

It's sunny, but waters still rising

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Govt has no choice but to open gates of dams

BATU PAHAT: Despite clear skies and sunny weather over the past few days, Batu Pahat residents are unlikely to see an end to their flood woes any time soon.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman has warned that flood waters will continue to rise for some time to come due to the large amount of water being released from three dams around the Batu Pahat area.

He said the Bekok, Sembrong and

Machap dams were already full following the first wave of floods and when the second wave hit, the water level rose to above the capacity of the dam.

He said the state government had no choice but to open the gates of the dams as water was not flowing out from the spillways fast enough.

The gates of the three dams have been left fully open 24 hours a day since Jan 10.

"The concrete wall of the dam is very strong and it will hold, but the sides are just earth and they could crumble if we do not ease the water pressure through controlled releases," he said.

"If the sides crumble, there will be a bigger disaster because entire villages will be washed away."

Abdul Ghani, however, said the state government planned to close the gates a little.



Star gift

Children at Masjid Lama Parit Awang in Batu Pahat looking at the T-shirts that were given to them by representatives of *The Star* yesterday. Some 150 T-shirts were distributed to children of 158 families from Kampung Parit Awang, Parit Selamat, Parit Arshad and Parit Abas. — AZHAR MAHFOF / *The Star*