Mavallipura and Mandur."