

# WB team arrives today to review Rs 1700 cr-funded projects

To check progress on drainage, dewatering, road infrastructure in city

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Srinagar, Oct 21: A 12-member team of World Bank is arriving in summer capital Srinagar on Monday to conduct mid-term review of Rs 1700 crore projects funded by it post 2014 devastating flood in Kashmir.

An official said the team would review different components of Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) related to road development, drainage, dewatering up gradation, capacity building, disaster management, restoration and strengthening of livelihood which falls under different departments.

Officials from different departments, which are executing the projects, such as SMC, disaster management, industries and commerce, JKPC and public works have been told to make preparations for the review by the high profile team that will be on five day visit.

Chief executive officer, J&K Economic Reconstruction Agency Dr Raghav Langer said the mid-term review meeting will chalk out further course of action for Rs 1700 crore project divided into seven components.

"Under the first component, work is being carried on construction and strengthening of critical infrastructure at estimated cost of Rs 216.59 crore. Another Rs 272.95 crore is being spent on restoration of urban flood management infrastructure while Rs 106.78 crore is being utilized



on restoration and strengthening of livelihoods," said Langer. "Similarly Rs 120 crore has been kept for strengthening of disaster management capacity."

On October 5 state administrative council had cleared proposal to integrate JTFRP as a project (unit) with ERA, after government had asked implementing agencies to speed up work on JTFRP, started two years ago.

Chief Secretary BVR Subramanyam had recently expressed dismay over slow pace of the work on the entire project which is in third year of its implementation. "The officials have been told to come up with detailed presentations," Langer said, adding closing loan date of 2020 was drawing nearer,

necessitating speedy implementation of the project.

While authorities have come under severe criticism for slow pace of work on the schemes, Langer said the project identification under JTFRP was major bottleneck which took one-and-a-half-years.

The funding, he said, has been expedited too and works amounting to Rs 400 crore stands awarded. "By end of this month we expect Rs 100 crore more allocation from World Bank. We will be undertaking a complete study of both Jhelum and Tawi throughout their length for completion of Rs

35 crore projects," Langer said.

A source said under JTFRP the initial plan was to go for road widening and develop 2-way roads. But later it was decided that land acquisition for widening would be time consuming and considering the loan closing date, it was decided to upgrade existing roads where no new land acquisition was required.

Till date, a source said just 2 percent of funding awarded under JTFRP has been spent in three years.

The JTFRP envisages supporting recovery and increasing disaster resilience in project areas besides increasing capacity of the project implementing entity to respond promptly and effectively to crisis or emergency.

"The primary beneficiaries would be communities in the districts that were affected by loss of public service infrastructure," Langer said.

Also, flood management works of Jhelum and its tributaries are also being undertaken under JTFRPs project management unit of World Bank.

The consultancy contract was allotted to Spanish firm M/S Eptisa Servicios de Ingenieria. In the aftermath of devastating floods the Government of India had requested assistance from World Bank.



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