

The looks on these children belie the fact that they have to grapple with the loss of things that are dear to them.

Volunteers: We need items for children

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PETALING JAYA: Of the thousands of flood victims whom Yayasan Salam Malaysia met, it is the children who tug at their heartstrings the most. Even at their young age, the children are gripped with the loss of things that are dear to them. Senior executive (volunteer management) Nooraini Khaironi

(pix) related one incident in which a little girl called out to her and another volunteer, saying: "*Adik pesan kat abang untuk sangkut beg sekolah atas pintu. Tak tahu lah macam mana sekarang* (I asked my brother to hang my school bag on the door. I don't know how it is now)."

"We need a lot of things for children from stationery to exercise books, uniforms and shoes, because they have nothing left," said another volunteer Serina Hor. Nooraini and Hor were among the 61 members of a post-flood relief mission, led by Sharizad Husin, which left for Johor last Friday.

Their post-flood mission – with Malaysia Amateur Radio Emergency Services (Mares), Malaysia Airlines (MAS), MAS Backpackers, the Civil Defence Department, Tenaga Nasional Engineering and Consultancy (TNEC), KPMG Malaysia, Nationwide Express Service, 4x4 Team, Kioku and other organisations – extended into a rescue effort as well and an all-round relief mission as Friday's rain "never stopped" over the weekend.

Working from their two base camps – Wisma Belia Batu Pahat and Yayasan Pelajaran Johor in Kluang – the Yayasan Salam team returned to their homes in the Klang Valley at 5am on Monday, after three days and nights without proper rest.

While contributions of food and clothes are coming in for flood victims in general, there is still insufficient supply of items for children, such as milk and even toys and other items for play-therapy.

"We received news that there is enough food but schooling [items] are needed," Sharizad said.

Besides, Yayasan Salam needs children and adult diapers, clothes that are decent and in good condition, mosquito nets and funds, including to pay for fuel for rescue vehicles like rescue jet-skis.

The organisation also needs more volunteers to oversee administrative tasks, welfare concerns and organise activities for the children at evacuation centres.

"If you intend to sign up as a volunteer, you had better be men-

tally prepared to face an emotionally draining situation," warned Nooraini.

Yayasan Salam executive director Md Ghani Ibrahim said volunteers were also needed to work out the logistics in cooking, cleaning and loading and unloading of supplies. "We have been to Segamat, Batu Pahat and Kluang and so far, we have deployed more than 200 volunteers, mainly from Klang Valley and Johor."

Yayasan Salam, he said, is pooling its resources again for its next mission, fixed for Jan 19-22 and is still looking for volunteers.

To contribute or volunteer, please contact Yayasan Salam at 03-7958 4021.

Cash contributions are tax-exempted and can be sent to the organisation at No. 8, Jalan Utara, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

Donation can also be made to its Public Bank account (3072879302) and contributions in kind can be directed to Nationwide Express Service (03-5163 3333), which is sponsoring the shipment of relief items.



Flood situation improves

KUALA LUMPUR: The good weather throughout the day yesterday helped improve the flood situation in several places in Johor and Pahang, allowing more evacuees to return home.

The number of flood evacuees in Johor dropped to 80,755 last night compared with 101,716 on

Monday night. Kota Tinggi town was still under water, Bernama reports.

In PAHANG, a state police spokesman said 1,836 people were still taking shelter at nine evacuation centres last night compared with 3,559 the night before. – Bernama

