

FLOODING INEVITABLE AS MUMBAI IS ISLAND CITY!

BMC CHIEF SUMS IT UP

AKASH SAKARIA / Mumbai

Mumbai is an island city so there will be flooding!

This was BMC chief Ajoy Mehta's brilliant piece of insight into why the city had to face such hardship during the recent downpour.

In his 40-minute discourse, Mehta waxed eloquent about how the city was flooded and how the 'neap tide' jeopardised the operations of the pumping stations.

Most residents of Mumbai know their city like back of their hand and do not need a tutorial on 'high' and 'neap' tides. Yet Mehta went into elaborate details about the process of draining nullah water into the sea through pumps. And why this is not possible during 'high' and 'neap' tides.

Sample this: "Flooding happens when the water level in a nullah is higher than that in the sea. On Tuesday, there was a 'neap' tide as well, which almost acts like 'high tide'. If we were to open the pump outlet, even seawater will enter the city."

Mehta also asserted that the corporation engineers were well-qualified and they knew their job. Praising the BMC staff for a 'job well done,' he fended off a torrent of complaints from angry corporators who complained of wa-

terlogging in their respective areas, saying, "Corporators should be in their respective areas to gauge the situation first-hand".

Livid at the commissioner's statement, corporators voiced their dissent. "We should not be blamed. Was there anyone to check whether we were on the field or not?" demanded one of the city's civic representatives.

"There is no point in giving reasons and clarifications, if someone has not done work, they have not. But if they have, then that should be taken into account. Yes, the streets were waterlogged; yes, there were problems faced by people and there should be action taken against the culprits; but efforts by civic workers should also be considered. Although some of the civic staff doesn't work properly and they should be penalised for that, around 3,500-4,000 workers were on the streets at any given time safeguarding the city," said Mehta.

At the end of his 40-minute explanation on why the city lay submerged in water for four consecutive days, his conclusion was, "Be it Kirlskar or any other high-end pumps, since Mumbai is an island city, there will be flooding."

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SWAPNIL MISHRA / MUMBAI: Most households in Nalasopara need food, water, milk and medical supplies. They were without electricity, too, for nearly 72 hours. The densely populated area is not just inundated in water, it is stranded. It has been abandoned by the authorities. It is apparent to one and all: the Island City matters, Nalasopara does not. Although rainwater has receded, pockets are still in knee-deep water. It will take another day for the water to reach ankle height. But what is staring them in the face now is the threat of an outbreak of disease and epidemic. Even more so since the water from Vasai creek has entered mainland. In this hell hole, the supply of perishable goods is down to a trickle and is available at a premium. Citizens are finding it difficult to access clean water for meeting their basic needs; they have to subsist on Bisleri which is hard to come by.

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Mehta also said there was need for productive feedback and constructive criticism so that the corporation keeps up with the good work. "People make profound statements like 'Mumbai was drowned for four days'. But why? What was the reason? No one discusses that. How will we work on our follies, if there is only blame game?" demanded Mehta.

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