

GOVT PREPARED FOR 2ND WAVE OF FLOODS

Additional relief
teams deployed to
affected areas

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THE government has raised its preparedness level in facing floods as the second wave is likely to be worse than last year.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said additional relief teams had been deployed to affected areas, especially in Johor and Pahang.

He said this was based on the rainfall distribution and rising water levels in both states.

"The second wave of floods last year was considered minimal, but this time, I think the situation is quite bad.

"This is based on the report by the Meteorological Department that strong winds and heavy rains are

expected to continue.

"According to the department, there will be several waves from January to March.

"This is a worrying situation as the second wave of floods has started to hit Johor and Pahang.

"The number of evacuees in flood-affected areas is expected to increase," Zahid said after receiving a courtesy call from New Zealand Immigration Minister Michael Woodhouse.

He said the National Disaster Management Agency and relevant relief agencies would continue to help flood victims.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim had been given the responsibility of coordinating aid during the floods.

In **Kota Baru**, authorities reported that the number of flood evacuees in Kelantan, who had been decreasing over the past few days, rose again yesterday as heavy rains hit the interiors of the state, in particular in Jeli and Gua Musang.

The number of evacuees, reported to be 137 in the morning, climbed to 593 at 5pm.

According to the state flood operation room, the highest number of victims were from Jeli (437 people).

In **Tumpat**, many people were still trapped by floodwaters, which had inundated several villages.

Most residents from villages, such as Kampung Bendang Pak Yong and parts of Kampung Simpangan were forced to use boats to reach the main road.

In **Kuantan**, Pahang Civil Defence Force director Zainal Yussof said seven districts in Pahang had been flooded, resulting in 3,501 people being evacuated as at 6pm yesterday.

In **Gemas**, Negri Sembilan Fire and Rescue Department director Norazam Khamis said 186 residents of Taman Pinggiran Sungai Kelamah, Taman Sungai Gemas and Kampung Jeram Panjang had to be evacuated when floodwaters inundated their homes yesterday. **Additional reporting by Kalbana Perimbanayagam, Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi and Nur Aqidah Azizi**

Page 1 pic: Firemen helping Woo Hoi Chee move his belongings in his house at Taman Sungai Gemas, Negri Sembilan, yesterday