

2 killed as major rivers breach danger levels

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ALOR STAR: Two people have died in Kedah due to the worsening floods, which started with a downpour on Sunday.

The first victim, an elderly German woman, was reported missing after flash flood hit her son's bungalow in Kampung Kota Giam, Malau, near Jitra, about 20km from here, on Monday.

Erna Fischer, 64, was swept away by strong currents about 8pm.

She and her son, Yusof Abdullah, 41, together with his wife, Ashalehah Zain, 40, had rushed out of the bungalow only to be swept by the torrent.

The couple were swept away for about 300m before they managed to grab a tree each.

They clung on to the trees for almost three hours before they were rescued by Tenaga Nasional Bhd workers and members of the Civil Defence Department.

Ashalehah said she could only watch helplessly as strong currents swept away her mother-in-law.

At press time, Fischer's body has yet to be found. She was to have left for her home in Germany yesterday.

The second victim was 13-year-old Mohd Zaki Shaari of Kampung Cerok Bongor, near Kuala Nerang, about 40km from here.

His body was fished out from Sungai Kuala Nerang about 7pm.

Several residents alerted village elders after they spotted the boy's body about 500m away from the spot where he was last seen playing with some friends on Monday.

Although rain clouds have disappeared over Kedah and Perlis, the Meteorological Department has yet to lift the red alert it declared on the two states on Monday.

The number of flood evacuees in both states have risen by almost sixfold to about 19,000 people.

Residents in both states, especially in flood-prone areas, have been advised



German national Yusof Abdullah, 41, clinging on to a tree as he awaits rescue by members of the Civil Defence Department. — NST picture by Shahrizal Md Noor

to prepare for a major flood, similar to the one in 2005, which saw more than 15,000 people evacuated.

This, according to the authorities, was because water levels at all major rivers in low-lying areas in both states had breached the danger level.

Kubang Pasu remains the hardest-hit area, with about 11,000 people from 3,000 families evacuated to 31 temporary shelters. There were only about 300 evacuees on Monday.

A district office spokesman said Sungai Bata, the main river in the district, had a water level of 10.22m, 1.3m more than its danger level.

District Officer Datuk Noh Dahya said water level in Kubang Pasu would rise due to water flow from Padang Terap district.

In Padang Terap, 41 evacuation centres have been set up for 3,478 flood evacuees. On Monday, the number of evacuees was 1,400 people.

The water level at two of the four main rivers in the district has also risen above danger level.

At press time, water level at Sungai Kuala Nerang was 20.94m, about 4m above its danger level while at Sungai Kampung Kubu, the water level has risen to 15.50m, 2.6m above the danger level.

Also affected is the Kota Setar district where 438 people from 136 families were evacuated to seven relief centres yesterday.

Pokok Sena district saw 68 people from 17 families seeking shelter at eight relief centres.

Eleven schools — five in Kota Setar

and six in Kubang Pasu — have been closed.

Meanwhile, Universiti Utara Malaysia in Sintok has postponed the last two sessions of its 23rd convocation ceremony after the main road leading to the university was flooded on Monday.

Vice-Chancellor Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak said the fifth and sixth sessions of the three-day ceremony involving 1,373 graduates had been postponed to January.

At press time, almost two-thirds of Perlis was flooded, with some areas went under two metres of water.

A spokesman for Perlis Welfare Department flood operation centre said 4,700 people had sought refuge at 35 relief centres, compared with 1,400 people on Monday.



Mercy begins sending aid

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Relief Society (Mercy Malaysia) has activated its domestic floods response mechanism for flood victims in the northern states.

Mercy, with the help of National Security Council and local authorities, has mobilised volunteers to conduct needs assessments in flood-hit areas, especially in Kedah and Perlis.

"We have determined those areas, including Arau in Perlis and Kubang Pasu and Padang Terap in Kedah," it said in a statement.

Mercy sent 900 hygiene kits to the northern region for distribution to flood victims yesterday.

The kit contains items like toothpaste, toothbrush, comb, soap, shampoo, slippers, towels and sanitary pads.

Those wishing to donate can send their cheques to Mercy Malaysia or Mercy Malaysia Humanitarian Fund through Maybank (account name: Mercy Humanitarian Fund; account number: 5621-7950-4126) or CIMB Bank (account name: Mercy Malaysia; account number: 1424-000-6561053).

Meanwhile, in the case of fallen power lines or severed wires, contact the nearest Tenaga Nasional Bhd office or call TNB hotline at 15454.



Schoolchildren playing outside their school in Kuala Nerang yesterday.

A view of Kangar town yesterday. Almost two-thirds of Perlis is still under water. The Meteorological Department has warned of another major flood. — NST picture by Rizal Braim

84 return home as rain alert is lifted

KUALA TERENGGANU: All 84 flood evacuees from Kampung Renek, Kampung Anak Ikan and Kampung Paya in Besut returned home yesterday. A National Security Council spokesman said only nine people from Kampung Pantai Kuala Besut remained at an evacuation centre here. Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department terminated the heavy rain alert warning issued at 8.45am on Saturday at 12pm yesterday. It said the tropical depression observed earlier was now located over Andaman Sea, about 150km northwest of Pulau Langkawi. The weather condition over affected areas of Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu was expected to improve.

Rail service disrupted in Kedah, Perlis

KUALA LUMPUR: Rail services in Kedah and Perlis were been disrupted due to the floods, said Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd (KTMB). KTMB said yesterday due to the flood situation, the rail track between Arau and Tunjung from Km131 to Km130.75 had to be closed, forcing the service to be rescheduled. "The Butterworth-Bangkok and Ekspres Senandung Langkawi Hatyai-Kuala Lumpur had to be cancelled yesterday and for the interim, the Senandung-Langkawi-Hatyai-Kuala Lumpur service (northbound) will stop at Butterworth." For assistance, call KTM's help line at 1-300-88-5862 or visit the nearest railway station. — Bernama.

Safe way to fish at new seawater pond

KUALA TERENGGANU: Now that the monsoon season is here, sea fishing is no longer safe. But for the many anglers here who just have to catch their own "kerapu" (grouper), "siakap" (barramundi), "bawal" (pomfret), "jenahak" (snapper), "pari" (stingray) and other salt water fish, the can do so at the Kuala Ibai lagoon. "All they need to do is bring their fishing gear and fish without worrying about winds blowing up to 35knots or waves rising to more than five metres," said Terengganu Equestrian Resort chairman Datuk Hamzah Muhammad when opening the state's first sea water fish pond here yesterday.



340 people evacuated, nine schools closed

KOTA BARU: A total of 340 people from three villages in Rantau Panjang, Pasir Mas, were evacuated to flood centres yesterday.

The evacuees from 101 families were moved to three relief centres at the Rantau Panjang railway station, Kubang Kual mosque and Sekolah Kebangsaan Gual Tinggi.

Rantau Panjang headman Nik Arif Nik Hassan said the railway station held the largest group of people at 321, with 17 more at the mosque and two at the school.

Nik Arif said most victims moved to the centres on their own after their houses were inundated by flood water from midnight.

They were from Kampung Kedai Lama Rantau Panjang, Kampung Kubang Kual and Kampung Kubang Chenok.

One of the victims, Hasnah Yusuf, said her house was flooded every year and the family had got used to it.

"We started moving our belongings after it started raining heavily on Saturday. Water started entering our house about 7pm and rose rapidly, and we decided to evacuate to the relief centre at the railway station around midnight.

"However, the weather is fine today and the

water is receding. We hope to return home soon," said Hasnah, who evacuated with her husband, four children and her 14-month-old granddaughter.

A check at the Rantau Panjang duty free zone saw several areas still under 50cm of water.

Most of the shops and banks in the area were also closed for business.

The water level at the measuring station at Sungai Golok, Rantau Panjang, went up from 9.39m at 5pm on Monday to 10.20m at the same time yesterday. The danger level is 9m.

However, water level on Sungai Golok at Jenoh, which stood at 23.79m (danger level 23.50m) on Monday has receded to below alert level at 20.81m.

Meanwhile, eight schools in Rantau Panjang and one in Tumpat have been closed since yesterday.

State education director Hussain Awang said the affected schools in Rantau Panjang were SK Rantau Panjang, SK Sri Rantau Panjang 1, SK Sri Rantau Panjang 2, SK Lubok Stol, SK Rahmat, SK Gual Tok Deh, SMK Rantau Panjang, SJK (Cina) Khay Boon and SK Chenderong Batu in Tumpat.



Motorists braving a flooded road in Rantau Panjang yesterday.