

JOINT SURVEY ON RIVER EROSION TO BE UNDERTAKEN AT FARRAKA BARRAGE

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The West Bengal govt. and the Farakka Barrage Project Authority have decided to conduct a joint survey of *chars* (land) formed due to erosion along the river Ganga in the State. | file photo

The West Bengal Government and the Farakka Barrage Project Authority (FBPA) have decided to conduct a joint survey of *chars* (land) formed due to erosion along the river Ganga in the State.

A meeting was held between senior officials of the West Bengal Government and the FBPA on Monday, where it was decided to take a holistic approach to combating river erosion.

“A joint survey of the land (*char*) which has emerged in the opposite side of Malda across the Ganges is to be conducted so that it can be taken up with the Govt. of Jharkhand for its proper management. A similar exercise would need to be taken up near Jalangi at the exit point of the river Ganges into Bangladesh,” a press statement by the Government of West Bengal said.

The statement added that the erosion pattern of the Ganga had changed upstream and downstream of the Farakka Barrage, and there are important towns, apart from public infrastructure, in this area that need to be protected.

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“The stretch is long and a piece-meal approach may not work. It was therefore impressed upon the FBPA that their jurisdiction should be expanded and should include important towns/habitations so that a holistic approach is undertaken by FBPA in combating the river erosion,” the release said.

According to West Bengal Government, lakhs of people have been displaced from their habitation and there has been a massive loss of lives, livelihood and property, including of public infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, health centres, power lines, etc.

The State government said that the jurisdiction of the FBPA had been reduced in 2017 from 120 km (40 km upstream and 80 km downstream) to 19.4 km (12.5 km upstream and 6.9 km downstream), which had left out important towns, including as Dhulian and Samsherganj.

“It was therefore impressed upon the FBPA that their jurisdiction should be expanded and should include important towns/habitations so that a holistic approach is undertaken by FBPA in combating river erosion,” the statement added.

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