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Nod to flood, river management

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New Delhi, Nov. 4: The Union Cabinet has given its in-principle approval for the project for taking up river management, flood-control, anti-erosion works, drainage development, flood-proofing, flood-prone area development programmes, restoration of damaged flood management works — at cost of Rs 8,000 crores in the entire country.

The task force appointed for this purpose by the Union water resources ministry, in its report submitted in December 2004, proposed a total cost of Rs

4,982 crores for flood-management works in West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and the North-eastern states. The task force also called for providing Central assistance to the states for remaining works proposed in the 11th Plan period (2007-12) under an enlarged state sector scheme called flood management programme with an outlay of Rs 8,000 crores.

An Empowered Committee of secretaries headed by the finance secretary was constituted to select projects under the scheme in the

SPECIAL

Ganga Basin, Brahmaputra and Barak basins and other areas on the basis of detailed project reports prepared by respective state governments. The scheme will be implemented through state government and monitored by Ganga Flood Board and Central Water Commission. Their progress will be evaluated through remote sensing techniques and through independent agency, an official release has said.

The task force devised immediate and short term works of flood management

in states where problem of floods is acute. For the states of West Bengal, Bihar, UP and North-eastern states, at total of Rs 316 crores was sanctioned for immediate measures. The task force intended "short-term-I" measures to be taken up during the 10th Plan and short-term-II measures during the course of 11th Plan.

The task force also stated that as a long-term measure, storage reservoirs are to be constructed on inter-state and international rivers. However, cost of these proposals was not estimated by the task force.