

5,000 students miss first day of school

KOTA BARU: More than 5,000 students from eight schools in Rantau Panjang and Tumpat were unable to start their new school term because their schools were flooded by water between 1m and 1.5m deep.

State Education director Hussain Awang said the schools were SMK Rantau Panjang, SK Rantau Panjang, SK Sri Rantau Panjang 1, SJK (C) Koy Boon, SK Lubok Setoi in Rantau Panjang and SK Bendang Pak Yong, SK Simpangan dan Sekolah Agama Bantuan Kerajaan (SABK) Nurulhuda in Tumpat.

He said SK Bihai in Gua Musang was also closed as it was inaccessible after a landslide.

He also added that the bridge leading to the school was damaged.

"The teachers at the schools have been told to wait for instructions before opening the schools in the next few days.

"We want to make sure it is safe before the schools are reopened," he said.

Meanwhile, the last two evacuation centres in Kelantan were closed yesterday.

A district operations room spokesman said the centres at the Rantau Panjang railway station and SK Gual Tinggi, also in Rantau Panjang, were closed at 10am and 1pm, respectively.

The 403 people who were staying at the centres, some since Friday, returned home after the flood in their areas subsided.

The water level of the Golok river at Rantau Panjang has dropped to 9.6m but is still above the danger level of 9m.

In Nibong Tebal, Penang, a two-hour downpour yesterday wreaked havoc, leaving 60 houses from two villages in Sungai Kechil flooded with metre-deep water yesterday.

Most of the victims, who were busy with the new school term, failed to move their furniture and electrical items in time as the water level rose within an hour after heavy rain started at 8.30am.

The two villages affected were Kampung Besar and Kampung Nenas.

Seberang Perai Selatan police chief Superintendent Shafien Mamat said one senior citizen was temporarily relocated to the Sungai Kechil public hall.

He said apart from the two villages, the heavy rain also triggered flash floods in Kampung Situ in Sungai Jawi, Jalan Tasek in Simpang Ampat



SMK Rantau Panjang staff, Mohamad Nor Ishak, 48, (right) and Mohamad Samah, 55, cleaning up the school yesterday.

and at the Jawi Veterinary Department office.

Shafien said there were no plans as yet to relocate villagers from the affected areas as the flash floods were expected to subside within four and five hours depending on the weather condition.

Nevertheless, he said police, Nibong Tebal firemen and the Civil Defence Department have been put on standby at the scene.

Officers from the Nibong Tebal Welfare Services Department were also at Sungai Kechil to distribute food supply to the affected villagers.



Mohd Sharul Basri, 13, a student of SM Agama Tarbiah Chabang Empat is ferried by boat to school after the roads leading from his house at Kampung Bendang Pak Yong, Tumpat, are submerged. — NST pictures by Syamsi Suhaimi