



No. BB/PRO/2013/1
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES
BRAHMAPUTRA BOARD

Basistha, Guwahati-29
Dated March 20, 2013

To,

The Editor,
'The Assam Tribune'
Chandmani Guwahati-3

Subject: Editorial titled 'Brahmaputra Board' published in 'The Assam Tribune', Guwahati dated 12th March, 2013

Sir,

Apropos editorial titled 'Brahmaputra Board' in your esteemed daily newspaper – 'The Assam Tribune', Guwahati dated 12th March, 2013, it is stated that reporting is factually incorrect. The following may straighten misconception and misunderstanding about Brahmaputra Board. Managing flood and erosion comes entirely within the purview of State Government.

As per Sub-section (1) of Section-12 of Brahmaputra Board Act, 1980, Board shall carry out surveys and investigations in the Brahmaputra Valley and prepare a Master Plan for the control of floods and bank erosion and improvement of drainage in the Brahmaputra Valley.

So far, Brahmaputra Board has formulated 57 Master Plans. Out of above 49 Master Plans have been approved by Government of India and provided to respective State Governments for implementation of recommendations. The remaining 8 Master Plans have been provided to members of Brahmaputra Board for their views/comments.

The flood management schemes are planned, formulated and executed by the concerned State Governments as per priorities within the States with their own resources. Brahmaputra Board, however, may undertake any scheme including scheme on flood and river bank erosion management in its jurisdiction on approval of Government of India. The process of undertaking execution of scheme by Brahmaputra Board is outlined hereunder–

- (i) The State Government makes request along with 'No Objection Certificate' for execution of scheme.
- (ii) Lands required for implementation of scheme are provided by the concerned State free of cost. The State Government provides all such assistance as may be required for execution of scheme.

- (iii) State takes over maintenance of the scheme on and from the expiry of such period after its completion as specified by the Brahmaputra Board.

On request from Government of Assam, the following two schemes on flood and erosion management are currently in execution under Brahmaputra Board-

1. Protection of Majuli Island from floods and erosion of river Brahmaputra – Prior to year 2004 – before initiation of protection measures by Brahmaputra Board – there has constant been loss of land mass of Majuli Island. Situation has improved appreciably on implementation of measures by Brahmaputra Board. Particulars on land mass of Majuli Island with respect to time are tabulated here under –

| Year | Land Mass of Majuli (in sq km) | Remarks |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1914 | 733.79 | Assessment of land mass area is based on Survey of India maps. |
| 2004 | 502.21 | |
| 2008 | 506.37 | |
| 2011 | 520.26 | |
| 2013 | 522.73 | |

The above speaks about efficacy of measures undertaken by Brahmaputra Board. By no standard of measurement, achievement of Brahmaputra Board can be down played. It is exhilarating to mention that your esteemed daily in its editorial dated 16th February, 2013 has rightly reported increase in land mass area of Majuli Island from 502 Sq km in the year 2004 to 520 Sq km in the year 2012.

2. Restoration of rivers Dibang and Lohit to their original courses at Dhola-Hatighuli – On account of breach in embankment on Lohit River, at Dhola in the beginning of nineties, combined flow of Dibang and Lohit Rivers created a channel through Balu Nala meeting Dangari River, 55 km in length and 3.6 km in width causing a lot of destruction and miseries on account of floods and erosion. Measures for restoration of channels of Dibang and Lohit were initiated by Brahmaputra Board. Works for restoration of original channel of Dibang River are to be completed during current working season. Further, it is categorically stated that no proposal of State Government on 'Flood and Erosion Management' is unattended in Brahmaputra Board.

Management of flood and erosion and development of water resources of Brahmaputra and Barak basin will be effective with planning and execution of works considering entire Basin as a single entity. Central Government has consistently been making efforts as reported in your editorial for restructuring of Brahmaputra Board, with status of River Basin Organization. Efforts are on to workout unanimity in views of all Indian riparian States of Brahmaputra and Barak Basin on giving status of Brahmaputra Board as River Basin Organization. But, this is as important as daunting task.

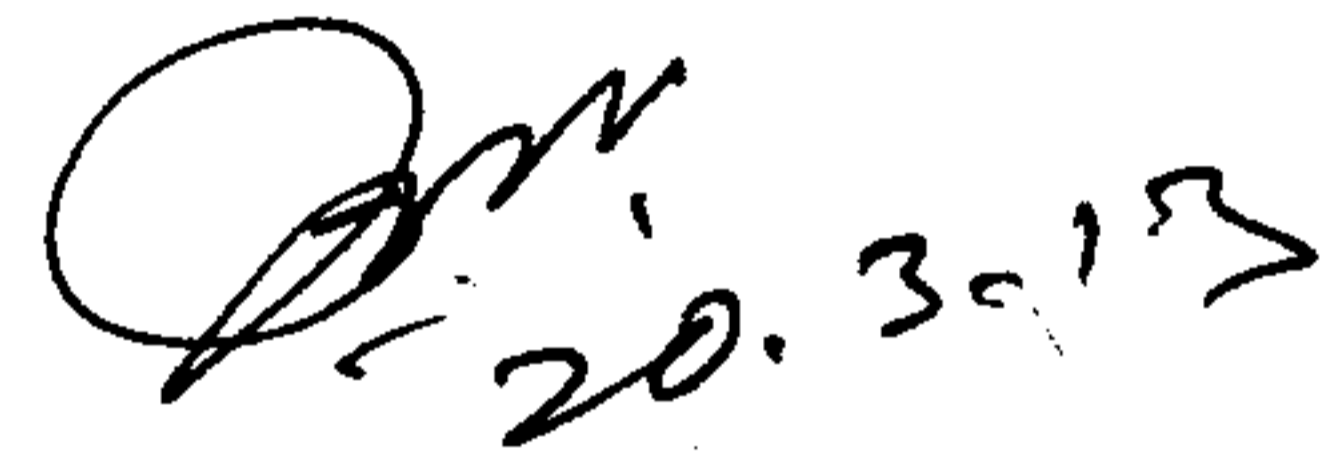
It has prominently and unambiguously been recommended in Master Plan of Brahmaputra River that development of reservoir projects in upper reaches is *sine quo none* for effective management of flood and erosion in the basin. It has, further, been clarified that creation of storage in the upper reaches cannot be substituted by other measures such as construction of embankment, river bank revetment, river training, river bed dredging, blocking or / and diversing of channel and other efforts.

It is also pertinent to mention that out of total estimated probable installed capacity of hydropower of about 148701 MW in India, North Eastern Region alone has potential for generation of hydropower of around 66065 MW probable installed capacity {(Source: Central Electricity Authority – Hydro Development Plan for 12th Plan (2012-17))}. But the current state of development of hydro-power projects is secret to none.

In the last, it is stated that the editorial has given title of 'White Elephant' to Brahmaputra Board. Brahmaputra Board is glad and thankful to your esteemed and respected daily. In mythology, 'White Elephant' is very auspicious, very rare – **Yeravat**. Brahmaputra Board would like to retain this title.

Publication of above in your esteemed daily as a rejoinder from Brahmaputra Board may allay the misconception about the Brahmaputra Board.

Yours faithfully,



(Joy Barman)
Secretary