

DPM: Use all means to help victims

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PAGO: Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin has asked government departments and agencies to use any means necessary to get aid to flood victims.

He said they should use their ingenuity, especially in areas that had been cut off by floodwaters.

"In areas that are difficult to reach, I hope there will be helicopters on standby to deliver supplies," he said after attending a briefing on the flood

situation in Pagoh, besides visiting several flood relief centres here.

Also present was his wife Puan Sri Norainee Abdul Rahman.

Muhyiddin also witnessed the presentation of a RM30,000 contribution by TSM Charity Golf competition deputy president Datuk Mustapha Buang to Bukit Serampang assemblyman, Tahir Taat.

More than 6,422 people, evacuated due to floods in Pagoh, have been placed in 35 relief centres.

"The evacuation was done properly, with no casualties. The distribu-

tion of aid was done well, including to areas that were difficult to reach."

On suggestions that rivers in the state be straightened and deepened to prevent floods, Muhyiddin said he would discuss the matter with Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Douglas Ugah Embas.

"We have identified the affected rivers under the project which will cost RM4 billion. In Muar alone, the project will cost RM1 billion," Muhyiddin said. "I have asked that priority be given to Muar as the district has been badly affected."



Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and wife Puan Sri Norainee Abdul Rahman (on his left) play with 4-month-old Nurul Alisa Nuraidy, as her mother, Isnah Ramly, 27, (left) looks on, during a visit to a flood relief centre in Pagoh, Johor, yesterday. — Bernama picture

More evacuees return home

MUAR: The flood situation in Johor continued to improve yesterday as rain eased off in almost all areas in the state.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, who toured flood-hit areas in Muar and Ledang districts yesterday nonetheless directed all agencies to continue be on alert.

"We need to keep surveillance on water levels and be ready to evacuate affected residents."

He said despite water levels receding and improving weather, flooding in low-lying areas could still occur as rivers were prone to overflowing their banks.

Ghani said the current flood was unlike the major disaster in 2006 as this time, heavy rain seemed to only persist in Segamat district.

"We are keeping a close watch on three rivers in Segamat, Batu Pahat and Muar to ensure excessive water

does not overflow the banks," he said when met at one of the five relief centres in Ledang.

Ghani was accompanied by his wife Professor Datin Paduka Dr Jamilah Ariffin, who is also the president of Johor Association of State Assemblymen's Wives (Juita). With them were Ledang member of parliament Hamim Samuri, assemblymen Goh Tee Tee of Tangkak and M. M. Asojan of Gambir and community leaders.

The five relief centres in Ledang were SK Abdullah, Bukit Kangkar hall, SK Sialang, Sekolah Agama Simpang Lima Darat and SK Simpang Lima Darat which yesterday housed 448 families comprising 2,306 people including 32 babies under 2 years old.

The flood victims were given food items, blankets and clothings.

Ghani said as of 8am yesterday, about 47,000 people were still at 232

relief centres in Johor with Segamat topping the list with 21,000 people.

The numbers dropped further at noon to 43,364 people at 227 relief centres.

Meanwhile, Jamilah said Juita members had been mobilised to assist flood victims and a contribution of RM50,000 was made for those in Ledang.

In **Malacca**, only 1,078 people remained in evacuation centres yesterday evening compared with 1,516 at noon, a flood operations room spokesman said.

They comprised 484 people in Melaka Tengah, 449 in Jasin and 145 in Alor Gajah.

The spokesman expected the number of evacuees to further drop today.

In **Negri Sembilan**, only 899 people remained in evacuation centres in Tampin and Jempol as the flood situation eased further.



Raja Zarith Sofiah inquiring about the health of Halimah Mohd Saleh, 79, one of the flood victims at the Kota Jaya Multipurpose Hall in Kota Tinggi.



Mohd Sarip Mohd Tahar, 48, and his sons Mohd Farhan, 18, (left) and Mohd Farid try to save a calf from drowning in the floodwaters in Kampung Pogoh 2, Segamat, yesterday. — NST picture by Sairien Nafis

RM40m to repair roads in three states

MALACCA: The cost to repair federal roads in flood-hit Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Johor is expected to be less than those incurred during the floods in 2006, deputy chief executive officer of Selia Group, Amli Talib said.

He estimated that the cost to repair roads in the three states, which are under the company's maintenance, to be between RM30 million and RM40 million.

He said this after handing over the company's aid to the flood victims at Sekolah Kebangsaan Krubong, here, yesterday.

Tangga Batu member of parliament Datuk Idris Haron handed over the aid.

Amli said the actual cost of the restoration works would, however, depend on the final assessment to be carried out by the company after the

floods had subsided.

He said during the floods, the company and the Public Works Department were monitoring the condition of the roads and had carried out emergency repairs to badly damaged ones.

He added that five areas which had extremely damaged roads were in Bahau and Gemas in Negri Sembilan, and Segamat, Kluang and Kota Tinggi in Johor.

"As part of our corporate social responsibility programme, we have allocated RM100,000 to provide assistance to the affected people," he said.

Members of the public in the three states can report damage to federal roads to Selia Selenggara Selatan Sdn Bhd at 06-2318140 or its website at www.selia.com.my:81/adu2/. — Bernama

Floods claim third victim

KOTA TINGGI: Despite the improving situation, the floods in Johor claimed its third victim yesterday.

Mariamman Narayanasamy, 53, from Kampung Bukit Samsu, Lukut Cina here, was reported missing by her family on Sunday.

They only realised she was missing at 6pm and, with the help of their neighbours, conducted a search.

Failing to locate her, the family lodged a missing person's report.

At 10.20am yesterday, Mariamma's body was found inside a two-metre deep drain by the roadside heading toward Lukut Cina, which was located several metres away from her house.

Kota Tinggi police chief Superintendent Osman Sebut said that investigations revealed that the victim had fallen into the drain and drowned.

Mariamman's body was sent to the Kota Tinggi Hospital for a post-mortem.

Osman said her death had been classified as sudden death.

Two women, also in their 50s, were the state's other flood fatalities so far.

Both were killed on Sunday night.

Rohani Ismail, 51, died after strong currents swept away the Perodua Kancil she was driving at Km145 in Cha'ah in Labis, Segamat.

In the second incident, Aw Yoke Lin, 53, of Taman Pelangi in Kulaijaya, died after the 4-wheel drive she was in was swept away by strong currents into a river in Kampung Rahmat, Kulaijaya.

Osman urged motorists to practise caution when driving and not to attempt to drive through flooded areas when the currents were strong.

Channel aid to victims promptly, says sultan

MUADZAM SHAH: Sultan of Pahang, Sultan Ahmad Shah called on the relevant authorities to improve the management system for flood victims to enable them to receive aid.

He said the management system adopted by the District Natural Disaster Relief Committee here was still weak and had resulted in flood victims, especially those living in rural areas, having to wait longer to receive aid.

"I hope all the relevant authorities will work together and ensure the flood victims receive the much-needed assistance," he said before visiting flood victims at the Bandar Tun Razak multipurpose hall and Kampung Rekoh Baru community hall yesterday.

Also present were Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and State Secretary Datuk Seri Muhammad Saffian Ismail.

Meanwhile, in Kota Tinggi, Raja Zarith Sofiah Sultan Idris Shah, the consort of Sultan of Johor Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar,

yesterday praised the authorities in handling the floods in the state.

She said the authorities had done well as the flood victims were provided with the necessary assistance, which included medical needs.

She said this during her visit to look into the welfare of flood victims at the Kota Jaya multipurpose hall here and at Sek Men Teknik Kota Tinggi.

Raja Zarith also donated boxes of daily necessities which included toiletries, milk, coffee, tea, rice and other items.

"With the combined effort by government agencies, non-governmental organisations and uniformed associations, things seem not to be too bad.

"What is equally important is for us to continue providing them with support once they return to their respective homes which could be damaged by the floods."



Sultan of Pahang Sultan Ahmad Shah having a word with a young flood victim during a visit to the Bandar Tun Razak multipurpose hall in Keratong yesterday. — NST picture by Azmaidi Abidin