



## Rescue in the rain

Volunteers come to the aid of two residents in Kota Tinggi trapped by rising floodwaters yesterday.



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# No let-up

**JOHOR BARU:** Continuous heavy rain has brought floods back to the southern part of Johor.

Areas around the state capital were among the worst hit, with more than 20,000 people evacuated.

On Thursday afternoon, there were less than 800 people left at relief centres. By yesterday evening, 129 centres were re-opened to accommodate people forced to abandon their homes once again.

- > Ayer Hitam latest area to be hit
- > More people moved out from Tebrau, Plentong, Pandan and Ulu Tiram
- > Singapore hit by flash floods
- > 49 schools closed
- > Singapore-Johor rail services disrupted
- > Kota Tinggi, Kluang and Batu Pahat badly hit
- > Heavy rain expected to continue till Monday
- > Evacuation started on Thursday night

> More stories and pictures in Pages 3, 4, 16, 18 and 19

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**In a tight spot:** Two Kampung Berembang villagers praying they will be rescued in time.



# Second wave hits Johor

## Rising waters force 20,465 people into relief centres

**JOHOR BARU:** Barely had the Dec 19 flood victims returned to their homes to pick up the sodden pieces, than flood waters once again gush into their houses as well as schools and business premises in a second wave that inundated most of the low-lying areas in the state.

As of 9.30pm yesterday, 20,465 people had been evacuated to 129 relief centres, and more were expected.

Many were seen moving out of their homes quickly, with evacuation having started in earnest at 8pm on Thursday. Yesterday's floods, which became evident in the morning, dashed hopes of a quick relief from the December disaster that affected 153,000 people.

The floodwaters caused minor landslips, and the closure of 47 roads in all eight districts.

Access to Kota Tinggi town from Johor Baru has also been cut off.

Operations at the Plentong police station had to be shut down at 8.30pm on Thursday and those with police business were redirected to Masai, Majidee and Johor Jaya.

Forty-nine schools were forced to close because of the floods, with some turned into relief centres.

State Fire and Rescue Department director Yusof Muhamad said most of the victims were from Kg Laut in Skudai and Plentong within the Johor Baru vicinity.

"We managed to rescue hundreds of people in these areas," he said, adding that besides boats, rescuers also used fire trucks to ferry people out of the flooded areas.

In **Tangkak**, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman urged affected residents to move out as soon as they see the water rising.

Speaking to reporters in Sungai Mati he said: "We want all residents living in flood-prone areas and those hit by the floods last month to be ready to move out when ordered to do so."

He said this time the floods also hit several areas that were not affected last month, such as Ulu Tiram in Johor Baru.

The Muzikarama organised by the Johor Baru City Council scheduled at Dataran Bandaraya today has been



**Wet, wet, wet:** Kota Tinggi residents being evacuated after floods struck the town for a second time in as many months.

called off.

In **Rompin**, Pahang, continuous rain over the past two days caused a road leading to a village to become impassable.

According to district OCPD DSP Abdullah Sani Salat, Kampung Jubau in Ibam has been cut off since Thursday night, but so far there was no need to evacuate the residents.

In **Singapore**, rains caused a landslide which forced the closure of KTM

Bhd's railway line between Bukit Timah and Woodlands.

KTM managing director Datuk Mohd Salleh said trains to Singapore would now stop at Johor Baru.

Heavy rain also forced the cancellation of yesterday's horse races in the city-state.

**See Page 4 and Star Metro**  
More floods reports and pictures



**Displaced:** Kamariah and her son Mohammad Eqqwan Afdal, six, resting at an evacuation centre in Kota Tinggi.

## Oh no, not again

**KOTA TINGGI:** The residents of Kampung Tembiah here were devastated when the floodwaters started rising again as they had only just returned home less than two days ago from the relief centres.

"Oh no, not again," was how housewife Kamariah Abd Wahab, 43, described having to evacuate from her home with her family again after spending 12 days at the relief centre.

"I am so fed up. There was only one day of sunshine in between and I could not even finish washing my clothes," she said.

Kamariah said the last flood had damaged their home and furniture. While they were away, looters also broke into their house.

The looters stole her jewellery, her husband's international passport and Singapore work permit as well as RM1,300.

"I am heartbroken that people could be so mean when we have been hit by such hardship," she said sadly.

Another victim from the same village, trader Khatijah Jantan, 59, related how her family had been feeling worried seeing the continuous rain the last couple of days and decided to leave their home quickly unlike the previous time.

"The last time we had to wade through water that was chest-deep, but this time we were so frightened that we decided to leave our homes the moment the floods reached just below our knees," she said.

General worker S. Supermaniam, 46, said it was tiring to have to cart his entire family, including his five children, each time the floods returned.

"Our home in Taman Aman is prone to flooding, but the last two occasions have been the worst in the 10 years we have lived there," he said.

# Strong winds and low-pressure zone the cause

**PETALING JAYA:** The heavy rains in Johor over the past two days were caused by a combination of strong north-easterly winds and the presence of a low-pressure system over the southern part of the state.

A Meteorological Department spokesman said the winds from the South China Sea due to the north-

east monsoon and the low-pressure zone were converging, creating conducive conditions for heavy rain.

"The convergence has caused more clouds to form over Johor. This has increased the chance of heavy rain occurring," he said.

He added that the winds were expected to weaken by Monday.

The spokesman said the red alert for heavy rain was still in effect for several parts of Johor, Pahang, Sabah and Sarawak. Again, this condition is expected to last until Monday.

The situation has also caused heavy rain to fall in Singapore and parts of Indonesia.

Indonesia's Geophysics and

Meteorological Department has also issued a flood caution.

The spokesman said above average rainfall was expected in Johor and other parts in the peninsula except for the northern states.

A change in the pattern is expected for the peninsula early next month.

Last month, prolonged heavy rain caused flooding in parts of Johor and Singapore.

Singapore's National Environment Agency website reported that the republic experienced rainfall of between 300% and 360% above average last month, making it the wettest month since January 1869.



**Water world once again:** An aerial view of Kampung Kangkar Tebrau submerged in floodwaters yesterday. It was like *deja vu* for the flood victims, who were just about to piece their lives back together after last month's floods when an unexpected wave of heavy rains submerged their homes – again.

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# Floods back like a bad nightmare

## Johoreans yet to fully recover from last month's calamity

**JOHOR BARU:** For the thousands of flood victims in Johor, it was like living through a "terrible nightmare" all over again when water levels started rising on Thursday night.

Many victims, who had yet to fully recover from the devastating Dec 19 floods, were forced to abandon everything and flee to safety. At some places, the water almost reached the rooftops.

A dejected looking Firdaus Latiff, 27, from Kampung Berembang in Pandan said: "We thought the worst was over but it is happening all over again."

Another villager, Yosop Masur, 66, muttered: "What more is there to be said?"

Lorry driver Zulkifli Zainuddin, 34, managed to load some belongings into his cramped Proton Iswara before driving off to the evacuation centre with his wife and four children.

"It had been sunny for a few days and everyone thought we could finally get on with life, yet this

»We thought the worst was over«

FIRDAUS LATIFF, RESIDENT OF KAMPUNG BEREMBANG

happened," said Zulkifli.

In **Simpang Renggam**, Rahmin Maridin, 43, said he had only completed cleaning his house in Kampung Parit Haji Salam on Wednesday night.

A night later, the general worker was back at the relief centre – the village's community hall – with his wife and four children.

Norah Abd Razak, 65, who was helping to prepare the victims' meals at the centre yesterday, said: "What can we do? Just hope there is no third or fourth time."



**Roomful of water:** A man getting ahold of a floating chair at a school in Kota Tinggi yesterday.



**Just roofs:** An aerial view of flooded houses in Kulai yesterday.

# TOTAL NUMBER OF FLOOD EVACUEES IN JOHOR

20,465 in 129 relief centres. 47 roads closed state-wide



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# Many yet to get

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## Shahrizat: Claims need to be verified



**Disrupted lives:** Flood victims queuing up to register at an evacuation centre while tired family members sleep at the Kota Kechil Hall in Kota Tinggi, Johor, yesterday.

**KUALA LUMPUR:** It has been about two weeks since the Government said it would give flood victims RM200 but many victims have yet to receive the aid.

They claim the RM100 for primary school pupils and RM200 for secondary school students have also not been distributed.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil said the delay could have been caused by the states having to authenticate the claims because of the large number of claimants.

"The states need to verify the claims because a large sum of money is involved," she said.

# financial aid



**Recuperating:** Life returning to normal after the first clean-up in Kota Tinggi, as shown in this file picture. Floods hit the town again yesterday.



**Hit again:** People walking through floodwaters in Kota Tinggi yesterday after heavy rainfall over the past two days caused another round of floods.

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Shahrizat added that initially the welfare department had used a list of registered flood victims at its relief centres to determine those eligible for aid.

The Cabinet later decided that those who were seeking shelter elsewhere, such as with family or friends, should also receive aid.

"As such, we decided to use only one list - that given by the states from the names of people provided by the district offices and elected representatives," she said.

"Those who feel they have been left out, please report yourselves to your district office or to your elected representatives," she added.

In **JOHOR BARU**, Yosop Masur, 66, from Kampung Berembang, claimed that his fami-

**»The state government needs to verify the claims because the aid involved a large sum of money«**

DATUK SERI SHAHRIZAT ABDUL JALIL

ly has yet to receive any aid from the welfare department.

"We did not even get biscuits, let alone money. We have photocopied our identification cards and all relevant documents and handed them over to the village chief, but to

date we have not received anything," he lamented.

Several other victims also claimed they had submitted all the required documents to the authorities but have yet to receive any aid.

Victims in Kota Tinggi echoed similar sentiments. "Some people have already received it while others have not," said Kamariah Abdul Wahab, 43.

"When I went to enquire about it, the officials said something about my name being processed," she said, adding that none of her four children had received any money promised by the Education Ministry.

Trader Khatijah Jantan, 59, felt that the handing over of money to flood victims was not done systematically, and there were many people who were overlooked.

State Women, Family and Community Development committee chairman Dr Robia Kosai said a total of RM5.2mil had been distributed to the respective district offices to be given out to flood victims.