

# Indian Express

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## Kochi, Heavy Rain, Waterlogging, Low-lying Areas, Widespread Damage

### Waterlogging returns to haunt residents of low-lying areas in city

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

IT'S A deluge! With the rain continuing to lash the city for the past three days, waterlogging has reared its ugly head. Various areas, especially the low lying ones, in the city are facing a deluge.

According to the residents of P & T Colony, located on the banks of Perandoor Canal near Kadavanthra, this is not an unusual phenomenon.

"The canal has never been dredged. Because of this wastes like plastic accumulate in it and obstruct the flow of water. This, in turn, causes it to overflow when it rains heavily," said Vijayakumar, a resident. Fed up with Kochi Corporation's apathy, the residents of the colony on Thursday staged a protest.

"The dirty water that has entered the houses is knee-deep and will surely rise if the rain doesn't stop. We have nowhere to go and our repeated requests to the authorities concerned have fallen on deaf ears," said Jaya Thulasidas, who has been living in the colony for the past 26 years.

The people who inhabit the colony are mostly daily wage earners. Most of them are autorickshaw drivers, housemaids and head load workers. Over 74 families live here, many of them for more than 25 years. Earlier, Perandoor Canal used to be an inland waterway, but now it has become one big garbage bin-cum-sewer. "Not only the nearby apartments but also the urban 'sewage' system dumps domestic

#### Holiday for schools

The District Collector announced Friday will be a holiday for the district's schools, including those offering the CBSE and ICSE streams, on account of the heavy rain and flooding. However, Saturday will be a working day for all schools.

waste into the canal," Vijayakumar said. During high tide and monsoon, water from the canal enters the houses through the outlet pipes of their bathrooms. "The people here have no respite be it summer or monsoon," he said. The MET Department's forecast of heavy to very heavy rain or thunder showers during the next 24 hours doesn't come as good news for those already bat-

tling flooding. According to Aman Nair working at a private firm in the city, the road that leads to the rear entrance of the South railway station resembles a mini pond. "With weeds and other waste clogging the drain on both sides of the road, water flows on to the road. This creates difficulties for motorists and pedestrians. I had to take a detour to reach Kaloorkadavanthra Road," he added.

According to Poornima Narayan, education standing committee chairperson, the blame solely rests on the Corporation's shoulders. "The Corporation has the requisite fund, but it is not using it properly. The civic body should take steps to stop water logging by cleaning the clogged drains," she said.

#### WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION

Kochi: Though no untoward incidents were reported from the district owing to the incessant rain lashing the region since Tuesday, it resulted in several areas becoming inundated. Ernakulam Junction Railway station (South) premises, Panampilly Nagar, Kadavanthra, KSRTC main bus station, MG Road, Palarivattom and Kaloorkadavanthra bore the brunt, with many parts remaining under knee-deep water. Both pedestrians as well as motorists had to wade through the inundated main roads and bylanes to reach their destination. With the arterial roads also getting waterlogged, the movement of vehicles was hit. The functioning of the SRV School and Girls' School at the South Junction was badly affected as the gushing waters entered the school premises leaving the students and teachers nonplussed. At the KSRTC main bus station, it was a familiar story, with the passenger waiting area and the business establishments functioning at the station getting waterlogged. "The Corporation's lackadaisical attitude resulted in waterlogging. If the Corporation had done pre-monsoon cleaning drive, there would not have been such issues. The Corporation should own up responsibility," said K J Antony, Opposition leader.



A woman drains out water from her house at P&T Colony located on the banks of Perandoor Canal on Thursday | A SANESH