

Seven die as monsoon fury grips Kerala

Five houses were destroyed and 55 houses damaged; seven relief camps opened across the State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The southwest monsoon unleashed its fury in Kerala on Monday with large parts of the central and southern parts of the State lashed by heavy rain, triggering minor landslips and flash floods, especially in the High Ranges.

Seven deaths were reported in the State over 24 hours. Five houses were destroyed and 55 damaged.

Pathanamthitta recorded the highest rainfall of 15 cm in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, followed by Idukki and Kollam (9 cm each) and Kottayam (8 cm).

Car accident

Three of a family were killed when their car careened off the road and fell into a swollen stream at Mallapally in Pathanamthitta district. Another Pathanamthitta resident has gone missing after



Under water: A view of the flooded Erattupetta causeway across the Meenachil river on Monday evening. ■ VISHNU PRATHAP

being swept away by a strong current in the Pampa river abutting Athikayam village. At Kollamulla village, one person drowned in a fast-flowing stream.

In Kollam, a 50-year-old man died after being caught under cascading water at the

Kumbavu Urutti waterfall at Achenkoil in Aryankavu village. In Kottayam, relatives reported a man missing after he fell into a flooded canal. In Malappuram, a youth drowned after his leisure boat capsized in the Ponnani river.

In Vizhinjam, a fisherman from Tamil Nadu died after his boat capsized in high wave while putting out to sea. He has been identified as Kingston, 27.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said heavy rain had rendered at least five houses

uninhabitable and partially damaged another 55 across Kerala.

Seven relief camps have been opened – one each in Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Thrissur, and Wayanad and two in Kottayam. As many as 90 people have been shifted to these camps. He also announced that a 24-hour disaster relief control room (8078548538) had been established at the State Emergency Operations Centre. Besides, control rooms will be opened in all districts and taluks.

The police, Revenue authorities, local self-government institutions, volunteer rescue teams, civil defence units and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been placed on high alert.

Mr. Vijayan ordered them to evacuate people living in flood and landslip-prone localities.