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Idukkki; Water Level, Water Release

Water will be released only during the day: Idukki Collector

NEJMA SULAIMAN @ Idukki

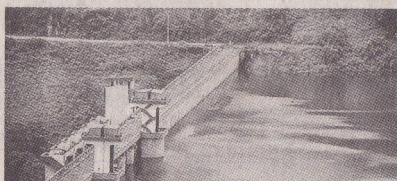
THE district administration said that four relief camps have already been set up to accommodate people in case of evacuation. "Of the 200 families living downstream, preparations are under way to evacuate 40 of them to relief camps," Jeevan Babu said. "A control room has been functioning from Sunday night and red alert message signifying the extreme gravity of the situation will be issued 24 hours before the opening of the shutters."

The Collector has also assured people living downstream that water will be released only during the day time, with all necessary precautionary measures having been taken to ensure security.

People have been restrained from visiting the area to see the opening of the Cheruthoni shutters. As estimated, the opening of the shutters at Cheruthoni — part of the Idukki dam project — will lead to water gushing to the Lower Periyar Dam and on to the Bhoothathankettu Dam. From there, water will flow through Periyar along Kalady and Aluva before merging with the Arabian Sea. Water is estimated to take nearly six hours to reach the Arabian Sea once the Cheruthoni shutters are opened.

If the shutters were to be opened, it will be the first time during the southwest monsoon since the construction of the dam in 1973. Twice in the past, the shutters had to be opened. But they were during the northeast monsoon (October to December).

The first instance was in 1981 (when the shutters were repeatedly opened and shut between October 29 and November 13) and the second time in 1992 (when they were kept open for 12 days from October 12 to 23). On both occasions, the water level in the dam touched the brim only when the storage built up during the southwest monsoon (June to September) was augmented by the inflow received following heavy downpour in the northeast monsoon.



The Idukki district administration has issued warning notices to the households and shops located downstream of the Cheruthoni Dam.

Many people who have cultivated crops on their agricultural land near the banks of the Cheruthoni river have started harvesting them, even though they have not reached maturity. Others have started to pack up their essentials to leave their houses, in case the red alert is issued.

Shutters of Neyyar dam opened

T'Puram: The shutters of the Neyyar dam were opened following heavy inflow of water into the reservoir from its catchment area. The four shutters of the dam were opened slightly by night. The full-reservoir level of the Neyyar dam is 84.75 metres. People living on the banks of the river downstream from the dam have been alerted.

'Don't fall for fake news on Idukki dam'

Kochi: A high-level meeting held in Kochi on Wednesday has urged public to not to believe fake news being spread in connection with the opening of shutters of Idukki and Idamalayar dams. MLAs, who attended the meeting held at Kakkannad, demanded cyber cell to take legal action against those who spread fake news through social media.

'200 families will have to be evacuated'

Idukkki: Terming the orange alert as just a standard operation procedure which is part of the dam safety protocol, District Collector K Jeevan Babu said there is no cause for panic. Allaying fears, he said people do not have to be evacuated soon after the alert. "When there occurs an emergency to evacuate people, it will be done only after alerting them and they will be shifted to the safest locations," he said. According to him, only four relief camps need to be opened — in the Vazhathope, Mariyapuram, Kanjikkuzhy and Vathikkudy panchayats — near Cheruthoni. "The flood will affect 22 families in the Vazhathope panchayat alone. A total of 200 families will have to be evacuated, out of which 40 families will be evacuated in the initial phase," he said. Those interested in moving to their relative's houses will be allowed to go and the rest will be given refuge in the relief camps. Jeevan Babu said the district administration has not yet decided the date of the trial run and this will be done only after informing the people 12 hours before opening the shutters.

Water level comes down in Mullaperiyar dam

Idukkki: Much to the relief of the people residing in the downstream of Mullaperiyar, the water level in the dam has come down to 135.80 ft on Monday compared to Saturday's mark, which was 135.95 ft. The water level at the dam on Sunday was at 135.90 ft. The dam authorities attributed the decrease in the water level to the reduction in the rainfall in the catchment areas of the dam. The catchment areas of the dam, Periyar and Thekkady, received 13.2 and 1.2 mm rainfall, respectively on Monday. Similarly, the inflow of water into the dam has also shown a decreasing trend. The inflow into the dam which was recorded at 2,008.9 cubic feet on Sunday decreased to 1,807 cubic feet on Monday. Even as Tamil Nadu has reduced the intake of water from the dam to 2,100 cubic ft from 2,300 cubic ft, the dam safety officers told 'Express' that the water level in the dam was steady at 135.80 ft.