

Times of India
14 August 2018

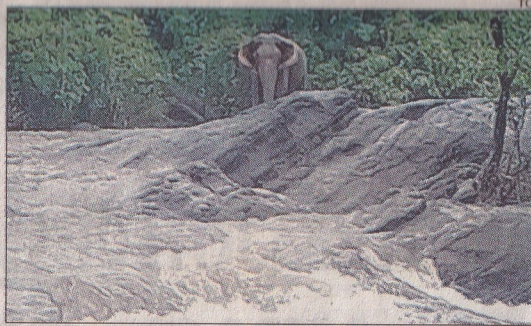
Thrissur, Chalakudy River, Rescued a Wild Elephant

Jumbo stranded in Chalakudy River rescued

Ramavarman.T
@timesgroup.com

Thrissur: In a remarkable operation, forest officers and KSEB employees rescued a wild elephant that was stranded on a rock in the flooded Chalakudy River at Charpa waterfalls near Athirappilly by reducing the water flow to the river by pushing down the shutters of Peringalkuthu dam on Monday morning.

Tribesmen, who had gone fishing, noticed the presence of a single elephant at a slightly-elevated point in the river water. Water was gushing all around the elephant, which was a makhna. They immedi-



Forest dept and KSEB officials rescued a wild elephant that was trapped in the flooded Chalakudy River near Athirappilly waterfalls

ately alerted forest officers who rushed to the spot. They wanted to ensure that people

don't flock around the area. "We thought the elephant was having a bath and usually

people crowd the area, which creates a dangerous situation. But soon we realized that it was stranded there as it was unable to move. It was testing the depths with its trunk. It could have been part of a herd and other elephants must have escaped," said forest range officer Mohammed Raphy.

Forest officers contacted KSEB and planned a risky operation that went well with a bit of luck. KSEB officials said they would be able to down shutters of Peringalkuthu dam for an hour. But it would take 30 minutes to reduce the flow in downstream area. The elephant had to be driven away within 30 minutes. If the op-

eration failed, the flow would double when the shutters were reopened. The gushing waters would have dragged the elephant to Athirappilly falls.

"Water level in the dam was at 422.5m, which was below the FRL of 424m. We kept shutters open as heavy rain was expected in two days. We couldn't allow water level beyond 424m as it would submerge the motors at the power station," said KSEB assistant executive engineer P Sureshkumar. "When the water level came down, we drove off the elephant by bursting crackers. Luckily it went away soon. It was a great feeling. KSEB then reopened the shutters," said Raphy.