

KARNATAKA

2,868 families in flood-risk zones in Kodagu to be evacuated

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77 places have been identified as prone to landslide and flood based on experts' advice and previous years' data

Even as the monsoon turned active in Kodagu district, 2,868 families living in areas identified as vulnerable to flood and landslide are expected to be evacuated to relief centres by July 15.

The officers in charge of evacuation are in touch with the families who are being persuaded to leave their houses in 'risk zones' as a safety measure.

Seventy-seven places in towns and villages have been identified as sensitive and prone to landslide and flood based on experts' advice and also previous years' data. Accordingly, steps are being taken to ensure the safety of dwellers.

"The families will be shifted out from the sensitive zones by July 15. The nodal officers have been instructed to ensure their safe relocation at the earliest," said Deputy Commissioner Charulatha Somal on Saturday.

Besides, 618 cattle from the risk zones would also be evacuated. Measures had been taken for establishing 17 animal shelters, she said.

A 20-member NDRF team is camping in Kodagu. Four teams each of the Fire and Police Departments dedicated for rescue operations are also ready. In addition, civil society groups and volunteers have come forward to offer their services.

The gram panchayats in the risk zones have set up local teams for rescue and relief works.

The highway connecting Mangaluru to Madikeri has been identified as a 'sensitive' road based on previous years' data (the road was damaged by landslides). The Kodagu district administration has banned movement of heavy goods transport vehicles, barring those supplying essentials in view of rains.

Ms. Somal said the onus is on the PWD to reduce the risk with necessary and timely interventions, she added.

The current spell of rains has already damaged electrical poles in certain areas. The Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) is already on the task of restoring supply, and replacing damaged lines and poles.

As the rescue operations may need more earthmovers, steps have been taken to hire machines in addition to those available with the PWD and RDPR.

“We need to be prepared to deploy more such machines for rescue operations,” she said.

Ms. Somal said the authorities of Harangi dam near Kushalnagar have been asked to be on alert and ensure that the 2018 episode was not repeated. The problems faced earlier may not recur since silt has been removed, the DC added. Unexpected and excessive release of water from the dam had led to floods. Areas close to the Cauvery river in Kushalnagar town were flooded.

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