

Supply aid, stores urged

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KLUANG: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has appealed to department stores to provide government agencies and departments involved in flood relief with food and other necessities such as mats and blankets.

"If they approach you, please help. We will reimburse the expenses later," the Deputy Prime Minister said after visiting relief centres in Kota Tinggi, Segamat and Muar by helicopter with Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.

The floods in Johor have worsened, with 50,000 people now placed in 277 relief centres.

Najib called for calm, saying that supply of food and necessities would be flown in to areas cut off by the floods.

"I have asked the Armed Forces to increase the number of assets to aid flood relief," he said.

"At the moment, there are 80 boats available and we plan to bring in more boats from other states.

"We have 11 helicopters and if we add to the ones operated by the police and the Fire and Rescue Department, we have more than 16 in Johor alone.

"If any area is cut off, we can use them to send in food supplies."

Najib reiterated that the



VIP VISITOR: Najib talking to Halimah Mat Said, 78, during his visit to a relief centre in Taman Kota Jaya in Kota Tinggi yesterday. — Bernamapic

Federal Government was ready to increase the allocation for flood relief.

Najib said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi expressed his sadness

over the flood situation and asked the Federal and state agencies to help the people. Abdullah had conveyed the message to Najib over the phone.

Abdullah is currently in Venezuela.

"The situation today has stabilised and supplies have been sent (to relief centres). Maybe there are some shortcomings

here and there, but generally I am satisfied with the management of the situation, he said.

Abdul Ghani said all the dams in the state had reached full capacity, while the Machap and

Sembrong dams were overflowing.

"But we have no plan to release the water from the dams as it will only worsen the flooding downstream," he said.

Shops run out of essential goods in panic hoarding

KUALA LUMPUR: Most shops and supermarkets in Segamat have run out of essential goods after residents rushed to stock up on finding the town cut off by floods on Wednesday.

Long-time Segamat resident Dr Ng Chai Bing said the stores were inundated with customers and by yesterday morning, most food items and all bottled water had run out.

"There was a bit of panic because many people had heard rumours of the situation becoming worse," he said, adding that talk of a dam in Pahang bursting had also made many worried.

The authorities in Pahang later denied that this had occurred.

Dr Ng, who operates a private clinic in town, added that many people had been stranded in villages around Segamat, totally cut off by the floods for at least two days and could only be rescued yesterday.

"This could mean that they have been without any suste-

nance for about two days," he said when contacted by telephone.

Dr Ng said he had treated many patients for diarrhoea, vomiting and other water-borne diseases.

"There were also many who came with injuries," he said, adding that he had enough medicine to last three months.

According to him, the road to Labis and Gemas became passable to heavy vehicles yesterday evening.

In Kluang, while the authorities were busy evacuating flood victims, a group of four-wheel-drive enthusiasts also helped out using their expertise in off-road driving.

Members from the Kluang 4X4 Club braved flooded streets to help ferry stranded victims to relief centres.

"We have eight 4WD vehicles and a boat," club president P.Y. Kong said. "So far, we have helped rescue 15 people trapped in their homes."

RMAF joins relief effort

PETALING JAYA: The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) has put five of its Nuri helicopters on standby to provide help for flood victims in Johor and Pahang.

The RMAF said in a press statement that another heli-

copter had started sending relief supplies to flood-hit Padang Kemelai in Endau Rompin yesterday.

Meanwhile, Mercy Malaysia has been treating hundreds of flood victims in Johor since Tuesday.

Do's and don'ts during floods

DO'S

- THINK of safety first during a flood.
- TAKE care when walking through shallow water.
- TURN off electricity and gas supply when evacuating.

DON'TS

- DON'T try to walk or drive through floodwater.
- DON'T walk across bridges as they may collapse.
- NEVER swim through fast flowing water.
- AVOID contact with floodwater as it may be contaminated.

Firemen's leave frozen

JOHOR BARU: Some 10,000 firemen nationwide have had their leave frozen and those already on leave have been told to report to the nearest fire station.

Fire and Rescue Department director-general Datuk Hamzah Abu Bakar said the directive was issued to all states following the flood situation.

The fire department's 24-hour operations centres nationwide are Putrajaya (03-88880964), Johor (07-2243444 or 07-2247444) Malacca (06-2319134 or 06-2319136), Negri Sembilan (06-6015864 or 06-6015007 or 6015008) and Pahang (09-5140312 or 09-5135544).