



Sharifah Hassan, 56, carrying her mattress to a safe place



SECOND WAVE STRIKES

- JOHOR SENT REELING AGAIN BY FLOODS
- THOUSANDS FLEE BACK TO EVACUATION CENTRES

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Pressure building up at dams

FLOODS ROUND-UP



The water level at the Sembrong dam in Johor was seen breaching the danger level of 12.99 metres yesterday. — Bernama picture

at midnight Thursday. Workers were called in to salvage whatever goods and machinery they could," an employee said, adding that they had to work in the dark as power had been cut as a precaution.

Hasnah Nawawi, 60, of Kampung Che Ami at Jalan Tun Razak Susur 1, who called the NST office, said all houses in her area were under a metre of water.

"When it happened last month, our household goods were all destroyed. Just as we were cleaning up, we were hit by this double whammy," she said.

According to a spokesman of the police flood operations room here, other flooded districts were Batu Pahat, where 913 people

had been evacuated to 14 relief centres, Kota Tinggi (1,999 people to 14 relief centres), Pontian (91 people to two relief centres) and Mersing (62 people to 15 relief centres).

He said the water level at Sungai Muar had exceeded the danger level of 9.3m, having risen to 9.93m at the river monitoring station in Segamat town and the alert level of 6.16m at the Kuala Segamat station, 8.5m at the Buluh Kasap station and 6.57m at the Sungai Muar-Tijah station.

In Muar, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said people were being evacuated as a pre-emptive measure.

"Although the situation is not as bad as the first wave, we are not

taking things lightly. The Johor Flood Operation Centre will be open round-the-clock."

He said families in potential flood danger zones throughout Johor would be told to evacuate during daylight hours to ensure better management of flood relief logistics.

"Previously we only raised the alarm and evacuated people after their homes had been hit by floods.

"This often occurred at night, making relief efforts difficult.

"But with immediate effect, all evacuations will be done during the day before the floods strike. This precautionary measure will be implemented in all areas."

The menteri besar confirmed

that many flood victims who had only returned home last week were now being forced to leave their properties a second time.

In Kuala Lumpur, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Jilil said that the number of evacuation centres in Johor would be increased, especially in Kota Tinggi.

Shahrizat told reporters that her ministry was mobilising state officers from unaffected areas to assist the critical districts.

Kluang currently has the highest number of evacuation centres (36) sheltering 994 families. Johor Baru has 23 centres for 1,201 families. The ministry has set up 92 centres in total.

PM: Syed Hamid to survey situation today

CEBU: The government is prepared to provide every assistance to flood victims in Johor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

Expressing sadness and sympathy for those affected by a second round of floods the prime minister said this included additional funds for flood relief.

He said relevant departments and agencies were prepared for

rescue operations and would be fully mobilised again.

"They know what to do. I hope the people will give their full co-operation to these government agencies, the Red Crescent Society and other non-governmental organisations," he told Malaysian Press here yesterday.

He said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, who is from Johor, would return

early from the 12th Asean Summit today, to survey the situation.

"After the Asean Summit is over (on Jan 15) I will also go to Johor," Abdullah said.

On additional funds, the prime minister said no government would abandon its citizens in time of need.

"If it gets worse, we will do more. The government must be ready to help, and where we

need to release funds, we will. The private sector has also come forward with assistance, and I hope more of them will help."

The floods in several states have already caused an estimated RM100 million in damages, with thousands being evacuated.

The government also announced that each family would get RM500 to purchase kitchenware and household items.

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JOHOR BARU: A second wave of flooding has struck Johor, sending thousands fleeing back to the evacuation centres they had left only days before.

The return of rising waters, predicted by weather-watchers and rescue and relief agencies in the current, exceptional monsoon season, occurred after two days of unrelenting rain across the state.

The towns and villages inundated in the first round of flooding between Dec 19 and Dec 26 were again deluged, and the situation is expected to worsen with rain forecast to continue over the weekend.

At Press time, 18,753 people had been evacuated to 117 relief centres throughout the state.

The worst hit district is Johor Baru, with 8,741 people moved to 41 relief centres, followed by Kluang with 6,482 evacuated to 35 centres.

Dams in Bekok (Segamat) and Sembrong (Kluang) are overflowing, having breached the danger level of 19.03m and 12.99m respectively. The Macap dam in Kluang is also reaching the danger level, having risen to 17.34m.

State Drainage and Irrigation Department director Chong Chee Han said the gates had to be opened to release the pressure building up at the dams.

He said the rivers flowing through Parit Raja, Yong Peng, Parit Yaani and other parts of Batu Pahat would swell and could exacerbate flooding in the surrounding lowlands.

"We are taking steps to open the coastal floodgates at regular intervals to release water into the sea."

The flooding here has resulted in traffic chaos with the closure of several roads, including Jalan Air Molek which leads to the Federal Government Complex.

Factories in Tebrau Industrial Estate IV were not spared. Epcos Sdn Bhd, a German electronic components manufacturer, suffered extensive damage for the second time in a month.

"The water level started rising



With the rising floodwaters came the spirit of neighbourliness and co-operation, as stranded residents were rescued and their possessions saved.

NST 13/1

Non-stop rain for 48 hours



School is out for 1,300 students of Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Pei Hwa in Jalan Ah Siang after water entered classrooms.

KOTA TINGGI: Still reeling from the first wave of monster floods two weeks ago, people here are now bearing the brunt of the second wave.

A number of roads are impassable after 48 hours of relentless rain from Thursday morning.

Kilometre 24 and Km26 of Jalan Kota Tinggi-Kulai are closed to traffic, while Km24 of Jalan Kota Tinggi-Kluang is open only to heavy vehicles.

Some 2,000 people from more than 400 households were evacuated to 14 relief centres yesterday.

Many children couldn't get to school as their school buses couldn't get through.

Six-year-old Lim Yang Yu, who had just started going to kindergarten, was told he'd have to give school a miss because the family was "taking another vacation".

His family, from Taman Kota Jaya, had returned home a fortnight ago to

find their double-storey house flooded.

Yang Yu's 33-year-old mother, Oi Choi Hua, said it took her a week to clean up the mess.

School is also out for 1,300 students of Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) Pei Hwa in Jalan Ah Siang, as the water level there is one metre-high.

Parent-Teacher Association chairman Tan Tiah Sung said the night watchman alerted the school at 5am.

"The headmaster then told all school bus drivers not to pick up the children," he said. The school will re-open once the waters have subsided.

All shops along Jalan Niaga were also closed due to rising floodwaters.

"Looks like the nightmare is starting all over again," said 53-year-old textile trader Tan Thoo Teck, who on Thursday was trying to clear his soiled stock by selling it at marked down prices.



First it rained continuously, then the road in Taman Malaysia in Skudai cracked yesterday.

Eye on the river, he is their watchman

KLUANG: Hawker Mak Wai Song is the early flood warning system for the neighbourhood around Jalan Cantik.

He'll be the first hit if Sungai Mengkibol bursts its banks as his home is on the riverbank.

But the 40-year-old is undaunted. Indeed, he has been on unofficial flood watch since the first wave of flooding on Dec 19.

"I've been staying up at night to keep an eye on the river water level. It's my job to alert my neighbours if it reaches the danger level. Many of them have stalls in the nearby hawker centre.

"Last time the hawkers lost everything, including kitchen utensils and chairs and tables, when the hawker centre was flooded. This time I want to warn them early so they can salvage their belongings."

Known as "Ha Mee" (stall owner of fried prawn mee) Mak's home is just opposite the 25-year-old hawker centre.

After last month's floods the centre was closed for days for a clean-up.

"People are now terrified every time it rains. But the best indicator is the river. That's why I don't take my eyes off it," he said.

He had been besieged with telephone calls from his anxious neighbours lately, he added.

"They all call to ask me the same question — is the water level safe?" said Mak.

In the last floods Mak lost many of his cherished possessions and household goods.

"I just bought new furniture, a television set and a refrigerator. I don't want to lose them again," he said.

Kluang is one of the worst-hit districts in the second wave of floods that hit the state on Thursday night.

More than 6,000 people have been evacuated to five relief centres. Other areas affected are Jalan Yap Tau Sa and Kampong Melayu.