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HUDHUD RESTORATION WORK

A.P. signs Rs.1587-cr credit agreement with World Bank

• **M RAJEEV**

The Hindu

Damage to property in Visakhapatnam during the October 12 Very Severe Cyclone Hudhud. A File Photo: CV. Subrahmanyam

The project envisages laying underground power distribution system to reduce vulnerability of Visakhapatnam's electrical network and repair roads.

The Andhra Pradesh Government has signed a major credit agreement with the World Bank for the AP Disaster Recovery Project aimed at restoring, improving and enhancing the resilience of public services and livelihoods of communities affected by Hudhud in the State.

The State Government has signed an agreement with World Bank for getting a credit of \$ 250 million (Rs.1587.01 crore) for the AP Disaster Recovery Project to restore, improve and enhance the resilience of public services and livelihoods of communities affected by the Hudhud in the State.

The agreement was signed by Selva Kumar, acting joint secretary of Department of Economic Affairs on behalf of the Central Government, State Revenue Department Principal Secretary J.C. Sharma and World Bank (India) country director Onno Ruhl.

The project is aimed at restoring the damages caused to roads and public infrastructure including environmental services and facilities besides increasing the resilience of power infrastructure.

Underground power cables

The project envisages laying underground power distribution system to reduce vulnerability of Visakhapatnam's electrical network. Accordingly, about 700 km of 33kV, 11kV and 415 vlots network lines would be converted to underground cable network.

About 800 km of rural roads and major district roads would be rehabilitated. Old cyclone shelters would be repaired with friendly design features for the elderly, women and children. Investments would be made along the beachfront of Visakhapatnam which would include pedestrian walk ways, streetlighting, public toilets and landscaping for protection from erosion.

The project would also help reconstruct the severely damaged zoological park at Visakhapatnam and ecological park at Kambalakonda. It would assist in restoring lost shelterbelts, windbreaks and mangroves along the coast and support livelihood opportunities of poor vulnerable coastal families by building nurseries that would supply saplings for farm forestry.

Road network

The project envisages broad range of investments in strengthening the State's disaster response systems through better search and rescue equipment, wireless communication and mock drills and awareness programmes in schools and villages, according to a World Bank release. The project would specifically benefit over 13 million people in the four severely affected districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and East Godavari.

Though the Government was proactive in evacuating close to 2.5 lakh people from low-lying areas and limited the death toll to 61, it caused major damage in 26 cities and towns in the four districts affecting about 9.2 million people.

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