

MUNDA DAM TO CURTAIL FLOOD RISK IN KPK

By

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The Munda Dam multi-purpose project will create economic opportunities for farm families in central Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by expanding cultivable area and curtailing flood risks to agriculture sector, according to official sources.

The project, on completion, would expand cultivable area by bringing an additional 15,300 acres under irrigation in Charsadda and Peshawar districts, said a provincial development planner.

The \$ 1.4 billion project, he added, would augment some 108,900 cultivated acres through improved irrigation, improving per acre yield. Besides, the project is imperative for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa because of its projected utility to mitigate flood risks in Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan and Peshawar districts, he said. The four districts jointly house over 378,000 cultivable hectares and 556,887 reported hectares (suitable for cultivation), according to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Development Statistics (2010).

“An alternate housing would be provided to some 118 families that will be displaced due to the project’s execution”, said the official.

Officials of the irrigation and planning and development departments said that the flood mitigation component of the project was vital for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s agro-economy in view of risks of flood to its agriculture-rich Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera districts where standing crops, private housing and government facilities were left in ruin after the 2010 floods.

“We made the Water and Power Development Authority to raise the height of the dam to take the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s interest into account as flood mitigation is equally important side by side generating electricity”, said an irrigation department official. He said that the WAPDA had designed the project for hydropower generation. Later, it agreed to accommodate Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s stand, making the Munda Dam project a multi-purpose initiative. Involving a 213-meter high and 760-meter lengthy ‘concrete faced rock fill dam’, the project will be completed in nine years, including seven years construction period and two years for preparing detailed engineering designs, for which WAPDA has engaged private consultants.

To be built on Swat River, five kilometers upstream of Munda headwork in Mohmand Agency, the dam will create a reservoir, spanning 15,400 acres, good for storing 1.29 million acre feet water. The irrigation department official said that low feeding tunnel would be built to supply water to lower Swat canal that irrigated several union councils in Mardan, Swabi, and Nowshera districts.

A senior irrigation department official said that the effects of the 2010 floods could have been minimised in case there had been Munda Dam.

The execution of the project, according to officials, has been started after a delay of several years. First, feasibility study on it was completed in March 2000. Later, in view of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s reservations, a review of the feasibility was conducted that was, upon completion, submitted to the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) in 2006.

The province, he added, needed to beef up flood mitigation by adding new water storages and water channels to its inadequate irrigation network.