

KOLKATA FLOODS: BJP-TMC WAR OF WORDS AS CITY STRUGGLES AHEAD OF DURGA PUJA



Kolkata has been left paralysed after torrential overnight rains triggered severe flooding, submerging vast parts of the city and claiming at least nine lives, many due to electrocution from live wires. With knee-to-waist-deep water inundating neighbourhoods like Maniktala, Science City, and parts of central Kolkata, the downpour crippled traffic, disrupted train schedules, and caused major flight delays.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee termed the rain “unprecedented,” noting that nearly 300 mm of rainfall was recorded within just a few hours — conditions meteorologists described as a rare cloudburst. To provide some relief, she advanced Durga Puja leave for state-run school employees. However, the devastation has quickly spilled over into a fierce political blame game.

BJP Slams Civic Collapse

The BJP seized the moment to attack the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), accusing it of mismanagement and corruption in civic bodies. Videos of waterlogged streets and flooded Durga Puja pandals were shared by the party’s Bengal unit on X (formerly Twitter) with the caption: “Durga Puja celebrations are starting this week, yet pandals are submerged. This is the result of Kolkata’s failed drainage system.”

Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari launched one of the sharpest attacks, calling the tragedy a “procession of deaths.” He accused the state government and municipal corporations of ignoring prior weather warnings and failing to upgrade drainage systems. “Seven people have already died due to electrocution. This is not just negligence, this is criminal failure,” Adhikari alleged.

The BJP also argued that such conditions could deter investors from Bengal. “If this is the state of infrastructure, how can anyone think of a sustainable life in Kolkata?” the party asked, citing images of flooding around commercial hubs.



TMC Counters with Science and Empathy

The TMC pushed back, accusing the BJP of politicising a natural calamity during Bengal’s biggest festival. Finance Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said: “Nearly 300 mm of rain in hours would overwhelm any city, regardless of its drainage. This was a rare cloudburst. But instead of acknowledging science, the BJP spreads propaganda.”

Women and Child Development Minister Shashi Panja added that leadership is measured in “compassion and action,” accusing the BJP of failing to show empathy. She pointed to double standards, saying: “When Gurgaon gets flooded, the BJP remains silent. But when Bengal faces a natural disaster, they mock instead of offering help.”

Political Flashpoint in Festive Season

The flooding, coming just days before Durga Puja, has amplified tensions in West Bengal’s already polarised political landscape. While residents continue to wade through waterlogged lanes and cope with power cuts, the BJP and TMC are trading barbs, turning a natural disaster into a political flashpoint.