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**Kochi; Muttam , Flood Rescue**

# Wet from head to toe, floating on hope

Disney.Tom@timesgroup.com

**Kochi:** Wet from head to toe, Muhammed Siraj, in his early twenties, was shivering as he set out on a Navy rescue boat to rescue his family. Muhammed's family was among the about 150 people stranded at a colony in Muthirapadom near Muttom.

Muhammed was out with the rescue workers all night and he had gone to a friend's house to take rest. However, the water level increased drastically overnight from knee-level to neck-level, cutting him off from his family.

Muhammed's journey on the inflatable boat from near the Companypady metro station is through a 10-metre-wide by-road which has now turned into a river.

"My parents and relatives are stuck two kilometres inside. They didn't expect the water to rise so quickly and by morning the ground floor was completely flooded. Water on the road was over six feet deep," said Muhammed.

Mohammed returned on the boat by around 2pm, but without his kin. The boat had got full even before the team co-



Muhammed Siraj's (R) family was among the about 150 people stranded at a colony in Muthirapadom near Muttom

uld get Muhammed's family on board. Some of the occupants were also holding their suitcases and even pets.

"They told me that my mother has already been rescued but I am yet to locate her. She has difficulty in walking. I saw my uncle from a distance and showed the Navy personnel where to pick up my family," Muhammed said, still quivering.

On the boat, meanwhile, came another family from Indira Lane near Muttom who hadn't

realized that their neighbours had left the place overnight.

"We realize that our neighbours had left only in the morning. The water level was at least a couple of feet above my head as I am fairly short. We remained in the first floor. It was such a relief when we saw that boat approaching," said Rajamma, an elderly woman at the highway. At least 150 people were stranded in Muthirapadom alone. The situation was similar in other areas of rural Ernakulam.