

□ REPORTS by NELSON BENJAMIN, HAMDAN RAJA ABDULLAH, MARSHA TAN, MEERA VIJAYAN, FARIK ZOLKEPLI, MD HANAFI HANAFIAH, FARIDAH BEGUM, AUDREY EDWARDS, LEE YUK PENG, MAZWIN NIK ANIS and IZATUN SHARI; □ Pictures by ABDUL RAHMAN EMBONG and KENNETH WONG

Cabinet sets aside more funds to help victims cope

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Government has agreed to make additional allocations available immediately to help flood victims.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said victims whose homes or household appliances were damaged by the floods would also receive

assistance when the situation improved.

"Initially, assistance will be given to victims at the flood relief centres," he told reporters yesterday after presenting the contributions to the Armed Forces Veteran Foundation, the Armed Forces Fund and single mothers at the Defence Minis-

try here.

Najib said the floods – which have hit several districts in Johor as well as other states and affected thousands – were discussed at the Cabinet meeting yesterday.

Asked whether the Government had issued a disaster alert, he said: "Not yet. We are

now monitoring the situation in other states.

"It is difficult to forecast the weather. We had expected areas in the East Coast to be hit by floods. We never expected Johor to be the most affected."

He said the minister in charge of the matter, Women, Family and Community Development

Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, had been instructed to go to Johor to monitor the situation and ensure that aid could be channelled to victims immediately. She was in Muar yesterday.

Meanwhile, Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Dr Fong Chan Onn has called on

employers to be sympathetic and not insist that staff members affected by the floods should turn up for work.

"They should instead give these workers unrecorded leave so that they can clean up their homes," he told reporters in Putrajaya after the Cabinet meeting.