

ODISHA SHELTER HOMES TO HAVE LIGHTNING PROTECTION SYSTEM

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Disaster and disaster management

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The Odisha government has decided to have lightning protection system in multipurpose shelters across 25 districts as lightning has emerged as the leading cause behind natural deaths across the State.

The governing body of the Odisha Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary A. P. Padhi has underlined the need for fixing lightning arresting systems in multipurpose shelters and strengthening the outdoor lightning alert system.

“Multipurpose shelters operating in 25 districts would be retrofitted with lightning protection system. In the first phase, 640 shelters would be taken up with funding support from the World Bank under the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project,” said Bishnupada Sethi, OSDMA Managing Director.

He said about Rs. 17 crore would be invested in the project while the remaining 239 multipurpose shelters would be taken up at a later stage.

“The OSDMA in collaboration with the US-based Earth Networks has installed six lightning detection sensors in different parts of the State. The system gives prediction of lightning about 30 to 45 minutes in advance. Moreover, more map-based lightning alerts are being provided,” said Mr. Sethi.

The government will install more alert systems in 14 most lightning-prone blocks of the State on a pilot basis.

“The system would specify the exact location of the lightning and storm and provide automatic warning through sirens. The siren would be audible at a one-kilometre radius,” he said.

In Odisha, lightning claims an average of 400 lives every year. The total number of reported deaths due to lightning during the last three years from 2015-16 to 2017-18 is 1,256, which accounts for about 27% of total number of disaster deaths.

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