

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

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**UNION FINANCE MINISTER’S ADDRESS AT COMMENCEMENT OF WORK ON  
KALIAGHAI – KAPALESHWARI - BAGHAI BASIN DRAINAGE SCHEME**

**New Delhi: February 17, 2012**

**Please find below the text of the Union Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee’s Address at the commencement of work on Kaliaghai-Kapaleshwari-Baghai Basin Drainage Scheme:**

It gives me great pleasure to be here today at the commencement of work on the scheme for improving drainage in the Kaliaghai – Kapaleshwari – Baghai Basin. I am sure this excavation and drainage scheme would improve water management in the area, and enhance the availability of water for irrigation and other uses.

2. The Kaliaghai – Kapaleshwari – Baghai Basin has an area of about 2,150 Sq Km spread over in the districts of Purba and Paschim Medinipur of West Bengal. The lower part of the basin having flat terrain has been suffering historically from flood and inundation. The existing drainage in the area is congested and as a result large part of the basin remains flooded for several weeks during the monsoon period. As a result, the agriculture in this area is dependent on a single crop.

3. The State Government has taken up several schemes in the past, in a piecemeal manner, to relieve the area from drainage congestion. Though there has been some immediate benefit, it could not be sustained for long. For a more durable solution for this problem, the State Government had entrusted the work for formulation of a Master Plan for the drainage problem of the region to WAPCOS. It is the joint effort of the State Government, WAPCOS and Ganga Flood Control Commission that a proposal estimated to cost Rs. 650 crore was sanctioned in January 2010.

4. The scheme envisages re-sectioning of about 140 Km of rivers in the entire basin to increase their carrying capacity. There is also provision for re-alignment and reconstruction of embankments on the rivers Kaliaghai, Kaplaeshwari and Baghai. The proposal also includes construction of a regulator on river Kaliaghai at Chabukia and construction of three bridges on river Chandia near Sridharpur, Ejmalichak and Chandipur. On its completion, the scheme is likely to benefit a population of about 17 lakhs living in the Purba and Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal.

5. It was been difficult for the State Government to arrange finance for taking up this major work. As I belong to this area and I am fully aware of the problems of people in this area, I see it as my responsibility to complete this work at the earliest. Indeed, I had made an announcement for funding of this project by the Central Government in my budget speech for the year 2010-11. This scheme has now been included under the Central “Flood Management Programme”. The first installment of funds was released in October 2010.

6. The State Government has had a difficult time in arranging the land for taking up the work under this scheme. I have come to know that about 450 Ha of land will be required for construction of the project. The State Government has taken up the challenge and I have come to

know that the land will be made available for taking up the project work very soon. I congratulate them for their efforts in this regard.

7. I have been informed that the work on this project will be completed in about 3 years. I hope and I pray to the God for his blessing so that the work can be completed as per schedule. I also encourage you to extend your maximum support to the project for its timely completion. No project can be successful without the active support of all stakeholders.

8. I would also like to mention that the Government of West Bengal and the Union Government have signed an agreement on with the World Bank on December 21, 2011 for a loan of US\$ 250 million for the “West Bengal Accelerated Development of Minor Irrigation Project”. The objective of this project is to enhance agricultural production of small and marginal farmers in the project area. This will be achieved through development of minor irrigation schemes, strengthening community-based irrigation management, and support to agricultural development, including through provision of agricultural services, encouraging crop diversification, use of new technologies and creating income generating opportunities. I am sure the World Bank would bring international best practices in the field of irrigation and the project would meet its objectives for increasing the irrigation potential in West Bengal.

9. Let me conclude by congratulating the State Government for commencing the work on this project and hope that it will make every effort to complete the scheme on time.

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**DSM**