

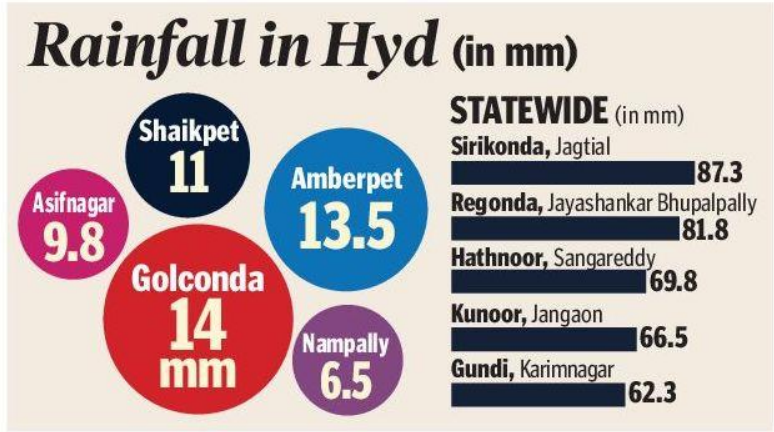
More rains in store

CITY BUREAU
Hyderabad

More rains are in store for Hyderabad as well as several districts in Telangana in the next three days.

With the southwest monsoon again getting active over the State, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday issued a Yellow alert for Hyderabad and an Orange alert for the districts of Nirmal, Jagtial, Rajanna-Sircilla, Kamareddy, Medak, Sangareddy, Rangareddy, Mahabubabad and Khammam.

The Yellow alert for Hyderabad indicates the possibility of heavy rain of 7.5-15 mm in the city. At the same time, the Orange alert means heavy to very heavy downpours and some of these dis-



tricts witnessing rainfall between 15 mm and 33 mm.

A few parts of the city witnessed light drizzle during the early hours of the day with the area surrounding Golconda experiencing the highest rainfall in the city of 14 mm. The maximum temperature recorded in the city was 31.2 degrees Celsius.

The city has experienced a comparatively dry August this monsoon. However, according to the IMD, the southwest monsoon is again active over Telangana. Several districts surrounding Hyderabad have also been experiencing continuous rainfall. On Thursday, Sirikonda in Jagtial saw the highest rainfall of 83.5 mm.

Hindustan Times- 27- August-2021

Climate crisis: India now faces a drought

Drought-like conditions are setting in over most parts of Gujarat, west Rajasthan and some districts of Odisha that have recorded significant rain deficiency during the monsoon, according to Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) data for August maintained by the India Meteorological Department. SPI is an index used for monitoring droughts. This substantiates the recent report of the Drought Early Warning System (DEWS) that said over a fifth of India's land area (21.06%) is under different degrees of drought. Last year, the corresponding figure for the same period was 7.86%. DEWS is a real-time drought-monitoring platform.

The warnings must induce effective policy responses. Unlike other natural hazards such as cyclones and floods, droughts often develop gradually over a long period of time; they are "creeping disasters". The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report has warned that the South Asian monsoon has weakened in the second half of the 20th century, mainly on account of human activity, and that rising temperatures could mean more droughts.

India needs to expand the farm insurance net and ensure timely payouts, invest in greater adoption of micro-irrigation techniques, and introduce drought-resistant crops. These steps are important because droughts could further intensify farm distress (50% of the population is dependent on agriculture and more than 50% of the cultivable area rainfed), lead to over-extraction of groundwater, increase rural to urban migration, and intensify water conflicts between states and between farms, cities and industries. Effective drought proofing, management and monitoring is the need of the hour.

Millennium Post- 27- August-2021

Fresh spell of rain expected in city from Aug 29

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: A fresh spell of rain is expected in the national Capital and adjoining areas in northwest India from August 29 as the monsoon trough is expected to shift towards the plains from the foothills of the Himalayas, according to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).

Delhi and other areas in northwest India are currently witnessing a partial "break monsoon" phase, weather experts said. "The entire monsoon trough lies close to the foothills of the Himalayas. It is likely to remain there till tomorrow (August 26)," the IMD had said in a statement on Wednesday.

R K Jenamani, a senior scientist at the IMD, said the region



is experiencing a "weak monsoon" at present. "If the monsoon trough shifts close to the foothills of the Himalayas and

remains there for two to three consecutive days, we call it a break monsoon phase," he said.

During the monsoon sea-

son, there are spells when the trough shifts closer to the foothills of the Himalayas, leading to a sharp decline in rainfall over most parts of the country. This is called a "break monsoon" phase.

However, rainfall increases along the foothills of the Himalayas, northeast India and parts of the southern peninsula.

In July, the monsoon had entered the first break phase even before reaching most parts of northwest India, including Delhi. The national capital and adjoining areas in northwest India entered a "break monsoon" phase again on August 10 that continued up to August 19.

The IMD said a cyclonic circulation is expected over northwest and adjoining the west-central Bay of Bengal on August 27.

It is likely to pull down the western end of the monsoon trough from August 29, leading to rains in northwest India, including Delhi. Light rain is predicted in the capital, starting August 29. The city has gauged 214.5mm rainfall against the normal of 221.8 mm this month so far. Normally, Delhi records 247.7mm precipitation in August.

Of the 214.5 mm rainfall this month, 138.8mm came in 24 hours ending 8:30 am on Saturday, which was the highest on a day in August in 14 years.

The capital had gauged an unusual 507.1 mm rainfall this July, which was nearly 141 per cent above normal. It was also the maximum rainfall in the month since July 2003, and the second-highest ever.

Indian Express- 27- August-2021

Despite SC freeze, 7 Uttarakhand projects get ok, 1 flash-flood hit

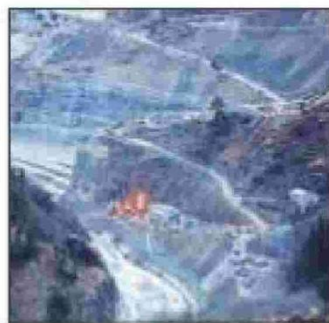
JAY MAZOOMDAAR

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 26

EIGHT YEARS after the Supreme Court imposed a moratorium on clearing hydro-electric projects in Uttarakhand following a flash flood that killed over 5,000 people in June 2013, the Union ministries of Environment, Power and Jal Shakti have reached a consensus on allowing construction of seven hydel projects on the Ganga and its tributaries in the state.

The consensus was conveyed in a consolidated affidavit placed in the Supreme Court on August 17 by the Environment Ministry.

On the list is NTPC's 4x130 MW Tapovan Vishnugad project which was ravaged by a flash flood in the Dhauri Ganga river in Chamoli district in February this year. The others are the 1000 MW Tehri Stage II, 444 MW Vishnugad Pipalkote, 99 MW

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Tapovan power project in Chamoli. *File*

GIVEN THE GREEN SIGNAL

- Tehri Stage II
- Tapovan Vishnugad
- Vishnugad Pipalkote
- Singoli Bhatwari
- Phata Buyong
- Madmaheshwar
- Kaliganga-I

154420/2021/WSE DTE

line:

■ **2009:** Uttarakhand drafted its Vision 2020 statement on the theme of 'Pahad Ka Pani, Pahad Ki Jawani'.

■ **2012:** A report by Wildlife Institute of India (WII) opposed 24 proposed dams to safeguard the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi basins. Another by IIT-Roorkee said a string of measures could reduce the impact.

■ **2013:** Taking suo motu cognizance of the Kedarnath disaster and its impact downstream, the SC stopped clearance of hydel projects, and asked the Environment ministry to form an Expert Body (EB) to assess the role of "mushrooming of hydropower projects" in escalating the impact of the flash floods.

■ **2014:** In April, the EB, led by environmentalist Ravi Chopra, submitted its report, which agreed with the WII's recommendation.

In December, the Environment ministry's affidavit accepted EB's findings that hydel projects exacerbated the disaster both directly (by blockage) and indirectly (by ecological damage).

The SC lifted the statewide ban, putting on hold only the 24 projects in question until policies finalised.

Six hydel developers joined the case, pleading that their proposed projects be allowed to go ahead since they already had clearances. The SC directed the ministry to set up another committee to consider these six projects.

■ **2015:** In February, a four-member committee, under Vinod Tare of IIT-Kanpur, acknowledged that the six projects had necessary clearances, but warned that the proposed dams could have a serious impact on the region's ecology. The Environment ministry, however, presented before the court only the fact that the six projects had all clearances.

Following media reports, the SC asked for the entire report. Unfazed, the ministry decided, in May 2015, to form yet another committee, under the chairmanship of B P Das, who, as vice-chairman of the ministry's expert appraisal committee, had earlier cleared three of these six projects.

In October 2015, the ministry told the SC that the Das committee recommended all six projects, but it would still consult the other stakeholder ministries. The fate of these six projects remain undecided.

■ **2016:** In January, the Environment proposed a policy decision — based on a 1916 agreement between Madan Mohan Malviya and the colonial government — to allow any hydel project that releases at least 1,000 cusecs of water into the Ganga.

Uma Bharti, then minister for Ganga Rejuvenation, objected to this submission made without reaching a policy consensus. The SC asked the ministries to file their own affidavits. In May 2016, the Power ministry backed the Environment but the Jal Shakti ministry opposed it.

■ **2017:** In November, Uttarakhand underlined the criticality of hydropower for its socio-economic development.

■ **2018:** In January, the Power ministry supported Uttarakhand's stand.

■ **2019:** In January, Jal Shakti ministry agreed to back seven projects "which already made substantial progress and sizable investment" with the caveat that no more hydel projects should be allowed in the Ganga basin in Uttarakhand.

In February, a meeting in PMO recommended a permanent ban on new hydro-electric projects in the Ganga basin in Uttarakhand, seeking to stop work on projects where con-

struction had not reached the halfway mark, and compensate the state.

■ **2020:** In March, Das committee filed the final report. In August, Uttarakhand sought "recommencement of hydro power development".

■ **2021:** In February, a flash flood hit two hydel projects in Chamoli. In August, the government backed seven projects, including the one damaged in February.

7 hydel projects

Singoli Bhatwari, 76 MW Phata Buyong, 15 MW Madmaheshwar and 4.5 MW Kaliganga-II.

If accepted by the Supreme Court, this may pave the way for several other hydel projects in the state because these seven projects "form part of 26 projects recommended... for implementation, duly incorporating certain improvements/suggestions" by the latest expert committee constituted in the case by the Environment ministry.

Ever since the Supreme Court moratorium in August 2013, the Environment ministry has formed several experts panels and switched its position from accepting the first expert committee's report that blamed dams for exacerbating the 2013 disaster to backing the latest expert committee's conclusion that 26 hydel projects could go ahead with certain design modifications.

This is the chequered time-

The Tribune- 27- August-2021

‘No more hydel projects’ cry echoes in Kinnaur

Fuming over frequent landslips, locals say won't allow further damage to fragile hills

PRATIBHA CHAUHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, AUGUST 26

The echo of “no more hydel project” is reverberating in Kinnaur with villagers from across the tribal district converging at Reckong Peo to oppose indiscriminate digging of the fragile hills in the name of development.

Villagers today gathered at the district headquarters of Reckong Peo in large numbers to send a strong message to the authorities and power companies that people won't allow any more power projects.

Holding banners and plac-



A rally against hydel projects at Reckong Peo, Kinnaur. TRIBUNE PHOTO

ards reading, “Save Kinnaur: No means no”, the villagers made it amply clear that they would not allow the coming

up of the proposed 804 MW Jangi Thopan hydel project. Representatives of mahila mandals, youth bodies and

panchayati raj institutions turned up to register their angst against environmentally degrading activities, especially hydel power generation.

Environmentalists and NGOs, including Him Lok Jagriti Manch, District Forest Rights Sangharsh Samiti and Kinnaur and Jangi Thopan Powari Affected Sangharsh Samiti, extended support to the locals.

Kinnaur has some of the biggest hydel projects, including 1,000 MW Karcham Wangtoo and 300 MW Baspa projects. All these

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No more...

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projects besides the 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri project are located on the Sutlej.

Shanta Kumar Negi, president, Hungrung Sangharsh Samiti, said people had come together as they wanted “vikas” and not “vinaash”. The power companies would face a stiff opposition, he said.

“The recent disasters at Badseri and Nigulsari are warning signals against destabilising the hills,” says RS Negi, president, Himlok Jagriti Manch. “Though gram sabha NoC is needed to set up a project, but this is done after all permissions are obtained and huge investments are made, leaving panchayat helpless,” said Negi.

New Indian Express- 27- August-2021

Seven upper Ganga projects cleared amid grave environmental concerns

RICHA SHARMA @ New Delhi

SIDELINING concerns of experts on allowing construction of hydropower projects in the ecologically fragile Himalayas, the Union environment ministry has recommended allowing completion of seven hydroelectric projects on upper Ganga in Uttarakhand, including one that was damaged in flash floods in Chamoli in February, killing hundreds.

These projects were put on hold by the Supreme Court after the Kedarnath tragedy in 2013, which claimed over 5,000 lives, with several missing.

An affidavit submitted in Supreme Court on August 17 by Sujit Kumar Bajpayee, joint secretary in the environment ministry, said this has been

based on a joint decision by three Union ministries.

"Following responses from the ministry of Power and the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the matter has been reviewed. There is consensus on seven projects among the three ministries and the government of Uttarakhand. These are part of the 26 projects recommended by the expert body II for implementation, duly incorporating certain improvements," said the affidavit.

The affidavit says the devastating flash floods on February 7 in the Dhauliganga river damaging the Tapovan Vishnugad hydroelectric project, was initiated by an avalanche and not by glacial lake burst. The ministry said it is in advanced stage of construction

and nearly 75% of work had been completed in February.

The seven projects include Vishnugad Pipalkoti (444 MW) on Alaknanda river; Tapovan Vishnugad (520 MW) on Dhauliganga river; Singoli Bhatwari (99 MW) on Mandakini river; Phata-Buyong (76 MW) on Mandakini river; Tehri Stage II (1000 MW) on Bhagirathi river; Madhyamaheshwar (15 MW) on Madhyamaheshwar Ganga; Kaliganga II (4.5 MW) on Kaliganga river.

Experts questioned the decision. "Regrettable. While mountains are crumbling, the government is giving a nod on infrastructure that are accentuating this climate change. It shows how unconcerned the government is," said Mallika Bhanot, environment activist.



The Chamoli disaster claimed nearly 200 lives earlier this year. More projects have been sanctioned in the region despite that