The Times of India- 03- July-2022

50,000 'Amrit Sarovars' to help store rainwater, supply soil for infra projects

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New Delhi: The government is targeting to address two concerns—catching the run-off rainwater and meeting the scarcity of soil for infrastructure projects — by fast-tracking the construction of over 50,000 Amrit Sarovars (ponds), each with a size of over one acre. Each such pond will be of at least one acre with a water holding capacity of 10,000 cubic metres.

According to the minutes of the last Pragati meeting chaired by PM Narendra Modi, he has asked all agencies working in the infrastructure sector, such as roads and railways, to map their projects with the water bodies being developed under the Amrit Sarovar scheme, to meet their requirement. "This would be a win-win situation as the material dug out for the Amrit Sarovar can be utilised for civil works by the agencies," the minutes said.

A senior official in an infrastructure ministry said the availability of soil dug up from the identified sites for the ponds will address a key issue. "Now, different state authorities charge royalty for soil that's excavated for carrying out road and other infrastructure projects. Once we have the states identify the spots for the ponds, we can get the soil without any problem. This will fast-track project implementation," he added.

Shortage of soil has been one of the concerns for infrastructure projects across several states, and more so when there are orders from different benches of the green tribunal and local authorities.

As per government data, So far 65,536 spots have been identified for Amrit Sarovar and work has started at 27,324 sites. Till now works have been completed at 857 sites.

Hindustan Times- 03- July-2022

{ GOOD RAINFALL }

Monsoon covers all of India, 6 days before time

Six days ahead of schedule

Southwest monsoon has covered the country six days ahead of normal date of July 8

When monsoon covered the country before July 2	
2005	June 30
2013	June 16
2015	June 26
2019	June 29
2020	June 26

*SINCE 2013

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NEW DELHI: The southwest monsoon has covered the entire country, the India Meteorological Department said on Saturday, nearly six days earlier than its usual date.

"The southwest monsoon has further advanced into remaining parts of north Arabian Sea, Gujarat and Rajasthan. With this, the southwest monsoon has covered the entire country on Saturday, six days before the normal date of July 8," said scientist RK Jenamani of the weather office.

Since 2003, there have only been five instances when the monsoon covered the entire country before July 2, official data showed.

In 2013, the monsoon covered all of India by June 16, in 2015 and 2020, it was on June 26, in 2019, it was on June 29, and in 2005, the monsoon's advance was completed on June 30.

Last year, the monsoon covered the entire country by July 13. After covering most parts of India in June, the southwest monsoon last year was on a 'break phase', because of which parts of northwest and central India had to wait for monsoon onset.

Higher rainfall activity is likely over Odisha, Gujarat, Konkan and Goa in the next five days, over central India on July 4 and 5, and over northwest India between July 5 and 6, the weather bureau said. While parts of northwest India, including Delhi, saw a good start to the monsoon, there is likely to be a brief break in the region over the weekend. However, isolated and

continued on →8

Millennium Post- 03- July-2022

NORMAL RAINS FORECAST FOR JULY: IMD

'Monsoon has covered entire country, to pick up pace soon'

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: Southwest monsoon has covered the entire country six days before the normal date, as parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat received their first seasonal rains on Friday.

The monsoon had set over Kerala on May 29, three days ahead of the normal date of June 1.

"Southwest monsoon has covered the entire country on Saturday, six days before the normal date of July 8," the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Saturday.

Parts of western Rajasthan and north Gujarat, which were yet to receive monsoon rains, got their first showers on Friday.

However, the country has recorded a rainfall deficit of five per cent as on Saturday.

According to the IMD, all states falling in the monsoon core zone, barring Rajasthan, have received deficient rains till now. The monsoon core zone comprises the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, which are rain-fed agricultural regions.

Gujarat has received 37 per cent deficient rains than the long period average (LPA) till July 2, followed by Odisha (-34 per cent), Maharashtra (-25 per cent), Chhattisgarh (-25 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (-15 per cent). Rajasthan has received 33 per cent excess rains than the LPA.

Continued on P4

Monsoon clouds loom over the Anasagar Lake, in Ajmer, on Friday PTI

Highlights

- Parts of western Rajasthan and north Gujarat, which were yet to receive monsoon rains, got their first showers on Friday. However, the country has recorded a rainfall deficit of five per cent as on Saturday
- Gujarat has received 37% deficient rains than the long period average (LPA) till July 2, followed by Odisha (-34%), Maharashtra (-25%), Chhattisgarh (-25%) and MP (-15%). Rajasthan has received 33% excess rains than the LPA

According to the forecast for July issued by the IMD, the rainfall average for the country as a whole is most likely to be normal at 94 per cent to 106 per cent of the LPA for the month. The LPA for July, based on the rainfall data from 1971-2020, is about 280.4 mm.

The weather office has forecast enhanced rainfall activity over Odisha, Gujarat, Konkan, and Goa during the next five days, over central India on July 4 and 5, and over northwest India on July 5 and 6.

A cyclonic circulation has formed over Bangladesh and there were also signs of formation of a low pressure area over north Odisha, which could help boost monsoon rains in the region and parts of central India. With agency inputs

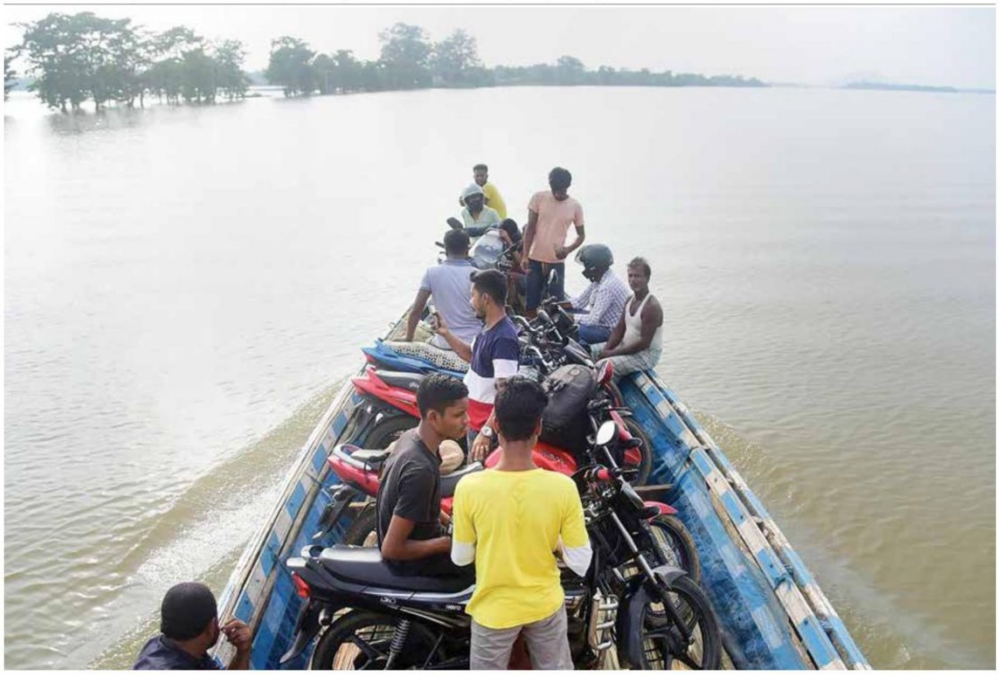
Millennium Post- 03- July-2022

Unattended catastrophe?

Despite claiming numerous lives, spurring internal migration and rendering unfathomable socio-economic losses, mitigation of Assam floods remains centred on ineffective infrastructural quick-fixes — bereft of any long-term sustainable solution

AUTHOR

ARYAMINI CHOUDHARY



The year 2022 has witnessed above 170 fatalities, and 2.9 million people are affected across 30 districts

Each year, Assam experiences flooding along Brahmaputra and Barak rivers — fed by over 50 tributaries. The year 2022 has witnessed above 170 fatalities, and 2.9 million people are affected across 30 districts. Assam floods result in chaos, forcing thousands of people and animals to relocate and destroying valuable crops and assets. The greatest floods in terms of their effects on human life were those in 1988, 1998, and 2004; the 2004 floods alone affected 12.4 million people and resulted in 251 fatalities.

Assam's flood and erosion problems are singularly different from those of other Indian states. According to the Rashtriya Barh Ayog (RBA), the state's flood-prone territory is 31.05 lakh hectares, or around 39.58 per cent of Assam's total land area. This equates to approximately 9.40 per cent of the country's total flood-prone territory. Approximately, 10.2 per cent of the country's land area is considered to be flood-prone. It means that Assam's flood-prone territory is four times larger than the country's average flood-prone area.

As of now, this year, by July 2, there have been 173 fatalities, and the town of Silchar in the Cachar area has been underwater persistently. According to a report released by the Assam State Management Disaster Authority (ASDMA), the overall population affected by the floods stands at 29.7 lakh across 30 districts. In the meantime, lakhs of people have been evacuated and transferred to relief camps. Assam has experienced devastating floods twice in less than a month. In May, flooding in the state claimed the lives of at least 30 individuals. The worst-hit areas of the Assam floods of 2022 are Karimganj, Cachar, Silchar, Kamrup, Darrang, Tamulpur, Udalguri, Dima Hasao, Hojai, among a few others.

Responsible factors

Several factors contribute to annual floods of Assam. The flash floods caused by rivers coming down from neighbouring states like Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya worsened the state's flood situation. Due to cloud bursts in the Meghalayan catchment areas, flash floods of great scale occurred in lower Assam's south bank tributaries of the Brahmaputra in the years 2004 and 2014. The rivers Gainadi and Jiadhal also witnessed flash floods of extremely high magnitude in August 2011.

Assam is simultaneously dealing with bank erosion caused by Brahmaputra and Barak rivers, and their tributaries. Every year, erosion-related losses total several hundred crores. Since the 1950s, Brahmaputra and its tributaries have already eroded more than 4.27 lakh hectares of land, or 7.40 per cent of the state's territory. The estimated average annual loss of land is close to 8,000 ha. Due to bank erosion, the Brahmaputra River's breadth has risen to up to 15 km in some locations. Embankment breaches brought on by riverbank erosion are now commonplace. Erosion is diminishing the state's fertile riverine agricultural fields, which is particularly bad for the rural economy of the state.

Human activities — including encroachment of riverbanks and wetlands, poor drainage, uncontrolled urban expansion, hill-chopping, and deforestation — also contribute to flooding. Any haphazard development in or close to the river's natural course will end badly.

Furthermore, Assam floods are made worse by the location of the area, southwest monsoon's heavy rainfall and topographical formations that are prone to erosion. Scientists think that the rains were probably worsened by climate change. A report released by AP states that since the 1950s, the pattern of the monsoons, which is essential for India's agrarian economy, has changed, with extended dry spells interspersed with heavy rain.

Control measures

In contrast to the painful situation people face on account of natural calamities, one can see the kindest of hearts who stand in solidarity with each other. Amid these testing times, a large number of people have come forward to offer their help and support to those who are affected. Several NGOs are working relentlessly to look after the people of the state. People have been generously donating money and other necessary things. Celebrities and other important figures in the country have come forward to offer their immense support. Help is flooding in for Assam's millions of flood victims, from the 14th Dalai Lama to Bollywood. Dharamsala reports that the Dalai Lama said in his letter that he was sending a "gift from the Gaden Phodrang Trust of the Dalai Lama" to help organisations that are working to rescue and aid those who have been impacted, as well as to show his sympathy with the Assamese people.

Following the nation's historic floods in 1954, the Indian government developed a national flood policy with three phases — the immediate, the short-term, and the long-term. As of yet, no long-term solutions to the state's erosion and flood problems have been undertaken. Assam's flood control efforts really got underway after the National Water Policy was announced. The priority regions that required immediate and urgent attention were then identified, and an "outlined plan for flood control in Assam", along with numerous comprehensive strategies, was established. The Water Resources Department has so far focused its efforts on protecting important townships in both the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys as well as on the general development of the rural sector. The congestion of the drainage system in cities and other significant locations has also been addressed with plans. Since the start of the second five-year plan and up until the present, the Water Resources Department in Assam has been carrying out programmes like "Construction of Embankments and Flood Walls," "River training and bank protection works," "Anti-erosive and town protection works" and many more.

Assam must rely more on grants from the federal government because of its own financial constraints. The flood control activities are currently being carried out with the aid of the financing sources including Flood Management Programme (FMP), Additional Central Assistance (ACA), and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

Accomplishments in flood control

Length of Embankment	4473.82 Km.
Raising & Strengthening of Embankment	655.502 Km
Anti-Erosion and town protection works	911 Nos.
Drainage schemes	874.966 Km
Sluices (Major)	94 Nos.
Sluices (Minor)	545 Nos.

(Data provided by Assam Government)

Lack of permanent solution

Sooner or later, there must be a permanent solution to this yearly destruction that comes with an endless amount of loss. Building dams and reservoirs to reduce flooding was recommended by the Brahmaputra Board in its master plan for the river in 1982. But there have been issues with dams. Even if they aid in controlling the flood waters' flow, the release may still exceed the capacity of the canals downstream. The construction of dams has also been opposed by communities and environmentalists since it may result in environmental harm and eviction. The government has put a number of dam projects on hold over the years. There can be long-term measures, for instance, rejuvenation of wetlands, decentralised weather forecast, and reconstruction of embankments. Another significant exercise is the zoning of floodplains, which classifies areas according to their vulnerability, and prohibits certain activities like farming and home construction there.

It is odd that a region that frequently floods should be so unprepared. The state government, the Union government, environmental organisations, and the general public may all work together to address the issue at its root.

Despite the recurring nature of the disaster, neither the Central Government nor the mainstream media acknowledge the floods, nor do they express any sorrow. The issue is still solely Assam's. Numerous pressure groups' cries for the situation to be unanswered.

According to the Disaster Management Act of 2005, a disaster is defined as a catastrophe, mishap, calamity, or grave occurrence in any area that results in a significant loss of life or human suffering; damage to, and destruction of, property; degradation of the environment; and is of a nature or magnitude that is beyond the coping capacity of the community of the affected area — whether it be caused by natural or man-made causes, accident, or negligence.

In addition to the occasionally insufficient regular funds set aside by the Centre, Assam, at times, also receives donations from a number of prominent "celebrities". However, these would appear to be little more than crumbs tossed at the north-eastern state from the inside point of view.

The destruction caused by floods in Kaziranga National Park — which is home to two-thirds of the world's one-horned rhino population and numerous bird and animal species — as well as the slowly shrinking landmass of Majuli — the largest riverine island in the world — which has reportedly been reduced to less than half of its original size due to erosion, have failed to win the support of mainstream media.

If declared a national calamity, Assam floods can attract the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF)

If declared a national calamity, Assam floods can attract the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF), which is fully funded by the Centre, will be helpful when the resources of the CRF prove to be inadequate. It will also lead to the granting of concessional loans to people affected if the disaster is declared "severe".

Human-induced crisis

Floods are frequently included in the natural catastrophe category when classifying disasters into natural disasters" at the National Institute of Disaster Management. Floods are referred to as "the most frequent sort of natural disaster" by the World Health Organisation. However, this characterisation obscures the fact that flood devastation has human causes. Floods, along with earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, storms, and tsunamis, have always been a part of the earth's natural system. However, human activity has been directly causing floods since the advent of agriculture and urbanisation. Man-made structures such as dams and barrages, hydroelectric projects, unsustainable mining, deforestation, watershed degradation, and encroachments in riverbeds have all had an impact on the cause and nature of floods.

While dams are frequently promoted as a way to prevent rivers from flooding, they are also the cause of numerous flood disasters. Every dam should, in theory, be able to reduce floods in communities downstream if it has a place to store water. Actually, every activity that helps hold back, replenish (to groundwater aquifers), or delay the flow of rainwater from the catchment to the river serves to control its flow which, in turn, moderates river floods. However, because of the ongoing degradation of local water bodies, wetlands, natural forests, and soil's ability to retain water, our catchments are rapidly losing this capacity. Only when dams are operated with this goal in mind can their potential to help mitigate floods be realised in practice. There is no room left to hold more water when dams are not operated with this goal in mind and are instead filled as soon as water becomes available. The only remaining option is to let all of the inflow flow into the river downstream. Due to this, downstream areas that are already experiencing flooding from local rainfall or other factors have their flood disasters exacerbated by the dams.

Flood prevention strategies must go beyond simple infrastructural improvements and incorporate stakeholders from riverine communities. What must be realised is that river flooding is a natural occurrence that needs not turn into a catastrophe. Modern flood control technologies are neither particularly effective nor friendly to people. Additionally, flood management cannot be seen in isolation and must be included as a component of a comprehensive environmental strategy that re-examines the concept of "development" in its entirety.

Majuli: A shrinking island

Floods severely damage infrastructure and claim many lives. They also spread poverty and permanently exclude the devastated area from growth. Majuli, one of the most populous river islands in the world, has been designated as a Cultural Heritage Site by the Assam government and is home to 1,67,304 people. It has an area of about 584 square kilometres (Census of India 2011). A sizable chunk of the island has been lost to the river over the past 66 years. The precise amount of harm brought on by riverbank erosion is up for debate, though. The Brahmaputra riverbank erosion has three effects on Majuli Island. First, over two-thirds of Majuli's original area has been lost to erosion, altering the island's topography. Second, the loss of land has impacted agriculture, the island's main economic activity, and third, the relocation of satras outside of Majuli could lead to the eradication of Majuli's centuries-old neo-Vaishnavite culture. Majuli's landscape has undergone significant alteration as a result of riverbank erosion, which has also altered the island's traditional society and economy.

Recurring homelessness

In order to make ends meet this year, Rafiqul, a farmer in the Patharsali hamlet of the Barpeta district, recalls how his family was looking forward to the harvesting season. But the flooding caused terrible destruction. We had no time to care for the farms because of the flood's continuous surges. He remarked, "Our entire crop has been gone, and our tin-shade house is totally soaked." At least 150 families from Rafiqul's hamlet were compelled to leave and relocate to one of the 304 relief camps established by the state government in Chatala Char. A riverine island on the Brahmaputra known as a "char" is prone to erosion upstream and deposition downstream. Despite the weekly rice and dal handouts that each family currently receives, they wish to be rehabilitated in order to jumpstart their livelihoods. "Our town has been completely destroyed, but we managed to flee with what little cattle we could." We want the government to provide us with some financial assistance so we may resume farming. Rafiqul lamented, "So many of us are homeless and have lost farmland." For millions of people in Assam, being forced to relocate due to unpredictable and extreme weather has become a terrifying reality. Currently, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma has been visiting the flood-hit regions in the state to review the situation. While he listens to the problems of locals who have been affected by the floods and assures them that the administration will provide assistance for the reconstruction of damaged houses and other losses, the state's role in assisting these people's plight has been significant.

The Statesman- 03- July-2022

Rajasthan CM approves proposals worth ₹2,629 cr for irrigation projects

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, 2 JULY

To give a big boost to irrigation system, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has given a financial approval of Rs 2500 crore for the construction of Upper High Level Canal from Mahi Project in Banswara district and Rs 129.19 crore for strengthening of Shri Haridev Joshi Canal (HJC) and its distribution system.

Gehlot also gave the nod to include 121 additional villages in the command area

under this project which is crucial for the development of tribal areas, quoting him an official said here last night.

With this project, irrigation facilities will now be available in 41903 hectare area of 338 villages of Banswara, Bagidaura, Anandpuri, Sajjangarh, Kushalgarh and Gangadtalai tehsils of Banswara district. This will help elevate the social status and standard of living of the farmers in the area.

With the approval of the CM, a 105km long canal will be constructed, discharge of which would be around 20 cusecs. Entire area, up to a unit of 1.25 hectares, under the project will be irrigated through a pressure-based pipeline with the help of a sprinkler system. This will help store water and ensure ample quantities for irrigation.

The Sunday Standard- 03- July-2022

Frothing in Yamuna a rare sight in monsoon season, say experts

IFRAH MUFTI @New Delhi

WHILE crossing the Old ITO Bridge from Lakshmi Nagar towards ITO, the sight of foul-smelling Yamuna covered with white toxic froth will surprise one as frothing happening amid the monsoon season is a rare sight, according to the Delhi based experts.

However, the Yamuna River under the old ITO Bridge has no flow, owing to the heavy frothing floating over the long stretch of the river.

South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP), an informal network that works on issues related to rivers, large dams and their impacts, sustainability and governance claimed that the Yamuna is witnessing frothing leading to a foul smell as some of the ITO barrage gates have not been functioning, creating problem in smooth flow in the river.

Bheem Singh Rawat, Associate coordinator of SANDRP said, "Normally during the monsoon season, the flow of river is normal which helps in diluting pollutants. However, this time the sight was unusual and unprecedented. In the past three-four days, we have witnessed good spells of rain, after which a low level of flood spell should have reached the Yamuna by now but nothing of that sought happened."

"The river is covered with froth during Chhat pooja festival, but no action is taken against it," Rawat added.

Normally during the monsoon season, the flow of river is normal which helps in diluting pollutants. However, this time the sight was unusual and unprecedented — Bheem Singh Rawat, SANDRP

He added, "We have been told that some of the ITO barrage gates have not been functioning. Also pollution coming from the Rajghat Nala, ITO damages the river."

Ashok Upadhayay, a caretaker of small nursery near the river said, "Big turtles are found in Yamuna and they gasp for air as there is hardly any oxygen in the river. The froth and garbage in the river is posing threat to the aquatic wildlife."

Meanwhile, none of the Delhi Jal Board officials were available for an answer.

According to the experts, the primary reason behind the formation of the toxic foam is high phosphate content in the wastewater because of detergents used in dyeing industries, dhobi ghats and households in Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Water Minister Satyendar Jain in March advanced the deadline of the cleaning of the river to 2023 from 2025. However, the city based non-government organisations working on the issue clearly said that the government will not be able to meet the deadline if they don't start working on 'real issues'.

Announcing the new deadline, Jain said, "We will invite you all to take a dip in any stretch of the river in Delhi. The water will be so clean that one would be able to find fishes in the river. In the next five to ten years, Delhi's groundwater table will be as good as it was 50 years ago."