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Kochi, Heavy Rain, Flood, Waterlogged Roads, Epidemic, Water Contamination

Situation still grim even as rain subsides in district

Threat of epidemic outbreak looms large; man drowns in Chilavannoor Lake

STAFF REPORTER
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Even as rain relented somewhat, there seems to be no end to the plight of people in the district with the situation remaining grim in several areas of Thrikkakara Assembly constituency where floodwater remains at precarious levels without any immediate signs of receding.

Threat of an epidemic outbreak looms large with even drinking water contamination getting reported from various places. Despite drop in the density of rainfall, a large number of relief camps continues to be operated by the district administration across the district.

At the last count, the number of camps stood at 53 and their inmates 3,986. New camps are being opened wherever they are necessary. Paravur taluk with 20 relief camps topped the chart in terms of number of camps followed by Kayannur taluk (12), Muvattupuzha (09), Aluva (06), Kochi (03), Kothamangalam (02) and Kunnathumadu (01).

District Collector K. Mohammed Y. Saifulla inspected the camps and ensured the availability of medicines and doctors on Wednesday. Apart from the service of the District Medical Officer and Supply Officer, camps are also benefiting from the volunteer work of individuals and organisations.

Man drowns

Meanwhile, a man drowned in Chilavannoor Lake on Tuesday night. Subramanian, 45, of Ambelpadam Road near Vyttila, was engaged in fishing when his country boat capsized.

Asha Sanil, district panchayat president and co-chairperson of the District Disaster Management Authority, said that in view of the lack of enough toilets in schools regularly selected as relief camps, the district panchayat has decided to build as many toilets as needed at least in about 10 such schools in proportion to the number of people who can be accommodated in them. P.T. Thomas, MLA, said that an unprecedented flood situation prevailed in many parts of his constituency at Thrikkakara, which he largely attributed to the indiscriminate filling of natural canals and water-



bodies by builders over the years. "Absence of such natural avenues for the floodwater to recede has led to the precarious situation," he observed.

A residential project along Chitrapuzha near Chittethukara continued to remain flooded for the third day after the Kadampayar in the vicinity remained almost in spate. Some of the residents have shifted their families to other places following the possibility of an epidemic outbreak.

Water contamination

While water has receded substantially within the city limits, water contamination remains a threat. Ernakulam MLA Hibi Eden said that families at Udaya and P&T Colonies and a few families on the paramboke land along side Muttar River have been moved to relief camps. "The situation is especially fluid at the colonies with stormwater mixed with septic tank content entering houses," said Mr. Eden.

The 60 residents of the P and T Colony continued to stay in the camp set up at Kendriya Vidyalaya at Gandhi Nagar. The community kitchen that was operated for the residents of Udaya and Karithala colony continued to function on Wednesday too. Sanitation works were carried out at these colonies by health workers as water levels receded, said Poornima Narayan, Education Standing Committee chairperson, who represent the division.

District Medical Officer N.K. Kuttapan said that the real threat of an epidemic outbreak emerges once the water recedes and people



(Top) Motorists wading through the waterlogged M.G. Road in the city on Wednesday, and (above) a passenger alights from a bus at the flooded Ravipuram bus stop. *H. VISHU

put up in camps return to their homes. "Chlorination and sanitation campaigns and testing of water quality will have to be done at that time," he said.

Mayor Soumini Jain said that tapped water remains more or less safe except where it is contaminated by leakage in pipelines. It is mostly water from other sources that poses the problem, she added.

Airport operations not affected

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
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Cochin International Airport operations have not been affected by the current bout of rain over the past four days. No flights have been cancelled, said a

statement issued by the airport operator on Wednesday.

'Fake picture'

The statement described as 'fake' a picture of an airport parking area being

passed off as at the Kochi airport.

"The fake video message was created deliberately by miscreants with an intention to spread panic among passengers," said the airport operator.