

# **People's Bank provides financial assistance to support distressed customers and businesses**

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Wickrama Narayana, DGM-SME, Development and Microfinance, People's Bank.

Bank has introduced a range of concessions and financial support measures to assist small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) affected by Cyclone Ditwah, in line with its role as a responsible state-owned bank. Guided by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) and the Ministry of Finance, the Bank has launched a special relief program to support impacted individuals and enterprises, according to Wickrama Narayana, DGM – SME, Development and Microfinance.

He noted that the primary challenges faced by entrepreneurs include rebuilding damaged property, meeting urgent working capital needs such as purchasing raw materials and paying utility bills, and managing loan repayments. To address these issues, People's Bank has introduced relief measures under CBSL directives.

Existing borrowers are eligible for a three to six-month loan repayment moratorium, with the option of suspending both capital and interest or paying interest only. No additional interest or penalties will be charged on deferred amounts, and the concessions also apply to personal loans.

Affected customers may apply for new working capital or investment loans to repair damages at a maximum concessional interest rate of nine percent, repayable within two years.

A government-backed loan scheme funded by the Ministry of Finance is being implemented through three state-owned banks, including People's Bank.

Micro enterprises with turnovers up to 20 million rupees can access loans up to 250,000 rupees, while SMEs with turnovers up to one billion rupees can obtain up to one million rupees, at a three percent interest rate, repayable within three years with a possible six-month grace period.