
Nine AMRUT towns get Rs 538cr for infra revamp

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Bhubaneswar:The state government Thursday approved 53 projects worth `538 crore for development of infrastructure in nine towns covered under AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) scheme.

Around 97.5 per cent of the sanctioned fund has been devoted towards improvement of water supply and sewerage infrastructure while the remaining will be utilised for development of parks and other civic amenities.

The State-Level High Powered Steering Committee (SHSPC) on the scheme headed by Chief Secretary AP Padhi approved the detailed project reports (DPRs) of the projects and directed the Urban Development department to expedite their implementation.

With inclusion of new projects, the total number of projects for AMRUT towns reached 148 with an estimated cost of around `1,100 crore. The projects are being funded on 50:50 basis by the Union and state governments.

Padhi asked the departments concerned to drop the non-starter projects approved earlier and substitute them with new ones in interest of the civic services in the towns. He emphasised that no area of the AMRUT towns be left uncovered with water supply by the end of the project period.

AMRUT scheme was launched in the state in 2015-16 fiscal with a target to complete the projects by 2019-20. The towns covered under the scheme are Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Berhampur, Rourkela, Sambalpur, Balasore, Bhadrak and Baripada.

Discussions at the meeting revealed that Orissa has been leading nationally in implementation of service delivery and reforms at ULB (Urban Local Body) level.

During the year 2016-17, the state implemented around 12 major reforms including adoption of energy efficiency mechanism, waste water recycling and fecal sludge management, e-governance, development of children's park, adoption of model building by-laws, implementation of State Finance Commission recommendations and credit rating of the ULBs. Internal assessment of the progress in reform implementation shows that state has already achieved around 98 per cent in this direction.

Housing and urban development Secretary G Mathivathnan mentioned that last year state was ranked third nationally in reform implementation and was awarded with `10.52 crore as incentive grant. This year the state expects to repeat the same.