



Datuk Ghani Othman inspecting the hydraulic pumps in Senggarang yesterday.

NST 22/1

# Stagnant floodwaters pumped out

**BATU PAHAT:** The flood situation here remains unchanged, with the district having the highest number of flood victims in Johor.

As of yesterday morning, there were 50,907 evacuees at 122 evacuation centres in the state, with 49,496 of them at 112 relief centres here.

Menteri Besar Datuk Ghani Othman said seven hydraulic pumps were installed here yesterday to drain stagnant floodwaters at tidal gates out into the Straits of Malacca.

The tidal gates are located at Sungai Parit Bintang in Peserai, Assam Kubang and Senggarang.

Ghani said the rain that fell in the district in the last 48 hours was equal to two months' rainfall.

"This caused the high water level at the tidal gates, which

are closed during high tide. Thus we had to use pumps to assist the river flow into the Straits of Malacca," he said after visiting the tidal gates at Peserai and Senggarang.

The water level at the tidal gates is about three metres above sea level.

This is one reason why the floodwaters in Batu Pahat are not receding.

The other is the topography of the surrounding area, a flat valley with only Sungai Batu Pahat carrying water into the Straits of Malacca.

There are also smaller rivers in the district flowing into Sungai Batu Pahat.

Ghani said the state government would construct more water passages from existing rivers to allow better drainage into the Straits of Malacca to prevent future floods.

He said the plan was to build passages from Sungai Sim-pang Kanan and Sungai Sem-borong within five months.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports that the International Trade and Industry Ministry will submit a report to the government on losses suffered by industries during the Johor floods for the purpose of aid.

Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said the report would be submitted once complete and accurate data on the losses was gathered when the floods were truly at an end.

"The report will be reviewed by a special committee that will be responsible for deploying aid to the affected industries.

"We know that some companies and factories are in need of support as they were crippled when floods dam-

aged their machinery and equipment," she said after leading a Wanita Umno delegation to visit flood victims at the Sri Medan relief centre here yesterday.

Rafidah, who is also Wanita Umno chief, said the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers and the Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry had been asked to compile data on the losses suffered by their members.

She said the two organisations had already completed preliminary assessments of losses suffered by members during the first wave of floods that hit the state last month.

"The ministry is collaborating with these organisations to gather more information, particularly for the Batu Pahat area, the worst-hit, where a lot of industries are located."