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INDIA NEWS

Cyclone Gulab may have caused damages worth ₹2,000 crore

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Visakhapatnam districts in Andhra Pradesh saw floods induced by cyclone Gulab. (PTI)

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By Jayashree Nandi, New Delhi

The economic impact of cyclone Gulab that hit Andhra Pradesh and Odisha coasts is estimated to be around ₹2,000 crore, with much of it being borne by farmers, according to RMSI, a global disaster risk management firm.

"Gulab is a very unique cyclone as it made landfall in AP, crossed large parts of India and moved out into the Arabian Sea over Maharashtra and intensified again," said Pushpendra Johari, senior vice-president-sustainability, RMSI.

The bulk of the losses is estimated from agriculture (about 70%), followed by damages to buildings at about 20% (including 50% residential, 32% industrial and 18% commercial), according to RMSI's assessments. Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts in Andhra Pradesh and Ganjam and Gajapati districts in Odisha faced maximum winds due to Gulab while East Godavari, West Godavari, Guntur, Krishna, Prakasam, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts in Andhra Pradesh saw floods. In Odisha, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Puri, Jajapur, Jagatsinghpur, Baleswar, Khorda and Cuttack also saw flooding, according to RMSI.

"The governments of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh proactively took measures to reduce impact. Odisha's chief minister Naveen Patnaik set a 'zero casualty' target in the coastal districts of the state as the Odisha government evacuated as many as 3,049 people and shifted them to 204 relief shelters. Forty-two teams of the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force and 24 squads of the National Disaster Response Force, along with about 102 teams of fire brigade personnel were dispatched to seven at-risk districts," RMSI said.

However, there are reports of several fishermen from both Andhra Pradesh and Odisha missing, despite early warnings issued by nodal agencies.

And agriculture bore the brunt. "Crop was in its final stages in Andhra Pradesh. Due to heavy rain, standing crop fell. There was a lot of water stagnation because of which other than paddy, all crops, including vegetables which were in flowering stages, are damaged. I think the loss is huge for farmers," said GV Ramanjaneyulu, executive director, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Hyderabad.

Gulab, though it did not intensify into a severe cyclone, came during the harvest season, compounding the effect of the cyclone.

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