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## West Bengal Major Irrigation and Flood Management Project

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Government of India, the Government of West Bengal, the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** and the **World Bank** have signed a loan agreement for a project titled '**West Bengal Major Irrigation and Flood Management Project**'.

The project **includes the improvement in irrigation and flood management in the Damodar Valley Command Area (DVCA).**

### Key Points

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- West Bengal Major Irrigation and Flood Management Project aims to improve irrigation service delivery, strengthen flood risk management and improve climate change resilience in the project area.
- It is intended to **benefit about 2.7 million farmers** from five districts of West Bengal.

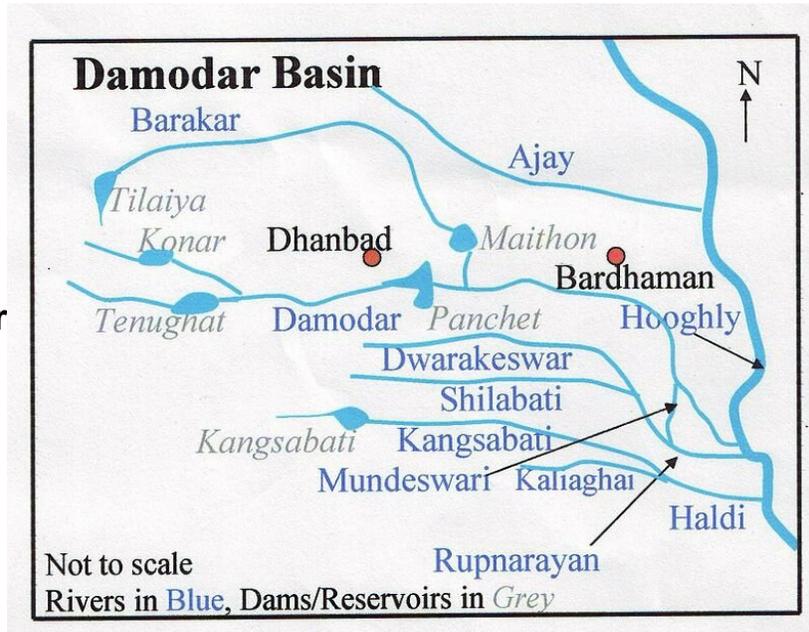
- The project comprises four components:
  - **Irrigation Management** : It will improve the management of the Damodar Valley Command Area (DVCA) irrigation scheme to improve service delivery, performance monitoring and irrigation efficiency evaluation.
  - **Modernization of Irrigation Infrastructure** : It will invest in the modernization of irrigation infrastructure at main, branch, distributary and minor canal levels.
  - **Flood Management** : It will invest in structural measures to reduce flooding in the project area. It will also include the implementation of the recommendations of the Dam Safety.
  - **Project Management** : It will strengthen the implementation agency's capacity for project management, including financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and environmental and social safeguards management and communication. It will also support a communication campaign to inform stakeholders on the importance of water use efficiency.
- The **total value** of the project is **\$413.8 million**, co-financed between the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (\$145 million), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (\$145 million) and the Government of West Bengal (\$123.8 million).

**International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) is a part of the World Bank Group** that provides financial products and policy advice to help countries reduce poverty and extend the benefits of sustainable growth to all of their people.

## Background

- The Damodar Valley Command Area is in the **need of modernization**.
  - The **command area** is the area around the dam/ project, where the area gets benefits from the dam, such as irrigation water, electricity, etc. It is an area which can be irrigated from a project and is fit for cultivation.
  - In other words, it is the area around a dam which is under its command as an irrigation source.
- It faces **key challenges** including degradation of infrastructure, inadequate irrigation management, poor quality of service delivery and inefficient irrigation.
- Due to above reasons, the **farmers in the area are forced to extract groundwater**, which increases the costs of cultivation.
- Moreover, the Lower Damodar basin area is historically flood-prone. As this area lacks the infrastructure to protect against recurrent flooding, on average, **33,500 hectares of the cropped area and 461,000 people are affected annually due to recurrent flooding** in the area.

## Damodar River



- The Damodar river rises in the **Palamu hills of the Chota Nagpur plateau** in the state of Jharkhand.
- It passes through two Indian states namely, **Jharkhand and West Bengal**.
  - The Damodar occupies the eastern margins of the Chotanagpur Plateau where it flows **through a rift valley** and finally joins the Hugli.
  - The **Barakar river** is its **main tributary**.
- Due to the devastating floods caused by the Damodar river and its tributaries in the plains of West Bengal, it is also known as the '**sorrow of Bengal**'.

## Damodar Valley Corporation

- The Damodar Valley Corporation was established in **1948** as the **first multipurpose river valley project of independent India**.
- Under this project, **four dams** were constructed namely,
  - **Tilaiya Dam:** It has been constructed across the **Barakar river** at Tilaiya in Koderma district **of Jharkhand**.
  - **Konar Dam:** The Konar dam has been constructed across the Konar river—a tributary of the Damodar River in the Hazaribagh District of **Jharkhand**.
  - **Maithon Dam :**It has been constructed across the Barakar river near the confluence of Barakar with Damodar river.
  - **Panchet Dam:** The Panchet dam has been constructed across the Damodar river, about 20 km south of the Maithon Dam.

**Source:PIB**