

Braced for floods

Kedah and Perlis prepare relief centres and conduct drills

ALOR SETAR: Authorities in Kedah and Perlis are on their toes following the deteriorating flood situation in Thailand.

They are establishing relief centres in flood-prone areas, preparing equipment and conducting rescue drills.

The Kedah Civil Defence Department, which has been inspecting the water levels at several rivers, said its focus was on districts such as Padang Terap and Kubang Pasu.

Perlis Welfare Committee chairman Mansor Jusoh said the state could be affected if the floods hit southern Thai districts.

A committee has been formed to monitor the situation, including the level at the Timah Tasoh dam, he said.

Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said the floods, which were the worst in seven decades, might take up to six weeks to recede.

Thailand has already recorded 356 casualties and about 110,000 residents have been displaced.

So far, Bangkok's airports are operating normally.

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That sinking feeling

Motorists driving through a flooded highway at Don Muang district in Bangkok yesterday. Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra warned people in parts of Bangkok to expect floods as water from the northern provinces had reached the capital. Flooding has swept through northern Thailand for two months, leaving 356 people dead and two missing. More than 2.4 million people have been affected in the worst floods to hit the kingdom in seven decades. See Page 34. — EPA

Kedah and Perlis on flood alert

Relief centres in water-logged areas identified and 500 personnel on standby



Just in case: Kota Setar Civil Defence (JPM) personnel preparing their speed boat and aluminium boat at their base at Wisma Persekutuan in Alor Setar, Kedah, yesterday. — G.C. Tan / The Star

ALOR SETAR: The floods in Thailand have put officials in Kedah and Perlis on alert, with relief centres already being identified in flood-prone areas.

Kedah Civil Defence Department director Mohtar Samat said the department had been conducting weekly training for its 500 personnel over several months.

"We want everyone to understand their role during floods. The training covers rescue missions, too," he said.

Mohtar said the department had 22 fibreglass boats and three five-tonne trucks that could be used during rescue missions, adding that it had also sent teams to survey flood-prone areas in Kubang Pasu, Pendang, Padang Terap and Kota Setar.

"Our focus is on the Padang Terap and Kubang Pasu districts, since the areas would be the first to bear the brunt of rising waters.

"We have inspected rivers there, especially Sungai Padang Terap, Sungai Wang Tepus, Sungai Anak Bukit and Sungai Bakar Bata," he said.

Perlis Welfare Committee chairman Mansor Jusoh said the state was ready to handle any flood.

He said if the floods reached Sadao or other southern Thai districts, there was a possibility that the state would be similarly affected.

Mansor said a committee had been formed to monitor the flood situation, including checking the water level at the Timah Tasoh dam.

"The state Drainage and Irrigation Department has been giving us updates on the water level," he said, adding that over 20 flood relief centres in Padang Besar, Kangar and Arau had been identified.

He added that the state had also identified suppliers of essential food items for the relief centres.