

# FLOOD RAGE

## These are telling images of damage and destruction

as relentless floods and storms ravaged six states. People are uprooted. Homes destroyed. Communications cut. And five are dead. Floods spread to the east coast yesterday while the situation improved in some areas in the south. Looting was reported in Johor.

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NST 22/12/06.



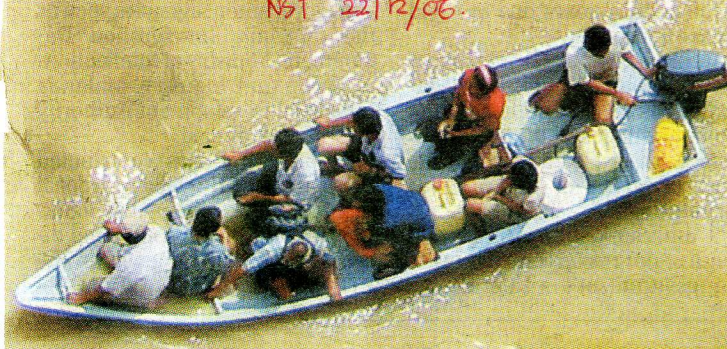
MALACCA



KELANTAN



JOHOR





Abdullah Muhari (right) with his damaged *hantaran*.

## Wedding reception and gifts affected

**JOHOR BARU:** While most newlyweds celebrate their wedding night at a love nest, a couple who tied the knot on Monday ended up at a flood evacuation centre.

It was an unfortunate turn of events for Abdullah Muhari, 28, and his wife, Misriah Osman, 22, as the Sungai Skudai overflowed its banks when they arrived for their wedding reception at Kampung Laut Batu 10, Skudai.

"The guests, who were tucking into the food under spe-

cially erected tents, had to flee to safety when water began to enter the compound of my house," said Abdullah, who had to spend his time cleaning up his house.

The couple, in traditional wedding attire, had been in high spirits for the reception.

Abdullah said he and his wife were sad because their wedding gifts, electrical appliances and furniture they had bought to start a new life together had been damaged. — Bernama



Help is at hand for stranded victims in Malacca.

The fury vented by nature on Zakaria Daud's kitchen in Pantai Telok Belangor, Bachok, Kelantan, has left it in shambles.



A bus lands on its side in Jalan Sri Genuang, Segamat.



Canopies put up for the opening ceremony of the Anugerah Bintang-Bintang Popular 2006 were destroyed by floodwaters in Kuala Terengganu yesterday.

# Tidal surge a warning to villages in the east coast

**KUALA TERENGGANU:** The tidal surge that hit several coastal villages in the state on Wednesday is an early warning of worse to come.

Residents are bracing for another pounding, as the Meteorological Department has forecast 60 to 70kph winds at least until Sunday.

Department director Kam-san Hamdan said the early forecast is that the rain will continue for the next three days, and there is a possibility low-lying areas in Terengganu will be flooded.

He said apart from the heavy rainfall, the floods are caused by the high tide blocking the rain water from running back into the sea.

On Wednesday, nearly 500 residents in Kuala Ibai fled with only the clothes on their backs when sea water rushed

into their homes at 8.30pm.

Two houses were seriously damaged by the powerful tide, and several others had their roofs blown off by gale-force winds.

Bunga Jusoh only realised she and her four children were in danger when she saw the water rushing below her stilt house.

"I could only save important documents and my children," said the 46-year-old single mother.

Forty-three-year-old Mek Hani Mamat has lived in Kuala Ibai for 30 years and said this was the worst tidal surge she had experienced.

"It came so suddenly. And the roof of my house was blown away by the strong winds," said the mother of six.

Her Kancil car was a total loss but she's glad all her chil-

dren are safe.

In Batu Buruk, the waves eroded the beach. At Tanjung, the granite embankment could not absorb the impact of the waves. The gale force winds also damaged several houses in Mangkok.

In Bachok, Kelantan, a storm had villagers along Pantai Irama cowering in fear after violent waves damaged 10 houses here on Wednesday night.

Fatimah Daud, 60, who was among the victims, said her house collapsed at 9pm as a result of erosion.

"I was at home praying when I heard the first waves striking the back of my house.

"This went on continuously until the sand foundation gave way.

"Half the living room and kitchen just collapsed into the

sea," she said in Kampung Pulau Belangan yesterday.

She said two other houses in her village also collapsed.

Several men then erected makeshift "wind shields", from coconut leaves and bamboo, to prevent the affected houses from further damage.

According to villagers, a 50-metre stretch of the popular Pantai Irama has been swallowed up by the sea while coconut trees have been uprooted.

Asri Hussin, 36, was watching television when he heard a loud crash from the toilet at the back of the house facing the sea.

"I turned around and the whole rear section of my house had been washed out to sea. It was nerve-wrecking.

"If this continues, I don't know what to do," he said.

## Fish prices may go up due to transport woes

**MUAR:** The inter-state transportation of fish in Johor has been severely disrupted because roads have been cut off by the floods.

Most of the fish caught in Endau, Mersing and Kota Tinggi are transported by lorries by road to fish merchants in Parit Jawa, Muar, for distribution to Malacca, Negri Sembilan, Kuala Lumpur, Pontian and Johor Baru.

The heavy rains have also affected the catch at sea.

"About 30 per cent of the 2,000 fishermen along Johor's west coast have not been able to go out to fish over the past few days.

"As a result, fish supply is down considerably," said Parit Jawa Fishermen's Association assistant secretary Kho Sang Kiow.

He said consumers could expect a hike in fish prices in the coming days.

■ VEGETABLE PRICES RISING P8

# Teacher among 5 dead in Johor

■ By Alang Bendahara and Siti Nurbaiyah Nadzmi  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Five people in Johor lost their lives to the floods yesterday.

Among them was teacher R. Mageswari, 26, who was on her way to Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Paloh at 6am on Wednesday to attend a staff meeting to discuss preparations for lessons before school reopens on Jan 3. She was not told the

meeting had been cancelled.

She was driving her Proton Iswara with her uncle, A. Muniandy, 59, along an oil palm estate road when the water from the overflowing Sembrong river blocked their path.

She telephoned her colleague and told him that they were stranded and unable to proceed further and probably would have to wait until the water subsided.

Unknowning to her, the incessant rain caused the water to rise and pushed the car down the

slope of the road.

The car eventually came to rest in a seven-metre ravine with flood waters submerging it.

A lorry driver, who noticed the car being dragged down the slope, alerted the authorities.

The police found them dead, locked in an embrace yesterday, 33 hours later.

Kluang police chief ACP Fawzi Arshad said Mageswari was from Paloh, Kluang, and her uncle from Lumut, Perak.

Fawzi said divers from the Fire

and Rescue Department located the car submerged in two metres of water. They had to force the door open to remove the bodies which were sent to the Kluang hospital mortuary.

The car was later winched out. In Segamat, an elderly man and woman were swept away by strong currents.

They were later found dead. Rescuers found the remains of Ahmad Sharkawi, 70, from Kampung Jawa near Segamat, in his house while Masiah Ahmad, 69,

from Kampung Jawa, was found adrift several metres from the house. The bodies were sent to Segamat Hospital for a post-mortem.

The fifth casualty was Norzari Nordin, 28, of Kampung Loga, Jementah.

His body was recovered from a river in Segamat on Wednesday morning.

He was reportedly taking a bath in the river when he slipped and fell before being swept away by strong currents.

## Kelantan hit by floods while areas in south improve

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The flood situation improved in some areas in Johor and Negri Sembilan while Kelantan saw rising flood waters.

In Segamat, the worst-hit town with all roads to it cut off, looters helped themselves to goods from several shops.

The Courts Mammoth furniture and electrical retailer in Jalan Genuang had its glass door broken and items such as digital cameras and electrical goods stolen.

Shops selling handphones were also broken into.

Many of the shops in the town were closed yesterday after floodwaters rose more than a metre, cutting the town off from the outside world.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who visited some of the flooded areas, gave an assurance that the government would extend all possible aid, including food supplies and the resources of the defence forces to help the thousands of flood victims in Johor.

"If this is insufficient, more will be despatched," he said after visiting flood victims sheltering at Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Ping Ming here.

He said 80 boats were provided for use in Johor to ferry food supplies and evacuate the victims. The number would be increased, if required.

Najib, who is also Defence Minister, said 16 army helicopters, the Fire and Rescue Department and the Royal Malaysian Police were also deployed during the flood operation in Johor.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said Johor's three dams in Bekok, Semborong, Machap and Linggui were safe.

He urged the people not to listen to rumours that the dams were at breaking point and could

drown nearby towns.

He said the dams were designed to overflow when the water level reached the maximum point.

In central Malacca, 4,355 people in Batu Berendam, Tanjung Minyak, Tengker, Tiang Dua, Melaka Tengah, Kandang, Malim, Bukit Baru and Taman Angkasanuri were forced to vacate their homes as early as 8am after the flood situation worsened.

They were evacuated to 20 relief centres.

In Alor Gajah, there were 557 people from 119 families at the evacuation centres. This brings the total number of people evacuated to 7,000.

In Pahang, a total of 1,758 people have been evacuated to relief centres in Rompin and Kuantan.

Eleven villages were affected in Rompin while 160 workers at an oil palm plantation and loggers in Ladang Kemelai have been trapped since Tuesday.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis, who visited some of the relief centres, said the Selanchar Felda schemes were cut off when part of the road to the area collapsed on Wednesday.

He said the armed forces would build a Bailey bridge to enable more than 6,000 people from the Felda schemes to use the road again.

In Kuantan, 486 evacuees from 12 villages and housing areas sought shelter at 12 relief centres while 77 Orang Asli families in Kampung Bukit Serok were saved from being swept away by a bursting river.

All 455 victims from the village have been evacuated and have taken shelter at Keratong Felda scheme. The gushing water had



People searching for goods swept out by flood waters in Johor Baru yesterday.

also swept away at least five houses and damaged dozens of homes.

In Kota Baru, 500 people were evacuated from villagers in Gua Musang while others in Kelantan's low-lying areas have been told to pack their bags and prepare to move out ahead of floods which authorities say will hit at any time.

The State Drainage and Irrigation Department said that water levels at three areas along Sungai

Kelantan had reached dangerous levels and those living along its banks in Kuala Krai, Pasir Mas, Machang and Kota Baru should be prepared for evacuation.

Kelantan police chief Datuk Zulkifli Abdullah said police teams had already been despatched to flood-prone areas in the state to prepare for evacuation procedures.

Strong overnight gales and violent waves, meanwhile, battered

villages along the coastline in Bachok district and destroyed 10 seaside houses.

In Negri Sembilan, the situation has improved. Two of the eight relief centres were closed with 470 victims remaining at six relief centres.

The situation in Gemas town, which was hit by waist-deep flood waters, vastly improved yesterday and the town is now accessible by all vehicles.