

9th High Powered Review Board Meeting of Brahmaputra Board Held

The 9th meeting of High Powered Review Board of Brahmaputra Board was held at Borgos, Kaziranga in Assam on December 30, 2017.

The meeting was chaired by Sri Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. It was also attended by Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister, Assam, Shri Keshab Mahanta, Minister, Water Resources, Assam, Shri Chandra Mohan Patowary, Minister, Transport, Shri Atul Bora, Minister, Agriculture, Assam, Shri Letpao Hopkip, Minister, Water Resources, Manipur, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam, Chief Secretary, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, and other dignitaries and senior officers from basin states.

Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari also launched the Mathematical Model Study prepared by IIT, Guwahati called Brahma-ID on this occasion. This project has been sponsored by Brahmaputra Board for an amount of Rs. 3.00 crore.

The key points that were discussed and agreed upon during the 9th meeting of 9th High Powered Review Board were as follows:-

- High Powered Review Board (HPRB) approved restructuring of Brahmaputra Board and advised that funds should be largely spent for works and limited funds should be spent for establishment costs including salary and wages.
- HPRB ratified the project for protection of Majuli Island from flood and erosion for an amount of Rs. 237 crore.
- HPRB approved the establishment of Brahmaputra Board office complex in Majuli and handing over the works to NPCC, a PSU of the Ministry.
- HPRB approved that the preparation of Master Plans, Feasibility Reports and DPRs for development of the complete Brahmaputra basin be also given to WAPCOS, a PSU under the Ministry.
- HPRB suggested to create a Centre for Brahmaputra Studies in IIT, Guwahati covering multi-disciplinary aspects of hydrology, environment, inland waterways, agriculture and sociology. For this purpose, IIT, Guwahati will identify and earmark a land area of about four acres for development of the Centre and the Government of India will support establishment of this Centre.
- HPRB advised to take up actively afforestation and catchment area treatment in the upper riparian states to prevent soil erosion and sedimentation. For this purpose MoWR, RD & GR will prepare a proposal through Brahmaputra Board and take it up with MoEF & CC for consideration and release funds through CAMPA.

- HPRB advised Brahmaputra Board to share Master Plans for all the river basins with party States by March 31, 2018.
- HPRB advised Brahmaputra Board to constitute an Advisory Board in all the basin States. The Advisory Board should include NGOs, political leadership, Water Resources Department officials so that they may become active stakeholders in the management of Brahmaputra basin.
- HPRB recognized need among basin States to build their capacity of Water Resources Departments. To this end, HPRB advised Brahmaputra Board and Central Water Commission to conduct regional workshops in every basin State to enable the states to build capacity especially in the field of preparation of Master Plans, Feasibility Reports and Detailed Project Reports (DPRs).

HPRB recognized the fact that Brahmaputra river offers great opportunities for economic growth and employment generation in the NE States through development of inland waterways, tourism, industry, agriculture and allied sectors. To this end, comprehensive DPRs need to be developed for integrated water management. These DPRs should be bankable which can be taken up for external funding with International Agencies like World Bank, JICA, and ADB etc. The HPRB formed a Committee comprising Chairman, Brahmaputra Board, Chief Secretary, Assam and Chief Secretary, Arunachal Pradesh to determine the terms of reference for this purpose. The HPRB further directed that this work of comprehensive integrated master plan be assigned to WAPCOS, a PSU of Ministry, who may partner with leading global organizations working in the field of integrated water management.

Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari hoped that Brahmaputra Board will turn these challenges of flood, erosion and sedimentation in Brahmaputra into opportunities for great economic growth with the cooperation of all stakeholders. He summed up with his vision for development of Brahmaputra as a great bridge to link India with South East Asia.

Samir/SKP/jk
(Release ID :175070)