

GUDDU BARRAGE REHABILITATION

Islamabad : The World Bank on Friday approved \$ 188 million to improve the reliability and safety of Guddu Barrage and strengthen the Sindh Irrigation Department's capacity to operate and manage the barrages.

Guddu Barrage, carried out under the Sindh Barrages Improvement Project (SBIP), is needed due to natural ageing of the infrastructure. The rehabilitation work would eliminate possible sources of failure and potentially give the structure another 50 years of life.

"Barrages are strategic assets of Sindh and millions of people depend on the water that is controlled, diverted, and managed by them. Their continued operation and management require specialized expertise, experience, decision making, and continuity of operation", said World Bank Country Director for Pakistan, Rachid Benmessaoud.

He said in addition to physical rehabilitation of the barrage infrastructure, this project would also support the Sindh government in training and technical assistance in procurement, financial. Social and environmental safeguards for operating hydraulic irrigation infrastructure.

"The SBIP would support the gate replacement works to improve the regulation and flow of the barrage, replacement of all 65 main barrage steel gates, 25 main canal head regulator gates and hoist gears including all mechanical and electrical equipment. The project would also finance the independent panel of experts, who would review, monitor, evaluate and help guide the rehabilitation process with regards to the safety of the barrage", he added.

Task Team Leader of the project Abdul Hamid Azad said the Guddu barrage constitutes the most strategic component of the large Indus Basin Irrigation System. The effective operation and structural stability are important for agricultural production and for averting potential disaster during floods. Climate variability would further add risks by changing the frequency and intensity of extreme events such as floods and droughts, he added.

The primary beneficiaries include (a) over 2.6 million people, across three million acres of irrigated land in Kashmore, Ghotki, Jacobabad, Sukkur and Shikarpur districts of Sindh, and Nasirabad and Jafarabad districts of Balochistan, who would receive reliable supply of water and (b) the local communities in flood-vulnerable areas, who would benefit from improvement in flood management and reduction in risks of embankment breaches, since the capacity of the barrage to pass flood waters would improve.

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