

41,000 in shelters

Flood situation 'very bad' in Kedah, 'precarious' in Perlis

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ALOR STAR: The floods in Kedah claimed the lives of two young sisters yesterday, bringing the total number of fatalities in the state to four since Monday.

The situation in Perlis is still precarious with two-

thirds of the state inundated by floodwaters, while in Kelantan and Terengganu, it is easing up.

To date, however, more than 41,000 victims are being housed in relief centres in the three states.

The two latest victims — Siti Nadia Syukur, 13, and Sharipah, 8 — were believed to have drowned after they fell off a motorcycle, ridden by a neighbour, into an irrigation canal

in Kampung Telaga Emas, Langgar in Pokok Sena about noon.

The neighbour, Intan Malik, 14, also fell into the canal but she held onto a tree and was saved by villagers.

The two earlier victims were a 64-year-old German woman, Erna Fischer,

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NSTP media prima

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Raja Muda Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail (second from right) helping to evacuate a patient from Tuanku Fauziah Hospital which was flooded yesterday. With him is Raja Puan Muda Perlis Tuanku Lailatul Shahreen Akashah Khalil (right).



It's fun time for these children at Kampung Titi Besi, but the lack of supervision by adults puts them in harm's way.

Students to be placed in hostels for SPM

By Koi Kye Lee
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PUTRAJAYA: Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) candidates will be moved to residential schools to sit for their examination if the flood situation does not improve.

Education director-general Tan Sri Alimuddin Mohd Dom said headmasters must inform the district education officers on the latest situation. The first day of SPM is Nov 22.

"If the water level is rising, it will pose a danger to students and the schools have to be closed down temporarily."

He said he received reports that the water level had risen to more than one metre in several schools in Perlis.

"The teachers are to also report themselves to the district education

office or neighbouring schools so that their respective headmasters can contact them easily," Alimuddin said.

He added that he received reports yesterday that 12 schools had been closed in Perlis and 15 schools in Kelantan and Kedah.

He said the move to place SPM students in unaffected residential schools when the floods hit would ensure that they have a place to stay and sit their examinations.

The other students would be moved to other schools.

Earlier, he handed the Jalur Gemilang to the Malaysian contingent to the World Robot Olympiad (WRO) 2010, which will be held in the Philippines from tomorrow until Sunday.

Malaysia is represented by 13 teams from primary and secondary schools.

KUALA LUMPUR: Moved by the plight of thousands of flood evacuees in several northern states, Media Prima Bhd and the New Straits Times Press (M) Bhd yesterday launched a joint appeal to raise funds for humanitarian aid.

In a statement yesterday, Media Prima Bhd chairman Datuk Johan Jaaffar said volunteers from both companies would be deployed to assist with aid distribution next week.

"The situation in Kedah, Perlis and Kelantan is urgent.

"Media Prima is seeking to relieve the burden of victims with the launching of this fund and the deployment of volunteers," said Johan, who is appealing for contributions and assistance from the public and corporate bodies.

"Both Media Prima and NSTP will provide the public updates on the crisis and to raise awareness on the relief efforts."

The statement added that victims were in dire need of essential items such as food and drinking water, hygiene kits, blankets, baby food, diapers and other necessities.

Contributions will be channelled to affected states to bolster existing relief efforts.

For more details, call Media Prima Bhd at 03-77266333 or visit www.mediaprima.com.my.

Updates could also be obtained at www.twitter.com/mpbtalk.

Media Prima Bhd is the country's leading integrated media investment group. It owns a full equity in TV3, 8TV, ntv7 and TV9.

It also owns more than 90 per cent equity interest in the New Straits Times Press (M) Bhd, one of the country's largest publishers.

Alor Star airport closed since Tuesday

SUBANG JAYA: The Sultan Abdul Halim Airport in Alor Star, Kedah, will be closed until today except for helicopter services, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Chong Ha said yesterday. He said heavy rains forced the airport to close since Tuesday. Kong said the Langkawi International Airport, Sultan Ismail Petra Airport in Kota Baru, Kelantan, and Sultan Mahmud Airport in Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, were open as usual. Malaysia Airlines managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Tengku Azmil Zahrudin said passengers who booked flights to Alor Star were allowed to reschedule or pick a nearest destination. — Bernama

Four more schools closed in Kelantan

KOTA BARU: Another four schools have been closed since the floods hit Kelantan on Saturday, bringing the total number of school closures to 13. State Education director Hussain Awang said three of the schools were in Pasir Mas (SK Bakong, SK Kok Pauh and SK Gual Sitok) and the fourth was in Tumpat (SK Bendang Pak Yong). A spokesman from the operations room in Pasir Mas said the water levels in all rivers of the state, except for Sungai Golok in Rantau Panjang, had subsided. At 4pm yesterday, the level in Sungai Golok was 1.1m above the danger level of 9m. He added that 121 families were still at three relief centres in Rantau Panjang.



Alor Star townsfolk trying to save their vehicles after a stretch of road at Anak Bukit was inundated. — NST pictures by Shahrizal Md Noor, Shahidi Shahidan, Ahmad Fayadh Abdul Manap and Rahmat Othman

Skies clear but anxiety remains

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who drowned in Kampung Kota Giam near Jitra on Monday night and schoolboy, Mohd Zaki Shaari, 13, who fell into a pond in Kampung Charok Bongor on Tuesday.

Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak said the number of evacuees in Kedah and Perlis were rising.

This was despite clear skies over the past two days and the Meteorological Department lifting the red alert status for the states on Tuesday.

Azizan said residents in Kedah, especially in low-lying areas, should brace for the worst.

He said the "very bad" situation in Kedah — in the districts of Kubang

Pasu, Padang Terap, Kota Setar and Pokok Sena — was compounded by high sea tides.

But he expressed relief that Federal and state government agencies, as well as non-governmental organisations, had been quick in providing relief to the victims.

"The state government has approved a RM300,000 allocation for flood relief efforts."

Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Md Isa Sabu said about two-thirds of the state were still under water, including several relief centres.

"The floods are worse than in 2005," he said.

He added that during that time, only 19,000 victims were evacuated in both states.

The floods this time had caused the closure of the North-South Expressway in Changlun, Kedah, since Monday.

Power and water supplies to four districts were also disrupted with Kota Setar being the hardest hit.

Offices and eateries, especially food stalls in both states, have yet to resume business since Monday.

Bottled water is also quickly running out at most supermarkets and hypermarkets.

At press time, Kubang Pasu recorded the highest number of evacuees at 15,275; Padang Terap at 3,993; Kota Setar at 4,543; and Pokok Sena at 823.

Fifty-five schools have been closed in Kedah, Perlis and Kelantan.



Dark clouds cast an air of gloominess in Kangar as floodwaters fill most of the town.