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Medigadda repairs not before March '25

Expert says by the time NDSA submits report, rains will begin

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The Medigadda episode is by all means a 'random occurrence' caused by nature's wrath. Certainly, there is ample scope for the rehabilitation of the barrage, said an irrigation expert and senior official in the department.

The reconstruction of the impacted pillars can be completed in two to two-and-half months if the works are undertaken with a sense of urgency. But it is too late to think in this line now. If the complexities involved in the issue are to be taken into consideration, nothing of that sort is going to happen before March 2025, he averred.

The NDSA has been tasked with the key responsibility and given four months to investigate and come up with recommendations for the barrage's rehabilitation. By the time the NDSA team submits its report, monsoon would have set in and some of the tributaries of the Godavari would be in spate. It would be the similar case with the Pranahita too. Going by its history, the first flood in the Pranahita would occur by June first week. The inflows into the Medigadda barrage were 1.3 lakh cusecs during the second week of July last year.

In the absence of immediate repairs and rehabilitation, the Medigadda barrage would be more vulnerable. The Pranahita sub-basin is the seventh largest in India, with its catchment spread across 1,09,078 sqkm. The sub-basin was the major



contributor for the highest-ever discharge of 28.25 lakh cusecs registered at Medigadda in July 2022. The CWC has, however, put it at only 24.5 lakh cusecs.

The NDSA team, after its first visit to the barrage on a stock-taking mission, submitted its report on November 1, 2023. The government, irrespective of the party in power, should have raised to the issue at least a month or two after receiving the NDSA report. By this time, half the works would have been completed, assuring farmers of resuming water supply for the Kharif 2024. But in the current circumstances, there is no scope to give water to resume operations at Medigadda and An-

naram before Kharif 2025, the irrigation experts said.

Rehabilitation will need Rs 1,250 cr

As far as the Medigadda rehabilitation works are concerned, its implementation would be at a cost of Rs 750 crore. Three of the piers found sinking have to be demolished and reconstructed. One or two piers in the vicinity of the impacted stretches may also need restoration as part of the permanent rehabilitation measures.

The rehabilitation of An-naram and Sundilla, wherein seepage issues were spotted, would require Rs 250 crore each. The Irrigation Department officials

have been left with no say in the rehabilitation of the barrages issue. They need to wait till the NDSA comes up with a plan of action to resume the operations of three barrages of the KLIS.

Though the NDSA was requested for an interim report with recommendation for taking up the repairs, it appears to be a remote possibility. It is yet to complete its information-gathering exercise. Irrigation officials, who are equally competent to show a way out, are now tightlipped. They are not going to take any initiative at this stage, as the proceeding of the judicial probe into Medigadda and other barrages is likely to take off soon, they said.