



River city: An aerial view of Alor Setar in front of Bulatan Maal Hijrah yesterday. Although the flood situation in most parts of Kedah has improved, it is not the same in the city with many roads still closed. The Sultan Abdul Halim Airport also remains closed. Reports on Pages 6 and 7. — ZAINUDIN AHAD / The Star

13 schools to reopen tomorrow

KOTA BARU: Thirteen schools in Pasir Mas and Tumpat districts will reopen tomorrow after being closed three days ago.

Kelantan education director Hussein Awang said the headmasters had been told to reopen the schools as the flood situation in the state had improved.

The 13 national schools with over 7,000 students were ordered closed after Sungai Golok overflowed its banks.

They are SK Sri Rantau Panjang (1); SK Sri Rantau Panjang (11); SK Rantau Panjang; SK Lubok Setoi; SK Kok Pauh, SK Rahmat; SK Gual Sitok, SK Gual Tok Deh; SMK Rantau Panjang; SRJKC Khay Boon; SK Bakong, SK Chenderong Batu and SK Bendang Pak Yong.

In Pendang, Padiberas Nasional Berhad (Bernas) will contribute rice, sugar, bread and mineral water worth RM500,000 to flood victims in Kedah and Perlis. — Bernama

Man drowns while trying to rescue wife

KUANTAN: A man drowned while attempting to rescue his newly-wedded wife after both of them were swept away by strong currents during a family picnic at a recreational spot in Kampung Pasir Kubur, Sungai Lembing here.

It is learnt that Mohd Hazrul Abdul Jalil, 26, had taken his wife Norfaridah Mohd Amin, 26, together with his mother and younger brother, Mohd Helmi, 25, to the spot for a picnic at 10.30am.

Relating the incident, Mohd Helmi said his brother and his wife had gone for a dip at the deeper end of the river when they were suddenly swept away by strong currents.

"My brother tried to push his wife up to the surface, to a shallow part of the river where passers-by pulled them to the river bank," he said.

"One of the passers-by performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on my brother but paramedics who arrived soon after, pronounced him dead. My sister-in-law survived the ordeal," said Mohd Helmi. — Bernama

Girl drowns in irrigation canal

KOTA BARU: An 11-year-old girl's selfless act met a tragic end when she drowned while trying to save her nine-year-old cousin at an irrigation canal in Kampung Tualang, Bangu, here.

The body of Siti Nur Fatimah Sharom was found 30 minutes after the incident yesterday.

The victim's uncle, Ismail Harun, 34, said Siti Nur Fatimah had jumped into the canal on seeing Mohd Faiz experiencing difficulties but was swept away by the current in the 10am incident. A friend of Mohd Faiz, also nine, pulled him to safety, said Ismail, the boy's father.

"Siti Nur Fatimah was found about 10 metres from the spot," he added.

A spokesman at Binjai police station confirmed the incident. — Bernama



Crowded house: Flood victims making do with what they have at a relief centre in Jalan Suka Menanti in Alor Setar yesterday.

Flood mission in full swing

DPM to travel to Kedah to study the situation

JITRA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said all federal government agencies have been mobilised to help the flood victims in Kedah and Perlis, while his deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said in Pagoh that he will be visiting flood-hit areas in Kedah today.

Najib said the agencies had been helping to move the victims to relief centres and send aid to them since the two states were hit by floods on Nov 1.

He told his political secretary Datuk Shahlan Ismail via a telephone conversation that he understood the ordeal the flood victims in Kedah and Perlis were going through.

Shahlan, who was presenting aid to flood-hit villagers in Kampung Pulau Timbul here, said the Prime Minister said this when briefed on

the flood situation in Kedah and Perlis.

"I called him to tell him about the situation. From his hospital bed, he (Najib) expressed his sympathy and at the same time he is grateful for the prayers made by the people for his recovery," said Shahlan.

Shahlan added that the Prime Minister's office will send 10,000 stoves that would be handed to flood victims in Perlis.

He said the stoves were contributed by Proton Holding Berhad, Bank Muamalat, Bank Rakyat, Perak state government and Bakti.

"This is one of our efforts to ease the burden faced by the victims once the floodwaters subside," he said.

Muhyiddin said during his visit to Kedah today, he would look at how the federal government can help the

high number of flood victims.

He said it was important to ensure trucks and boats were readily available to enable aid and food supplies to reach the victims fast.

"It is also vital to look into safety measures to protect lives and properties during the flood," he added. He also said the floods in Kedah could have caused extensive damage to the economy, especially to the padi fields and businesses.

"The Government will look into providing some assistance to those affected," he said after launching the Johor Community Colleges' entrepreneurship programme in Pagoh yesterday.

Muhyiddin said the Kedah state government should immediately provide free water supply to the affected victims as water is under the state's jurisdiction.

On the possibility of rescheduling the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) and *Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* (STPM) examinations, Muhyiddin said the flood situation was expected to improve before the SPM examination, scheduled to start on Nov 23.

Meanwhile, the Education Ministry's Matriculation department has postponed the start of the 2010/2011 teaching and learning sessions for Perlis and Kedah due to the floods.

The ministry said in a statement that the Perlis Matriculation College session has been moved from Nov 8 to Nov 11, while the Kedah Matriculation College has postponed it from Nov 7 to Nov 10.

For the other colleges, the dates for the second semester remains as stated in the 2010 calendar.

Family forced to make a home out of a bus stop

By EDMUND NGO
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ALOR SETAR: About 50 people are living in tents on a road divider and at bus stops in Titi Gajah after being forced out of their homes by floods.

Among them were Ismail Mahmud and his extended family who are staying in a tent, which is set-up at a bus stop, while waiting for the floods to recede.

Ismail, 69, said he and his wife initially moved to his son's house on Tuesday.

"However, my son's place was flooded on Wednesday morning, leaving us with no choice but to relocate here at this bus stop," he said.

The bus stop, next to a padi field, is located 3km away from his house

where flood waters still remain at chest high level as of yesterday.

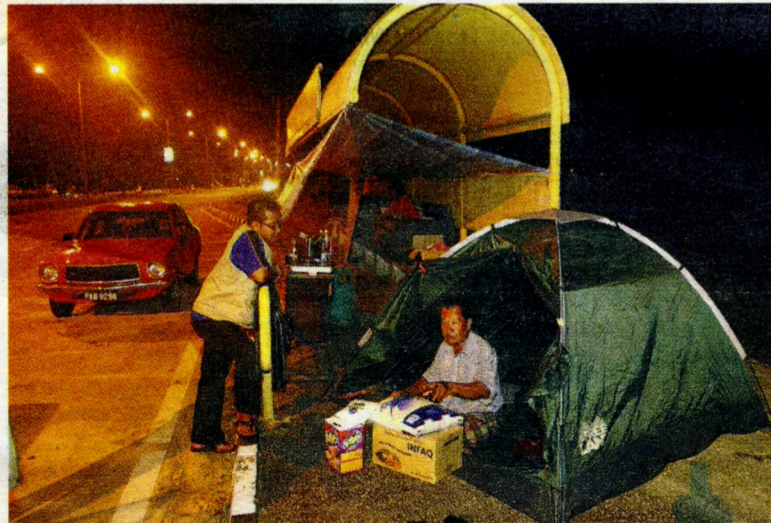
Ismail said all 10 of them, including his daughter and her family members, had to cram under the shelter of the bus stop on Wednesday night with some of their belongings.

"We contacted a relative in Penang who sent us this tent the next day and took six family members to Penang, leaving four of us to look after our belongings," he said.

Ismail hoped the water would subside soon as they had been surviving on rice, sardines and eggs.

During an interview last night, a group of Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia volunteers handed some rations to the family.

Ismail said he approached a relief centre on Wednesday but was turned away as the place was full.



Thank you: Ismail (seated) with a ABIM representative who presented him some rations at his bus stop home in Titi Gajah, Alor Setar.

Floods still bad in Alor Setar

Situation improves across Kedah except in state capital

By **EMBUN MAJID**

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ALOR SETAR: Many parts of the city remain inundated although the flood situation in Kedah has improved.

The number of evacuees has dropped to 33,563 people in 87 relief centres in the state.

While more people in the other districts are returning home, the reverse is happening in the Kota Setar district. Some 19,591 people sought shelter yesterday, up from 16,336 a day earlier.

A state National Security Centre spokesman said there were 12,242 evacuees in Kubang Pasu district while all centres in Padang Terap district had been closed after the victims returned home yesterday.

In Pokok Sena, 480 people are staying in five evacuation centres while 249 people are in a relief centre in Pendang.

He said several roads are still closed for all vehicles including Jalan Sultan Badlishah, Jalan Teluk Wan Jah, Jalan Alor Setar-Kangar, Jalan Alor Janggus-Kangar, Jalan Alor Janggus-Gunung Keriang, Jalan GunungKeriang-Sungai Korok and also the North-South Expressway from the KM28 stretch onwards.

Roads that have been opened for all vehicles include Anak Bukit-Kepala Batas road, Jalan Hutan Kampung Kepala Batas and Jalan Sultanah.

"Most of the flooded roads that are in knee-deep water and are still dangerous to light vehicles," he said.

The spokesman said that flood waters would fully recede in the Kota Setar district if the good weather continues the next two days.

The Sultan Abdul Halim airport is still closed while the water level at the menteri besar's house in Jalan Sultanah is now below knee-level.

Meanwhile, Sultan Kedah Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah has urged all parties, corporate bodies and the private sector to help ease the burden faced by flood victims.

"I am saddened by the flood that has affected the people but I want everyone to learn from this episode," he said after a special briefing by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak yesterday.

The Sultan also announced a RM500,000 aid from the state tithe collection and RM100,000 personal donation to help the flood victims.

Earlier, Sultan Kedah, who arrived at the Sultan Abdul Halim Stadium on a helicopter, met some of the 2,000 flood victims at the stadium.

He was accompanied by Sultanah Kedah Tuanku Haminah Hamidun, daughter Datuk Seri Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz Sultan Abdul Halim and Azizan.

The royal couple spent about 45 minutes with the victims.



Rescue lorry: Sungai Baru residents hitching a ride on a lorry to get to dry ground yesterday.

Nine-year-old girl's body found after three days

ALOR SETAR: Police have recovered the body of a young flood victim.

She is believed to be one of two girls who were swept away by strong currents while playing near a flooded padi field in Tanjung Bendahara, near here, three days ago.

Kota Setar OCPD Asst Comm Abdul Ghafar Rajab said the body was found at a rubbish trap at Sungai Tanjung Bendahara at about 9am yesterday.

"We could not identify the girl because of her physical condition. We will conduct a DNA test to

check her identity," he told newsmen here.

The two girls – Nurul Irshah Rosli, nine, and Awwad Hakimi Rudaini, seven – were swept away by flood waters at 12.30pm last Thursday.

Five people have drowned in flood waters in Kedah since Nov 1.