

Floods mean business

People shopping around to replace damaged goods

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ALOR STAR: The business community here is poised for a busy period ahead with businesses expected to soar now that the floods have begun to recede.

Demand for goods such as cleaning materials, kitchen equipment, cabinets, clothes, furniture, electronic and electrical items are expected to jump.

Apart from retailers, service operators such as car wash services, laundrettes and car workshops are expected to enjoy brisk business.

A workshop operator in Jalan Pumpong here, Leong Hoon Fatt, 57, said the number of vehicles damaged in the floods was double that of

the 2005 flood disaster.

He estimated the cost of repairs would range between RM1,000 and RM2,000 for cars and four-wheel-drive vehicles and imported cars depending on the price of spare-parts.

"Normally, the parts damaged are clutch plates, ball bearings and gear boxes," he said.

He added as of yesterday, six vehicles were already at his workshop.

Leong and his six mechanics worked from morning to late evening daily to fix the vehicles.

He also suffered losses when his workshop, located just metres away from the Pumpong river, was flooded and six car engines were damaged.

A used-furniture trader from Titi Gajah, Azizi Ali, who suffered a loss

of nearly RM200,000 when almost all his supply was damaged, described the situation as a blessing in disguise.

Azizi, 40, sells imported used furniture from Singapore, such as cabinets, beds, sleeping mattresses, dining tables, sofas and office equipment.

Furniture worth about RM40,000 which was supposed to be delivered to a buyer was also destroyed by the floods.

"I almost had a nervous breakdown on seeing the massive destruction, but I told myself not to give up as people would need to replace their damaged furniture," he said.

Azizi and his 10 workers have already started cleaning and repairing the furniture while those that could

not be salvaged were discarded.

Other than furniture, electrical suppliers were also increasing their stock as they were faced with a demand for washing machines, refrigerators and television sets, the basic items that were mostly destroyed by the floods.

Car wash operators were also beginning to have a brisk business with thousands of vehicle owners starting to send their vehicles for cleaning.

A manager at a kitchen and hardware shop in Jitra, Tew Hoong Liang, 35, said its *lelong* (auction) sale since Monday was a hit among the local folks.

"We gave a 50 per cent discount on items that were soiled or slightly spoiled by the floods but still in good condition," he said.