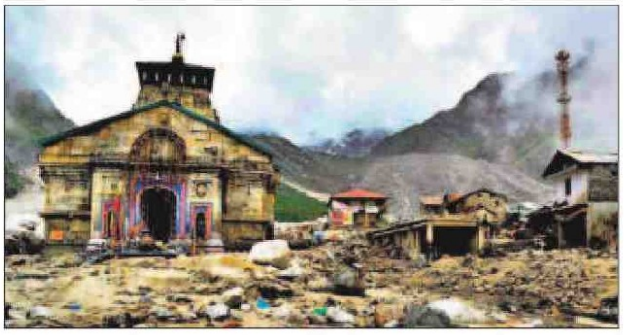
Hindustan Times- 17- July-2023

{ MY INDIA } KEDARNATH TRAGEDY

10 years on, lessons go largely unheeded



In June 2013, a midday cloudburst in the upper reaches of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand led to flash floods that claimed over 6,000 lives and swept away several settlements, including the one around the Kedarnath shrine, in what has been described as the worst natural disaster the state has ever witnessed. Ten years later, the state remains vulnerable to disasters exacerbated by unsustainable development. As lessons from the tragedy went largely unheeded, the number of pilgrims to Char Dham shrine have since increased beyond the carrying capacity of the valleys, experts said. →P13

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{ KEDARNATH FLASH FLOODS }

Decade on, no lessons learnt from '13 tragedy

Neeraj Santoshi
Neeraj.santoshi@htlive.com

DEHRADUN: In June 2013, a midday cloudburst in the upper reaches of the Himalayas in Uttarakhand led to flash floods that claimed over 6,000 lives and swept away several settlements, including the one around the Kedarnath shrine, during the height of the pilgrimage season in what has been described as the worst natural disaster the state has ever witnessed.

Ten years later, the Himalayan state remains extremely vulnerable to disasters exacerbated by unsustainable development. As lessons from the Kedarnath tragedy went largely unheeded, the number of pilgrims to the Char Dham Hindu shrines have since increased beyond the carrying capacity of the valleys, experts said.

Lessons from the Kedarnath disaster entailed a need for a sustainable and decentralised model of tourism based on the ecological carrying capacity of the fragile Himalayan ecology, said Hemant Dhyani, a noted environmentalist and member of the Supreme Court-appointed panel. "Instead of assessing this, a rampant increase in pilgrim influx is overburdening fragile Himalayan valleys," Dhyani said.

According to experts, the mountains need a sustainable model of development. HT ARCHIVES

Need for sustainable development

It is not just the number of pilgrims that is a problem, Dhyani said. Numerous experts opined that the higher Himalayas should be kept free from hydropower interventions, he said. "Despite this, nothing was implemented and, as a result, we witnessed the aggravation of the 2021 Rishi Ganga flood and sinking of the Joshimath area," Dhyani added.

In February 2021, a glacial burst on Rishi Ganga in Chamoli district claimed 204 lives and nearly swept away parts of a hydropower project being built on the river. In January this year, dangerous cracks developed in several buildings in Joshimath, the gateway town to the Badrinath shrine, which led the evacuation of several hundreds of residents to safer locations. Many of them are still living in relief camps.

The mountains need a sustainable model of infrastructure development, Dhyani and other experts said.

"Instead of a disaster and climate- resilient approach for infrastructure projects, the Char Dham railways, urbanisation and various roads projects are being taken up without keeping in mind the fragility and sensitivity of the Himalayas," Dhyani said.

In 2014, soon after the Kedarnath tragedy, an expert body set up by the Supreme Court had said hydropower projects should not be built in disaster-prone valleys north of the main central thrust (MCT) line, but the recommendations were not adopted. The hydropower project on the Rishi Ganga and Dhauliganga is located north of the MCT, which is highly prone to landslides, flashfloods and earthquakes. An interministerial group had also recommended in 2014 that such areas should be left pristine.

"Environmental concerns are consistently getting brushed aside in lieu of development plans. The crowds coming to the Himalayas, including Kedarnath, are only increasing. There is a mad scramble to set new pilgrim arrival records," Anoop Nautiyal, a Dehradun-based social activist, said. "If the tourism influx and construction are not curbed and not managed properly, a tragedy like 2013 can happen again in Uttarakhand."

Improving forecasts to prevent disasters

The authorities have also been found lacking in putting in place systems that would predict weather phenomenon quickly so that the human cost of disaster can be prevented.

A year after the 2013 tragedy, the then chief secretary Subhash Kumar had held talks with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) for setting up Doppler radars in the state under the Union earth sciences ministry's Integrated Himalayan Meteorology programme.

"Doppler radars help in providing extreme weather data in real-time and help officials in getting warning about storms in any region within two to three hours in advance. The severity of the weather systems can thus be quantitatively estimated more accurately and more precise advance warnings can be generated for saving human lives and property," Gautam said.

Despite the lawsuit and the court's repeated directions, there were delay in deploying the radars, Gautam said. Two Doppler radars were set up in the past three years, while the third one is yet to be installed. "Had they been set up early, it would have helped the authorities in the state a lot," he added.

Effect of climate change on Himalayas

The climate emergency will only increase the vulnerability to extreme weather events in the Himalayas, experts said. Himalayan glaciers are retreating due to global warming, triggering a host of related phenomenon that require close study. However, there are only around 10 or so glaciers being monitored among over 1,000 glaciers found in Uttarakhand, which include Gangotri, Chorabari, Dunagiri, Dokriyani and Pindari glaciers.

Besides the climate change factor, it is local factors that are precipitating human losses in extreme weather events, said Anil Joshi, founder of Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organization, a Dehradun-based non-profit.

"Climate change and temperature will further aggravate the situation in the Himalayan state with regard to extreme rainfall events and flash floods. We need to have an effective strategy to deal with Kedarnath-like tragedies in the light of climate change, so that human losses can be checked and minimised," Joshi said.

Hindustan Times- 17- July-2023

SDRF personnel rescue local residents trapped in floodwaters at Laksar, in Haridwar district. PTI

{ HARIDWAR }

Alert sounded as Ganga crosses warning mark

HARIDWAR/DEHRADUN: The water level in Ganga river in Haridwar rose above the warning mark of 293 metres on Sunday, prompting authorities to alert people downstream to stay vigilant on the ghats.

The water level was 293.15 metres at 8pm on Sunday, just below the danger level of 294 metres, in Haridwar. The flow was higher as water of Alaknanda river was released from the Srinagar dam earlier in the day. Police used loudspeakers to caution people not to venture near the Ganga river and inform local authorities in case of any further rise in water level, according to Bipin Pathak, senior superintendent of police at the district headquarters.

Meanwhile, a sluice gate of Bhimgoda barrage near Hari Ki Pauri was damaged. The repair work of the gates was not done on time, which resulted in damage to gate number 10, local residents alleged.

"Bhimgoda barrage's gate numbers 10, 11,9, 8, 15 are to be changed as part of routine maintenance. In a day or two, they will be completely changed," said junior engineer Sanjeev Jain, Uttar Pradesh irrigation department, Haridwar division. "There is no threat from its damage to Haridwar and areas downstream."

On Sunday morning, the water level in Alaknanda river rose to 535.10 metres, above the warning level of 535. Authorities from GVK Power Project in Pauri district released water from the dam reservoir into the river, leading to a rise in levels downstream at Yamkeshwar, Rishikesh and Haridwar. HTC

Hindustan Times- 17- July-2023

{ PATIALA } PUNJAB

Delay, lack of funds disrupt mitigation efforts

Vishal Rambani
letters@hindustantimes.com

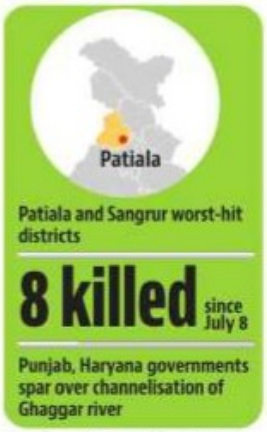
PATIALA: In Punjab, the Patiala and Sangrur districts – the former being a stronghold of former chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh and the latter being the assembly constituency of chief minister Bhagwant Mann – are worst-hit by the floods.

Urban Estate, one of the most posh localities in Patiala town, continues to remain inundated, highlighting the poor urban planning and inadequate flood control-measures to keep a check on the damages suffered due to heavy rains. The two districts received 200 mm rainfall in four days. Approximately, eight people have died in various rain-related instances since July 8 in the two districts, and 12 in the state.

While the Punjab government has blamed Himachal Pradesh and Haryana for the floods, the real problem lies in poor planning and mitigation of waterlogging, according to Punjab government officials. The officials, who did not wish to be named, said that the funds allocated for flood prevention measures were released late and insufficient. They added that the embankments of Ghaggar river and the Dhussi bandh of Sutlej and Ravi rivers were not strengthened, leading to breaches and flooding in the state.

Army personnel rescue flood-affected people from Urban Estate area in Patiala. ANI

The Ghaggar river, whose water level has crossed the 16 feet danger mark on July 8, has become a flashpoint for the Punjab and Haryana governments over an earlier report of the Central Water and Power Research Station on the channelisation of the river. "The solution lies in the channelisation of the Ghaggar River, as proposed in a report by the Central Water and Power Research Station in 2020. However, this report was not discussed in the Ghaggar Standing Committee, which includes representatives from Punjab and Haryana," a Punjab government official said, seeking anonymity.



Officials also said that poor planning by agencies such as the Punjab Urban Development Authority (PUDA) was evident through the submergence of the Urban Estate, which remained under nearly six-feet water for two days. Every family in the locality suffered a minimum loss of ₹4 lakh. The PUDA office itself was flooded. "This is all due to the poor planning by urban authorities... Who is responsible for this inadequate planning of the Urban Estate, which is situated in a flood-prone area?" local resident Dharampal Garg, who suffered huge losses, said.

Harmender Bharti, an expert on the climate crisis, said government planning agencies need to understand the change in rainfall patterns. "The increasing occurrence of heavy rainfall over short periods, equivalent to an entire season's rainfall, has become a major problem. Only the government can provide a solution by revising urban planning strategies and adopting mechanisms to address such flooding," he said.

Punjab irrigation secretary Krishan Kumar did not respond to phone calls on the flood situation.

The Times of India- 17- July-2023

Yamuna set to dip below danger mark in Delhi

New Delhi: The Yamuna receded to just above the danger mark on Sunday, giving respite to the Delhi government and people. While flood waters receded in Civil Lines in the north and several areas in the southeast, there was not much respite in Guru Tegh Bahadur Nagar and Mukherjee Nagar in northwest Delhi.

▶Full report, P 8

The water level was 205.5m at 11pm, down over 3m from its peak of 208.66m on July 13. "The level is likely to fall below the danger mark of 205.33 early on Monday," said a central water commission official. Though water released from the Hathnikund barrage increased slightly on Sunday afternoon, officials said it may not have much impact.

While government agencies worked hard to clear waterlogged pockets and make roads motorable again a day before the new week, the receding waters have left mounds of silt, along with stench and the possibility of infection.

Lack of drinking water and food has emerged as the new threat for people returning to their homes. TNN

Anindya Chattopadhyay

Lack of drinking water and food has emerged as the new threat

The Times of India- 17- July-2023

Yamuna retreats, but more rain to lash Del

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Yamuna receded further on Sunday, even though it remained marginally above the danger mark, giving a respite to the people and the government.

As the flow of water at Old Yamuna Bridge came down to 205.5 metres at 11pm, the government agencies intensified their efforts to clear the waterlogged residential pockets and streets, remove the silt, and make the roads motorable again a day before the new week began.

The Yamuna had caused flooding in several residential areas close to the floodplain, as the flow of water touched the all-time high of 208.66 metres on July 13.

Though the water level has been going down since then, officials are monitoring the weather closely as the meteorological department has predicted another spell of heavy rains on July 17-18.

Officials, however, said the river maintained the receding trend on Sunday too with the level going down at the rate of 3-4cm per hour for the third day in succession due to a fall in the release of water from Hathnikund Barrage in Haryana's Yamuna Nagar.

"At this rate, the flow of Yamuna in the capital is likely to go below the danger mark of 205.33 early on Monday," said a central water commission official.

Though the release of water from the barrage increased slightly — from the range of 40,000 on Saturday and early Sunday to 68,000 in the afternoon — officials said it may not have much impact.

Govt refutes claim of no flood panel meet

The apex committee for flood control and monsoon preparedness headed by Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal hasn't met in two years, claimed sources on Sunday. The government, however, refuted the charges and said ministers Saurabh Bharadwaj and Atishi had chaired a meeting and reviewed the preparations for floods and waterlogging with senior officers of all departments, including irrigation and flood control. TNN

The Indian Express- 17- July-2023

Save the water

If a large part of flood flows is conserved, it can mitigate droughts. Policy focus should shift from flood control to flood management

SHARAD JAIN

THIS YEAR THE monsoon began unusually. After 61 years, it arrived in Mumbai and New Delhi on the same day — June 24. The monsoon's onset in these cities is generally around June 10 and June 30, respectively. Immediately after its arrival, many places across India received heavy to very heavy rainfall. It is unusual to see flooded rivers and cities in June/early July since most of the flooding usually occurs in the later months of the monsoon.

Studies and expert appraisals have concluded that citizens, properties, and infrastructure in India cannot be provided with complete flood protection. Hence, we need to shift attention and efforts from flood control to flood management. But the hydro-infrastructure for river regulation in India is inadequate for effective flood management.

About five months after the end of the flood season in October, many parts of the country begin to face scorching summers and droughts. Currently, we see flood flows as a nuisance, to be passed on to the ocean at the earliest. If a large part of the flood flows can be safely conserved, damages would reduce. The saved water would help partially mitigate the upcoming droughts. Storage to manage river flow variability and mitigate droughts is an attractive opportunity for India.

In recent times, India has faced at least one major flood event each year. As the 2023 monsoon progresses, floods are beginning to repeat the pattern of damage and destruction. Every year 1,600 lives on average are lost due to floods, according to the National Disaster Management Authority. Floods also affect 75 lakh hectares of land and inflict damage worth Rs 1,805 crore to crops, houses and public utilities.

A range of tools are available to manage floods. Broadly, these are classified as structural and non-structural. Structural measures include storage reservoirs, embankments, and diversions. These reduce flood hazards by keeping damage-causing waters away from agricultural areas, cities, industries, etc.

Storage reservoirs moderate the flood peak by storing water during high-flow periods and releasing it after they have subsided. They also conserve water for irrigation, electricity generation, water supply, etc. Their effectiveness in flood moderation depends on the space available. In addition, tanks and ponds are traditional means of water conservation in India. They also aid in groundwater recharge and promote biodiversity.

Non-structural methods such as flood forecasting, warnings, and flood plain zoning, help in the timely evacuation of people and regulate the use of floodplains. Note that floods are a hazard only when people go close to flood waters or hinder their movement.

A forecasting and warning system provides a priori estimate of approaching floods so that people and movable assets are relocated to safer places in time. India has more than 5,500 large dams. Accurate inflow forecasts help moderate floods by estimating the space needed for storage in reservoirs. A common saying goes: "Floods are acts of God but flood losses are largely acts of man".

Non-structural methods don't involve construction and hence don't create an adverse impact on the environment or otherwise. However, the resource (water) is neither conserved nor put to alternate use. Large and medium water conservancy projects can save huge quantities of damage-causing water. So, to manage increasing variabilities, existing infrastructure should be upgraded or new infrastructure created.

In India, most of the water comes from the Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra, Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery, Mahanadi, Narmada and Tapi river basins. The monsoon's presence makes Indian rivers highly seasonal. During the four months of monsoon, Indian rivers carry about 75 per cent of their annual flows. Of this, about 15-20 per cent occurs in shorter, very high-flow periods. Flood flows are the flows present in a river for a short period that have huge volumes. Basins such as Ganga, Brahmaputra, Godavari, and Mahanadi have large flood flows. Although some part is currently conserved, unutilised flood flows are more than 100 (cubic kilometres) BCM. Storage space created in major river basins, such as the Ganga and the Brahmaputra, is inadequate for the available flows.

Options for water conservation vary in size from large storage to farm ponds. The impact also varies — local in scale to a large region. Each option will have some advantages, limitations, concerns and requirements. It is not wise to outright reject any option. Of course, it will be a challenge to find good sites to conserve water and build consensus.

Climate change will add a new dimension to flood management — rainfall patterns, intensities, and durations are likely to change. Recently IPCC released Assessment Report 6 where they noted that intense rains are likely to become more common in this warming world. Therefore, flows in Indian rivers and their variabilities will increase in the future. This will lead to more instances of floods and droughts. It is prudent we upgrade the hydro-infrastructure in the country now so that the tools to manage increased variabilities are available in time.

The entire suite of measures — structural and non-structural, appropriate mix of grey, blue and green infrastructure — needs to be considered for flood management. Mindsets need changing — flood flows should be seen as a resource to be conserved for subsequent use and water security. A river basin approach should be adopted for flood management while taking care of the environment.

A study completed in the US evaluated the performance of 383 flood control reservoirs and 8,500 miles of levees. They found that for every dollar spent on flood control, potential flood damages equivalent to $6 were averted in the past six decades up to the year 2000. Similar benefits can be harnessed if India implements a comprehensive flood management programme.

The writer was Director, National Institute of Hydrology and is now with IIT Roorkee

Millennium Post- 17- July-2023

32 Rajasthan districts receive 'normal', 'above normal' rains

OUR CORRESPONDENT

People near the flooded Foy Sagar Lake following heavy monsoon rains, in Ajmer FILE PIC

JAIPUR: All but one district of Rajasthan have received 'normal' or 'above normal' rainfall this monsoon so far, according to official data released on Sunday. Of the 33 districts in the state, 14 districts, including the state capital Jaipur, are in the 'abnormal rainfall' category and as many recorded 'excess rainfall', while four districts received normal rainfall, a report issued here by the Water Resources Department showed.

Only Jaisalmer witnessed 'scanty' rainfall with rains 60 per cent less than normal, the report said. The districts which receive 20 to 59 per cent more than the normal fall under the 'excess' category while districts recording 60 per cent or more rains are under the 'abnormal' category, the report cited.

Similarly, the districts where the rainfall ranges between 19 per cent below and 19 per cent above normal are considered to fall in the 'normal' category, whereas those receiving 20 to 59 per cent less than the normal are in the 'deficit' category. Districts recording below 60 per cent or less rainfall are said to receive 'scanty' rainfall, it added. The state 'abnormal' rains as it recorded 273.91 mm of rainfall which is 77.7 per cent above the normal of 154.11 mm recorded from June 1 to July 16, the report said.

While Ajmer, Barmer, Bhilwara, Jaipur, Jalore, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Pali, Rajsamand, Sawai Madhopur, Sikar, Sirohi, Tonk and Udaipur recorded 'abnormal' rainfall, Alwar, Bharatpur, Bikaner, Bundi, Churu, Chittorgarh, Dausa, Dholpur, Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jhunjhunu, Karauli, Kota and Pratapgarh are the 14 districts that witnessed 'excess' rainfall.

Four districts which fell under the 'normal' category in this period are Banswara, Baran, Dungarpur and Jhalawar, the report added.

Due to widespread rainfall, the water storage in 690 dams in the state on July 16 was 58.55 per cent of the total capacity of 12,580.03 mqm, compared to 44.54 per cent on the same day last year, the department added.

Telangana Today- 17- July-2023

Kaleshwaram proves its worth

Helps improve groundwater table by an average of 5.36 metres

Improvement in the water levels led to farmers increasingly use groundwater for irrigation purposes with the help of free power supply.

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

In these times when the State is facing a stingy monsoon, with 22 of the 33 districts reporting deficit rainfall, the far-reaching impact of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project is becoming all the more visible.

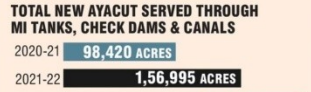
In fact, the cascading effect of the project on the groundwater table in the State, which has been helping farmers, is one side that many have failed to see, but one that cannot be denied.

According to studies by the State Groundwater Department, there has been an average increase of 5.36 metres in the State, with the table going up by 10 metres in some districts. This improvement in the groundwater levels has led to farmers, who use borewell and open well irrigation in about 35 lakh acres in the State, increasingly use groundwater for irrigation purposes with the help of the round-the-clock power supply.

Officials say the increase in groundwater levels did not happen overnight and could be attributed to the double impact of Kaleshwaram and Mission Kakatiya. As part of Mission Kakatiya, the construction of check dams and big reservoirs was taken up across the State, while 20,000 tanks and check dams were integrated with major and medium irrigation projects. With a majority of these tanks being filled at regular intervals, water had become perennially available in the State, Groundwater Department Director Pandith Madhnure said. (SEE PAGE 2)

THE IMPACT

TOTAL NEW AYACUT SERVED THROUGH MI TANKS, CHECK DAMS & CANALS



STABILISATION OF AYACUT UNDER SRSP-STAGE-1, STAGE-2 & NIZAMSAGAR PROJECTS

*Kharif & Rabi

IMPACT ON PADDY CROP

- Yield in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh: **1 lakh MT**
- After formation of Telangana: **3 lakh MT**

ON FISHERIES SECTOR

Fish production

- 2016-17: **1,93,732 tonnes** worth **Rs 1,356.61 crore**
- 2020-21: **3,49,000 tonnes** worth **Rs 3,141 crore**
- Increase in yield: **1,55,268** tonnes worth **Rs 1,784.39 cr**

> **The increase in groundwater levels did not happen overnight and could be attributed to the double impact of Kaleshwaram and Mission Kakatiya. As part of Mission Kakatiya, the construction of check dams and big reservoirs was taken up across State**
>
> **— PANDITH MADHNURE,** Groundwater Department Director

Kaleshwaram proves its worth

Pointing out that in sharp contrast to the situation in the State prior to 2014, there was no farmer in Telangana now complaining of dry borewells or open wells, officials said about 30 lakh borewells and thousands of open wells were rejuvenated, as a consequence of which irrigation using these had gone up.

According to estimates of the Groundwater Department, the groundwater reserve in the State was 680 thousand million cubic feet (TMC). Of this, farmers were utilising only about 250 TMC, which was not a negative development, but a necessary one, since if this extraction was not done, the groundwater table would have touched ground level, which in turn can cause waterlogging and salinity in farmlands.

"Knowingly or unknowingly, this is also going according to the guidelines of the Central Water Commission, which advocates conjunctive use of surface and groundwater," officials said. "The CWC, while clearing projects, puts the condition that project authorities should encourage conjunctive use of surface and groundwater. The CWC issued irrigation planning clearance for the utilisation of 240 TMC in the Kaleshwaram project, of which 25 TMC is groundwater. The Ministry of Water Resources has now made this compulsory as well, especially in command areas of major projects such as SRSP, NSP, Nizamsagar and Kaleshwaram," a senior Irrigation official said.

"There is no doubt that extraction of groundwater has increased due to the abundance of water. At the same time, the increase in groundwater recharge through applied irrigation has also increased, leading to the sustainability of borewells and open/dug wells. Filling of medium and minor irrigation tanks at regular intervals is also one of the major reasons for the abundance of water in tanks in turn leading to recharge," Madhnure said, adding that groundwater extraction had also come down from 65 per cent in 2017 to 42 per cent in 2022.

"There is also an increase in annual groundwater resources by more than 200 TMC during 2022 as compared to 2013, according to the Groundwater Estimation Committee. During the same period, groundwater extraction has increased by only 91 TMC," he said. All this had to be considered an impact of the Kaleshwaram project, the ultimate targets of which is the irrigation of a new ayacut of 18,25,700 acres and stabilisation of 18,82,970 acres of existing ayacut under Sri Ram Sagar Project (SRSP) Stage-1 & Stage-2, Flood Flow Canal (FFC), Singur and Nizamsagar Projects, officials said, adding that of the targeted new ayacut, 2.5 lakh acres was already being irrigated. Water was provided for irrigation during the last three years, including new ayacut and stabilisation of existing ayacut under SRSP Stage-1 below LMD, SRSP Stage-2, Nizamsagar projects, in the form of crucial wettings at critical periods in the crop cycle for the standing crop, they said.

The Tribune- 17- July-2023

Delhi flood: No apex panel meeting in 2 yrs

KARAM PRAKASH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 16

As Delhi limps back to normalcy from the monsoon rage, it has come to the fore that the Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-headed apex committee — meant for flood control and preparedness thereof in the national Capital — hadn't held even a single meeting for the past two years.

However, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) claimed that minister Atishi had held a meeting about flood on May 9 as Revenue Minister.

Debunking the claim, office of Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) said that the meet of May 9 was not a high-powered meeting of the apex committee.

It was the apex committee that had to ensure coordination among the various stakeholders: Delhi Government, Union Government, Indian Army and Central Water Commission (CWC) and was supposed to plan, decide and fix the problems caused by floods or drainage congestion.

According to the documents accessed by *The Tribune*, District Magistrate of East District and the nodal officer of this apex committee had moved a file on June 19 for a meeting.

Thereafter, the Divisional Commissioner and the convener of the committee made a request to Delhi CM Kejriwal on June 21 to suggest a suitable date and time for convening the mandatory meeting of the apex committee in the last week of June. The file was submitted to the CM through Revenue Minister Atishi Marlena.

Kejriwal's Additional Secretary, a relatively junior functionary, returned the file on June 26 to Atishi noting that, "Hon'ble CM has desired that the Hon'ble Minister (Revenue) may convene the meeting" of the apex committee that is chaired by the CM. But this meeting never took place.

"Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal is making his ministers and AAP leaders do overtime to blame everyone and everything under the sun for the flooding. For the pathetic situation of the national Capital, he has none other to blame but himself. All statements being made by AAP ministers and spokespersons are blatantly false," said a statement by Delhi L-G Secretariat.

Reacting to this, AAP stated: "The Delhi Government had been regularly reviewing flood and waterlogging issues since May. On May 9, Flood Control Minister Saurabh Bhardwaj and PWD Minister Atishi jointly chaired a meeting wherein all departments including PWD, MCD, I&FC, DJB, DDA and NDMC were present and preparation for floods and waterlogging was reviewed. The Chief Minister has been monitoring the situation himself as well."

Vehicles pass through a flooded road at ITO in New Delhi on Sunday. MANAS RANJAN BHUI

AAP, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IN WAR OF WORDS

- Aam Aadmi Party claims that minister Atishi had held a meeting about flood on May 9
- But Delhi L-G's office says the May 9 meet was not a high-powered meeting of the apex panel