

Mamata Banerjee Declares 12 Districts Flood-Hit in Bengal, Demands Central Funds

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File Photo: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (Press Trust of India)

KOLKATA: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today declared 12 districts in West Bengal as flood-hit and demanded adequate funds from the Centre for post-flood work, even as the death toll in it mounted to 83.

The chief minister held the Damodar Valley Corporation responsible for 'abnormal' release of water from their barrages, claiming this resulted in the present situation causing a huge loss of property and loss of lives, a charge denied by the DVC.

After reviewing the flood situation at a high-level meeting with senior officials and holding a video conference with the district magistrates of all the affected districts, Ms Banerjee told reporters that she had already requested the DVC authority to stop further release of water.

Ms Banerjee said she has sought appointment with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during her visit in Delhi on August 11 and 12 to discuss the situation and place her demands for flood damages from the National Disaster Relief Fund.

"I also want to raise the issue of release of water by the DVC," MS Banerjee said.

She said that she had lodged a complaint with Union Power Minister Piyush Goyal over DVC's 'abnormal' release of water.

"Earlier too I had written to the DVC to undertake dredging and to increase the capacity of their reservoirs, but sadly it had done nothing of the sort. We always cooperate with the DVC, but it doesn't cooperate," she alleged.

The DVC, however, today countered the charge of excess discharge from its barrages, saying the release of water from the DVC system was not the reason for the flooding in the downstream areas.

"The flooding over the past few days is mainly due to the high tidal effects and KOMEN depression-related rainfall. The combined release on August 3 was 95,000 cusecs which is lower than the safe downstream channel carrying capacity of the Damodar river which is 1,10,000 cusecs," DVC said in a release.