

FLOOD WOES

More states hit, 29,000 displaced



It's a water world in Segamat, Johor, yesterday. — Picture courtesy of China Press

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First it was Johor. Now, Pahang, Selangor, Malacca and Negri Sembilan are bracing for the worst as heavy rain has cut off transportation links, destroyed homes and forced the evacuation of more than 29,000 people. The authorities are moving quickly to help displaced flood victims.

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SEGAMAT TOTALLY CUT OFF

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KUALA LUMPUR: The heavy rains, which lashed Johor and made about 25,000 people homeless, have hit Pahang, Selangor, Malacca and Negeri Sembilan. These states have been advised to prepare for the worst.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the Cabinet discussed the situation yesterday and the National Disaster Management and Relief Committee would be taking steps to

tackle the problem.

"The minister in charge, Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil (who is Women, Family and Community Development minister), has gone to Johor to survey the flood-hit areas to ensure aid is administered swiftly," he said after presenting tithes and personal loans for retirees by EON-CAP Islamic Bank at the Defence Ministry here.

Najib said the government had agreed to provide immediate allocations to help with the supply of food and aid for flood victims.

"I have also asked the army to increase the number of personnel and equipment to move displaced flood victims. This includes lorries, boats and helicopters.

"If Johor needs extra equipment, I have asked for extra equipment to be sent from Negeri Sembilan and Selangor to help with the rescue operations," said Najib, who will be in Johor today.

"If there is anything to be done, we will do it. If the situation worsens, government agencies from other areas will be mobilised to help.

"We are monitoring other states as the weather is difficult to predict. We had anticipated floods in the east coast states but it was Johor which got hit the worst."

On allocations for victims, Najib said aid would be given to those whose homes and belongings were destroyed, adding that this would be done once the floods receded.

In Cyberjaya, Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis said winds at speeds of 50 to 60kph would be bringing more rain to Pahang, Selangor, Malacca and Negeri Sembilan until Sunday.

"As the winds move north, the situation in Johor will return to normal from tomorrow," he said after launching a Multimedia Super Corridor Malaysia seed fund.

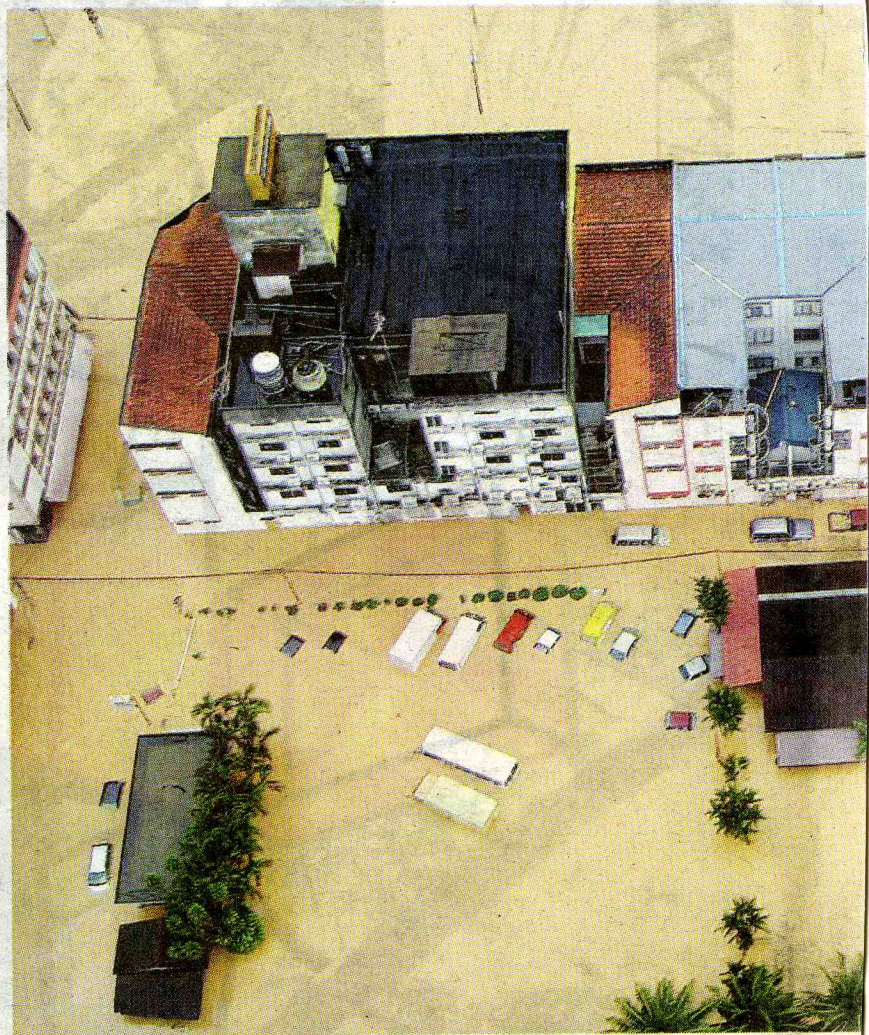
A day after massive floods struck nearly all of Johor's districts, rain continued to fall yesterday morning across the state, and in the southern and eastern parts of Pahang, southern Terengganu, Malacca and Negeri Sembilan, according to the Meteorological Department.

Jamaluddin said the unusually heavy rain was not a normal weather pattern but was due to strong winds coming from the western Pacific Ocean near the Philippines.

"The phenomenon is due to the effects of Typhoon Utor near the Philippines."

He said Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Penang were likely to be spared.

In Putrajaya, Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri Dr Fong Chan Onn said employers in Johor should give unrecorded leave to workers whose homes were flooded.



Segamat district completely submerged. — Picture courtesy of China Press



The road from Segamat highway leading to Felda Selancar is impassable.



Workers from the Malacca Water Company helping victims to evacuate.



Women in Kampung Kangkar Tebrau, Johor, wading through flood waters to get to their destination.



Mohd Sham Jaafar, 26, scooping out water from his house in Kampung Seri Jaya, Skudai Kiri, Johor.

Rain-lashed states

NEGRI SEMBILAN

760 evacuated, 284 stranded

THE flood situation in Negri Sembilan worsened yesterday, and by 5pm a further 760 residents had been evacuated.

Most were from Gemas and Tampin, and they were sent to eight shelters located at SM Tuanku Abdul Rahman, (housing 585 evacuees), SMA Felda Jelai (21), Balai Raya Felda Sungai Kelamah (30), Balai Raya SMK Ladang (21), Balai Raya Parit Buluh (12), Balai Raya Pasir Besar (seven), all in Gemas, and Kampung Keru in Tampin (seven).

Tampin police chief Superintendent Zull Aznam Harun, who is also the district flood operations director, said the federal road between Tampin and Johor Baru had been closed to all vehicles as a three-kilometre stretch in front of Felda Sungai Kelamah was in two metres of water. Jalan Gemas-Batu Anam, Segamat, Jalan Gemenchek-Batang Melaka and Jalan Gemas-Kampung Ladang had also been closed to all vehicles.

Meanwhile, 284 passengers on KTM's Ekspres Wau from Tumpat, Kelantan, to Singapore have been stranded at the Gemas station since yesterday morning.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan announced yesterday after chairing the state exco meeting: "The state government has appointed several grocery shops in the affected areas to accelerate the distribution of essential items to flood victims."

TERENGGANU

Winds push sea water ashore

THE rain fall was not heavy but strong winds pushed sea water ashore to flood houses along the coastal areas of Batu Burok and Kuala Ibai.

About 400 people in Kuala Ibai left their homes last night to stay with relatives and friends living on higher ground.

By midnight, the rising water in the affected areas was knee height.

JOHOR

More prepare for evacuation

THE heavy rains that continued to lash many parts of Johor has resulted in the number of people evacuated from their homes to more than double since yesterday.

At Press time, some 25,000 flood victims had been moved to the 562 relief centres set up throughout the state.

The situation had particularly worsened in Segamat and Muar, where continuous rain had exacerbated the floods, forcing more people to abandon their homes and flee to higher ground.

With all roads leading into Segamat flooded, the district is completely cut off from the

north and south. It is now only accessible via air by helicopter.

Johor Baru residents, however, have been spared with several hours of sunshine yesterday after two days of rainfall since Monday.

In Muar, the number of people evacuated yesterday tripled to 5,293 from Tuesday's figure of 1,651.

In Kluang, Sungai Mengkibol, one of Johor's four main rivers, burst its banks on Tuesday and flooded many parts of town.

The flood waters, which had risen above the 1.5 metre dangerous level on Tuesday, had begun to recede slightly yesterday, but it is still not safe.

Johor State Secretary Datuk Abdul Latif Yusuf said the situation was critical and advised the public to take precautions and be prepared to evacuate when asked to be do so by the authorities.

He confirmed that the water level at the Sembong Dam had now reached the dangerous level at above 12 metres.

MALACCA

Malacca river overflows

HEAVY rains since Monday have caused parts of Malacca river to overflow its banks, causing floods in a few places in the state.

A state Drainage and Irrigation Department source said the water level at Batu Berendam and Melaka Pindah yesterday was 2.41 metres and 11.9 metres respectively at 2pm.

About 3,200 people were moved to temporary shelters following the floods.

Of the figure, 912 were in Alor Gajah, 485 in Jasin and 769 in Melaka Tengah — Taman Merdeka Jaya, Taman Tamby Chik, Sungai Putat, Taman Angkasa Nuri and Taman Merdeka Megawati.

A few major roads in the city, including Jalan Peringgit and Jalan Batu Berendam, were also affected by the floods.

PAHANG

Road collapses, 30,000 isolated

MORE than 30,000 people in the Selanchar Felda schemes were cut off from the outside world when part of the road to the area collapsed in a downpour yesterday.

About 10 metres of the stretch, near a bridge over Sungai Pukin, collapsed about 3am. Sungai Pukin had swollen after incessant rains hit the area in the past few days, affecting settler families in Felda 1 to 5.

District police chief Deputy Superintendent Abdullah Sani Dalat said the bridge was also damaged and repair work was ongoing.

Several bridges along the Kuantan-Segamat road, near here, were also closed to light vehicles after the rivers overflowed between 10am and noon.

Twenty-nine people from six families in Kampung Rekoh had been evacuated to a flood relief centre after Sungai Segamat burst its banks and flooded the village.

In other areas, the authorities were on alert after a 24-hour downpour. However, no other floods were reported as at 5.30pm



Gemas town centre in 1.5m of water.

Prices of greens likely to soar

JOHOR BARU: The floods have wiped out large tracts of vegetable farms in Johor, with farmers reporting losses running into millions of ringgit.

This is likely to lead to a sharp increase in vegetable prices. The farmers said farm machinery and fertiliser stocks had been destroyed by the flood waters.

Many farmers in Kota Tinggi, Kulai, Simpang Renggam and Muar are unable to assess the damage because the roads to their farms have been cut off by the floods.

The worst-hit is Bukit Gambir in Muar, where more than 75 per cent of the farms, spread over 160ha and owned by some 100 farmers, are in several metres of water. The farms supply greens to northern Johor and Singapore.

Federation of Malaysian Vegetable Farmers' Association chairman Tan So Tiok said more than 100 water pumps had been destroyed in the floods.

Tan said consumers would have to depend on



Several lucky farmers in Muar are not so badly affected by the floods.

supplies from Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Cameron Highlands.

"With the farms almost wiped out in Johor, there is bound to be major drop in supplies, which only means higher prices for greens."