

# Indian Express

21 July 2018

## Kuttanad, Heavy Rain, Flood

### Kuttanad sees the worst deluge in two decades

BIJU E PAUL @ Alappuzha

SUNILAPPAN, 36, of Kuttaman-galam, Kainakari in Kuttanad, sleeps in a cot tied to the roof. Below him, the house is inundated in flood water. He also has tied up all the utensils to the roof, safe from the rising water. In the mornings, he climbs down to neck-deep water and goes to the relief camps for food.

For the past five days, he has been staying alone in the house situated on the paddy polder.

Sunilappan is not alone. This is the predicament of 22,000 house owners in Kuttanad. The houses are submerged ever since the water level started raising up following the heavy rain. Men stay alone in them to protect the house and vessels.

Kuttanad, which is witnessing the worst flood in two decades, has been isolated from the rest of the state.

There is no electricity or phone connectivity in the area. The rescue boats operated by the service personnel and Water Transport Department are the only link to the mainland.

But Sunilappan and men like him are forced to stay back. "I am staying back in the house to protect the household items. We have

tied all vessels and valuables to the roof. I sent my family members to a relative's house in Aryad. I go to gruel centres to eat food in the morning and return home in small country boats. Poisonous snakes which take refuge in marooned houses are giving me sleepless nights," said Sunilappan.

Only Vavakkad paddy polder is free from water logging. This was achieved after continues pumping out of water from the polder. Every day, close to ₹7,000 is needed to pump out water from the polder. But the shortage of fund is real problem faced by many residents.

The Revenue Department has opened gruel centres on higher grounds like bridges and top floors of buildings. But lack of fuel for preparing food is causing severe hardship.

The scarcity of drinking water is another huge problem. As taps are under water, the Water Authority is supplying potable water in boats.

Kuttanad is marooned and is virtually shut down. Primary health centres, government offices, mini civil station, churches, temples and business establishments have all closed down following heavy rain and flood.