
Chacharan Sharif Is Going Down.

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Erosion in the river Indus has endangered the 400-year-old historical Chachran Sharif town. Lying some 60 kilometre away in the north-west of Rahim Yar Khan, Chachran Sharif is the birthplace of famous sufi poet Khwaja Ghulam Fareed. Land erosion by water of river Indus is quite an old issue, reports kept appearing in different news paper in this regard, but no heed was ever paid and action taken to save Chacharan Sharif from disappearing from the face of the earth. Now it is a matter of time, Chacharan Sharif may not survive longer and will only have its reference in books.

Chachran town is the lone approach from where the people of Rahim Yar Khan and Rajanpur districts make their way to Kot Mithan after crossing the river Indus.

The whole stretch of 12 kilometre distance between Chachran Sharif and Kot Mithan encompasses the river water. The river Indus flows in four different creeks in this area and the largest among them snakes through near Chachran.

Many areas of the Rahim Yar Khan district were badly affected in the 1973 flood. Later, high floods in subsequent years in river Indus had affected many adjoining areas of Chachran Sharif. At that time the river would flow five to 10 kilometres away from Chachran.

In 1988, the irrigation department and the area people had requested then federal finance minister Makhdoom Shahabuddin to provide funds to build spurs for the protection of Chachran town, but to no avail.

Now only the old protection bund built from mud is intact. Five spurs were built to protect Chachran Sharif before 1998. The spur No 3 was damaged in 1998 due to high flood. In 2004, the flood water was not more than 2,000 feet away from these spurs. In 2005, the flow of flood water was higher in the creek nearest to Chachran town.

After the flood, the river water built more pressure towards the town in August last and the erosion process started. It was so swift that many villages in Chachran — Mud Adil, Mud Ismail, Basti Mazari, Basti Thakna, Basti Chackran and Basti Mohana were destroyed.

The erosion continued and by the mid of August last, Basti Abdul Karim, Basti Jahazi, its primary school and the engine turning circle near Chachran railway station worth Rs4 million were swept away.

The engine turning circle was built by the Nawab of Bahawalpur from German engineers in 1904. The costly engine circle was eaten up by the river owing to the negligence of railway authorities.

On Aug 30 last, the water was only two feet away from spur No 2 due to erosion. The water would have entered the town had the labourers not strengthened immediately the spur with stones.

All the same, the erosion in the river Indus had brought about a breach of some 200 feet in the spur No 2 only after few days of its strengthening.

It is feared that Chacharan town will awash with river water if the erosion continues the same way. The river is only half a kilometre away from Hamidpur and Hajipur heads, the adjoining areas of Chachran, where only a weak spur exists near Rukanpur.

The area people said the Irrigation department had built five spurs in Chachran, but the erosion had swept away the most important spur No 2.

They said that if the Irrigation department built an apron in a way that it fortified the three spurs in Chachran, the river could change its way, saving the spurs as well. The apron should be built from Chachran towards Kot Mithan.

A large number of people are affected after submerging of their villages while the people of adjoining areas are moving to safer places.

An irrigation official said that all the affected people were settled in bait (the river area). He said that they were informed many a time to shift to some safer places, but to no avail.

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