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Idukki; water, Houses along Riverbank at risk

Idukki water: Houses along riverbank at risk

Complete evacuation of people from 24 houses needed

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The opening of shutters of Cheruthoni dam may impact 324 houses that are located a few metres away from Cheruthoni river and upset the lives of hundreds of residents.

Of this, 24 houses are critically located at a distance of 10 m from the riverbank, which will bear the brunt of the water most when shutters are raised. A complete evacuation from these houses would have to be carried out to avert fatalities, disaster management experts said.

Most of the vulnerable homes are located at a distance of 50-75 m from the riverbank and have 881 persons, including infants, as residents. Over 170 buildings that have come up at this

risk zone of the river will also be flooded if huge volumes of water come down the shutters at a high speed.

The data on the families that have anchored their lives and constructed their houses and buildings at the vulnerable distance was drawn up by the disaster management authorities.

The impact of lifting of shutters would depend on the volume of water that would be released. The released water would take approximately an hour to cover a distance of 42 km and reach the neighbouring district of Ernakulam. The impact of release would be felt in the Idukki, Thankamany, Upputhode, Vathikudy, Kanjikuzhy and Konnathady villages, sources said.

It was in 1992, that water was released from the dam last when the water level in the reservoir reached dangerous levels. The shutters of the dam will have to be lifted in the event of water level reaching the maximum limit of 2,400 ft.

SDMA issues advisory

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The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) has issued an advisory for people living downstream in the event of the shutters of the Cheruthoni dam are opened.

The SDMA has advised people in the areas that were flooded when the Edamalayar dam was opened in 2013 to be vigilant and people planning to travel to Vazhathoppu, Mariyapuram, Kanjikkuzhi, Vathikudy and Konnathadi panchayaths of Idukki as tourists to witness the shutter operations to give up their travel plans. Nobody should cross the river once the water release from the dam starts.

There should also be no overcrowding on small bridges and along the riverbanks to witness the water release.

People should desist from taking selfies standing on bridges and along the riverbanks.

Don't enter river

It has also advised those in downstream to avoid bathing, swimming, washing, and playing in the river and keep an emergency kit and ensure that all certificates and valuable jewellery are stored at a height.

All information communicated over official channels should be passed on to all members of the family.

In order to avoid electrocution, the electrical main should be

switched off if floodwater enters buildings.

Special care should be given to the aged, bedridden, people with illness, differently abled persons and children.

If there are bedridden or differently abled people in a house, the matter should be reported to the nearest police station.

Animals can swim. If anyone is unable to secure their animals in times of floods, it is better to let them swim to safety.

Those living in flats should ensure that their cars are not parked in low-lying cellars.

Only those who are trained in relief, response and rescue, when requested by District Administration, should proceed to flood-affected areas, the SDMA said.