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Idukki; Flood, water Level, Houses submerged, Camps

1.2 lakh people still at camps as houses remain submerged

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Alappuzha

IN FLOOD-HIT Kuttanad, people continue to face hardship as the water level in the area remains above the danger level. Most of the houses are still under water and at least 1.20 lakh people are in relief camps.

Even though relief materials have been flooding the area thanks to the government and NGOs, the water level continues to be a worry for the residents. The Health Department has deployed medical teams to manage health issues and prevent possible outbreak of epidemics.

More than 100 bio-toilets and floating toilets have been set up in the flood-hit areas. The Collector had declared a holiday for educational institutions, including professional colleges, in the taluk for the 12 straight day on Thursday, as most of the institutions and roads remain under water.

Meanwhile, the Irrigation Department has decided to open a road as part of the Thanneermukkom bund's third stage by next week.

Officials said the approach areas of the road will be ready as soon as next week. For the construction of the approach road, traffic through the bund will be prevented from 7 pm to 7 am on July 29.

Water Resources Minister Mathew T Thomas — who visited the Thanneermukkom bund on Thursday — announced that at least two months will be needed to complete the construction work of the bund shutters.

"I have asked the CMO for the availability of the CM to inaugurate the bund in September-October. The fitting of 28 shutters has been completed, but the fixing of the automatic lock is not complete. There is no power connection for operating the automatic lock. So the allegations about the bund opening are baseless," he said.

"The opening of the shutters did not result in flooding Kuttanad. The shutters of the first and second stages of the bund remain open and water is flowing smoothly. The government will amicably settle the dispute over the sand that will be removed from the

Water recedes, but misery prevails in Kottayam dist

Kottayam: Though flood water has receded from many parts of the district, there is no let up for the rain-related sufferings for those living in Mundar, one of the major paddy cultivating areas in Kallara grama panchayat in Vaikom. With water yet to drain from around 3,000 acres of paddy fields, 300 families in the first two wards of Kallara panchayat have no means to lead their life. "Paddy cultivation, fish farming and its related labour are the predominant source of income for the people living here. The flood has destroyed the cultivation in the entire area, leaving people in dire straits," said K S Sreenivasan, a local resident. Though people have returned home from relief camps, it will take at least a couple of months before normalcy returns. The condition of around 20 SC families in Parayil colony in Mundar is even worse as the water is yet to recede from their houses. Two members of a news channel team lost their lives while returning after reporting the plight of these families. The situation is not so different in many other flood-hit areas in Vaikom, Ettumanoor, Kottayam and Changanassery. Even though water has receded, many have lost their crops. With paddy field under water, farm labourers have rendered jobless. Thousands in Aymanam, Neendoor, Arppookkara, Kumarakom, Thalaya-zham, Udayanapuram and Vechoor are waiting for water to recede so that they can resume their farming.

mud bund," the minister said.

Meanwhile, Public Works Minister G Sudhakaran said the government will not inaugurate a project before it is finished. "The third stage of the Thanneermukkom bund is not ready for inauguration. We will not take credit for a project by inaugurating it prior to its completion," he said.

