

Frothing in Yamuna river

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In news

Recently, the river Yamuna witnessed toxic froth floating on its surface in Delhi

Why does frothing in rivers occur?

- **High phosphate content:** The primary reason behind the formation of the toxic foam was high phosphate content in the wastewater because of detergents used in dyeing industries, dhobi ghats and households
- **Turbulence and churning:** These detergents and other organic matter gets deposited in the riverbed when the river is flowing normally. When more water is released upstream, it falls from a height on reaching the Okhla Barrage, leading to turbulence and churning which causes froth
- **Release of certain gases:** For the frothing is the release of certain gases when a specific kind of bacteria becomes active in anaerobic conditions – when there is no or little oxygen is available.

What causes a foam?

The foam is likely the result of a mixture of washing detergent residue and other waste, whipped into a froth

Why does such a problem occur repeatedly?

The majority of the detergents in the country don't have a certification by International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), which has capped the concentration of phosphates in the chemical substance

Other river pollutants and their impact

- Other river pollutants are cyanide, zinc, lead, copper, cadmium and mercury.
- These substances may enter the water in such high concentrations that fish and other animals are killed immediately.