

W.B. to dredge Teesta basin amid flood-like situation

Dredging river basin would remedy breaches in the river spurs – extended part of embankments that help protect riverbanks, say officials; traffic between Sikkim and parts of north Bengal hit

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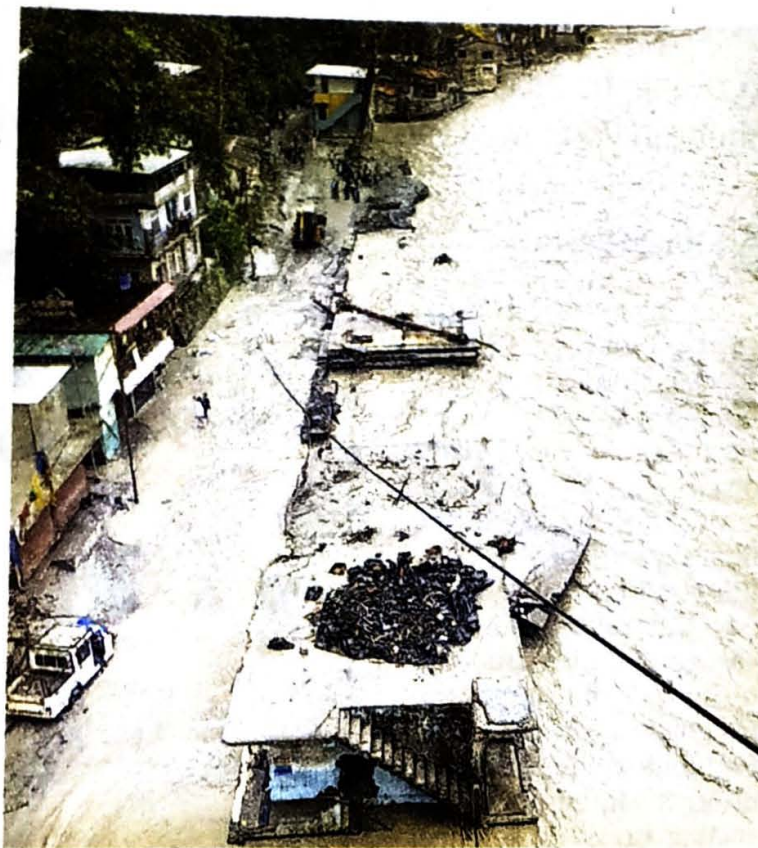
KOLKATA

Amid an incessant downpour in Sikkim and north Bengal and the consequent surge in the Teesta river, the West Bengal Irrigation Department has been directed to prepare a direct project report for the dredging of the riverbed.

According to Irrigation Department officials, dredging the Teesta basin would remedy the breaches in the river spurs – an extended part of the embankment that helps protect vulnerable riverbanks.

Changed course

Following the catastrophic flash floods in Sikkim in October 2023, the Teesta changed its course and deposited excessive silt in the river basin. Authorities suspected that like last year, several river spurs have been broken this year as well by the current surge in



In spate: A flooded bank of the Teesta river after heavy downpour in Siliguri on Friday. PTI

the river's water levels. The Irrigation Department was also engaged in the repair of dams damaged by the swollen Teesta, including in Milanpally, Bakali and

Changmari. The repairs for the Ghazaldoba dam were initiated on Thursday.

On Thursday, Teesta's water level had crossed the danger mark and eroded

and submerged major parts of National Highway 10, a critical roadway that connects Sikkim to the plains in north Bengal. The local administration also detected multiple cracks along the side of the highway and took steps to ensure vehicles did not ply over the damaged areas.

Meanwhile, flood-like situations along the banks of the Teesta, especially in Melli, Teesta Bazar and 28th Mile in Kalimpong, have alarmed locals and authorities alike. Authorities had earlier evacuated multiple homes along the currently submerged banks of the river and relocated residents to safer areas.

Additionally, traffic plying between Sikkim and places in north Bengal like Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Siliguri were also affected due to the recent landslips in Sikkim as well as diversions due to damages caused by the Teesta.