

Times of India

02 August 2018

## Cheruthonni, Idukki Dam, Water Level, KSEB

# KSEB for 2,403ft, govt undecided

Indecision On Water Release Trial Is Not Helpful As Shutters May Have To Be Opened After Northeast Monsoon

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Thiruvananthapuram/Cheruthoni:** The government's indecision over holding a trial run for water release before formal opening has left residents and dam safety officials perplexed.

The district administration is awaiting a cabinet decision in this regard even as officials of dam safety and revenue are engaged in discussions on what should be done. Power minister M M Mani will visit the Idukki dam on Thursday and review the present condition and water level, said officials. It is expected that the minister will announce the trial run on Thursday.

Though the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) has exuded confidence in managing the Idukki reservoir without draining water, Mani told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday that the government has decided to open the shutters only if the need arises.

The minister said the cabinet meeting on Wednesday discussed the situation in detail and has resolved to stick to the government decision to open the shutters of dams, including Idukki, if situation demanded it.

"We have done home work. Studies have been carried out on who all would be affected and what would be nature and depth of the impact if the shutters of Idukki dam are opened. It has also been decided that the shutters would be opened in a phased manner and it would be done after informing people in advance," he said. He dismissed reports that different ministries and departments have divergent views on discharging dam water, he said.

"There is no need to panic and we can store water up to 2,403 feet in the dam. Now, the water level is around 2,396 feet," said Idukki MLA Roshy Augustine. According to him, the shutters need to be opened as one needs to factor in the north-west monsoon. "I hope the minister will soon take a final decision," said Roshy.

The water level in the Idukki reservoir slowly rose to 2,395.98 ft at 7 pm on Wednesday. An increase of 75.14 ft when compared to the same day last year.

However, residents in Cheruthony are playing it cool and engaging in their daily chores. The district administration on Wednesday continued to clear the downstream pathway to ensure smooth water flow in Cheruthoni and Thadiyampadu areas.

While it didn't rain much in the night, there were steady showers in the morning. The rainfall recorded in the area is about 15 mm.

Officials informed that storage in the catchment is at 91.68% accounting for 66,209.29 million cubic ft of water.

Moolamattom power station generated 15.102 million units on Tuesday. The water level in Mullaperiyar dam dropped to 135.40 ft. The reservoir had reached 135.9 feet on Sunday.

According to KSEB sources, it was decided in the high-level meeting convened by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan that the shutters may be opened on a trial basis for a few hours, if the water level crosses 2,397 ft. At no point it was decided that the water level in the dam should be maintained at 2,397 ft or 2,398 ft.

"2403 ft is safe water level to be maintained in Idukki dam. Since the inflow of water is receding, we hope that the water level won't touch the top mark. The power generation at Moolamattom has been maximized. However, if the inflow gets stronger and the water level crosses 2,403, we would be naturally lifting the shutters, subject to our standard operation procedure (SOP)," a KSEB official said.

