

Depleting casuarina forests, embankment neglect worries Bhograi residents

27 September 2023



BALASORE: Residents living along the coastal areas of Bhograi block in Balasore district have expressed discontentment over the alleged lackadaisical attitude of the Forest and Irrigation departments towards the protection of casuarina forests and embankments along the sea.

Due to the depleting forest cover and embankment repair, ingress of saline water into farmlands has caused significant crop damage each year, affecting the livelihoods of those dependent on farming, they said. The embankment has also collapsed in some areas due to high tides and inadequate stone packing.

Residents said the Forest department used to plant casuarina saplings along the seashore every year, and the Irrigation department would repair the embankment to safeguard the trees. However, in recent years, not a single casuarina sapling has been reportedly planted along the coast. This is despite the fact that cyclone Phailin, Amphan, and Titli, besides the unlawful felling of casuarina trees by smugglers, have contributed to the erosion of the shoreline.