



Rain BONDS

COCONUT CATCHING

Sooraj Palakkaran, philanthropist and a popular social media figure from Pala, has been doing his bit for those affected in his home town. "The water levels were so high, in places, that we had to take out the *vanji* (country boat). There were landslides in some parts. But while we were rescuing people and reaching out, we did play a game of coconut catching, where people caught coconuts, that came floating in the water, using nets."

TEAM METROPLUS

On July 16, Advocate George Merlo Pallath woke up to find the front sitting room of his house in Ravipuram inundated. The torrential rains of the previous few days left his home filled with half foot water. It took him, his wife and son nearly five hours to manually drain the water out. "We are left with pains and aches," he says, now laughing over the plight that caught many inhabitants of the city in a similar situation.

Heavy rains is not something new to city folks. In fact its onset and downpour, is almost always a cause of joy, until it shows its other side. This time with a 42 % excess rainfall between June 1 and July 18, as per the statistics put out by the IMD, parts of the city are flooded with water entering many homes and displacing people.

The administration swung into action soon, setting up soup kitchens and shelter homes. But away from duty, common people began reaching out to the affected. WhatsApp groups and FB connections

quickly organised relief-food and clothing which began to pile up at collection points. The city saw a new face to itself, a bonding that perhaps only a football game can bring about. That in good times and this in hard times.

"Ernakulam town is 99 % swam- py. Forty to 50 years ago, these lands were paddy fields and the gradient of the land is sloping West to East, helpful in containing water for paddy fields," says George, whose family hails from the centre

City folks reached out to each other in a wave of compassion as rain waters rendered many homeless

of Ernakulam and built their house in 1971. With unplanned and unscientific urbanisation, canals were reduced to drains and converted to roads. "Earlier water would drain into the Perandoor canal but the coming of the railway line in the middle of the city realigned the existing drainage. Balanjeri Road was a big canal and so was Alappatt Cross Road. It was deep. If only we had those original canals, the situation would be quite different," rues George, adding that the road outside his house was once five foot below the steps to his house. Now he climbs down to enter his house.



WATER WATER EVERYWHERE

The Kerala Backwaters are a network of interconnected canals, rivers, lakes and inlets, a labyrinthine system formed by more than 900 km of waterways, and sometimes compared to the American Bayou.

