

Two swept away by strong currents

FATAL: Students believed drowned when they entered river

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TWO teenagers are believed to have drowned after they were swept away by strong currents while swimming in Sungai Pemandi in Kampung Makam, near here.

The two victims, who were identified as Zamil Zainal Abidin, 13, and Mohd Aidil Ismail, 14, of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bandar Kota Tinggi, Johor, had gone for a swim with two friends on Saturday at 6.45pm.

Only Zamil and Aidil went into the water while the two others waited by the river bank.

It is believed that the four friends

had gone to the river after returning from a wedding where the teenagers had played the *kompang*.

Although Zamil has been missing for nearly 24 hours, his 41-year-old mother has refused to return home from the site of the incident as she was hoping for her son to be found alive.

Jamaliah Basri said she would wait until there was news of her son, the eldest among four children.

According to one of their friends who declined to be named, the two boys had just entered the water when they ex-

perienced difficulties due to the strong current.

"We tried to help but it happened too fast and they were quickly swept away."
Teenager who witnessed incident

"We tried to help but it happened too fast and they were quickly swept away," he said.

"From what we saw, it appeared as if Zamil got into difficulties first, and Aidil had gone in to help him. Then both Zamil and Aidil disappeared," he said.

Twenty-eight firemen and 15 policemen were involved in the search and rescue operation.

Kota Tinggi Fire and Rescue chief Mohd Ismail Latif said it would resume the operation until 7am today.



Dr Yasiman Yusoff, 54, of Klinik Perdana in Rantau Panjang, attending to 1-year-old Ainal Mardiah Herman who is held by his mother, Mariana Abd Kadir, 29, in the flooded clinic yesterday. Pic by Fathil Asri

Clinic open despite floods

RANTAU PANJANG: The clinic in Jalan Lubuk Setol here is still drawing patients despite the overflowing water from Sungai Golok nearby.

A clinic worker said it reopened on Saturday after closing for two days since Thursday when floodwaters rose more than 0.5m.

"We washed the clinic on Saturday as everything was back to normal, but, suddenly, the water began to rise again yesterday.

"The clinic was flooded up to 0.3m yesterday, but the patients did not mind as there were not many clinics here.

"We had about only 10 patients each on Saturday and yesterday. The majority of them were suffering from flu.

"The numbers have dwindled as many people cannot come here as some of the village roads are cut off because of the floods."

Search for 2 missing youths called off

KOTA BARU: Search operations for two people who went missing in Machang and Rantau Panjang on Saturday were called off at 6pm yesterday without their bodies being found.

A Fire and Rescue Department spokesman said operations were expected to resume at 8am today.

Mohd Alif Razuan Azman, 15, went missing while playing with friends in Sungai Kemuning in Machang at 4.30pm.

In the other incident in Rantau Panjang, Azam Che Omar, 20, a Thai from Kampung Tok Lebir, Sungai Golok, went missing in Sungai Golok at 7pm.

The floods in the state had claimed four lives, including a 2-year-old toddler.

The number of evacuees in the state increased despite improved weather in the last two days.

The number of victims at evacuation centres in three districts numbered 1,761 yesterday, compared with 1,760 on Saturday.

A spokesman from the state flood operation centre said Pasir Mas continued to have the biggest number of evacuees, 1,230 people compared with 1,148 people the previous day.

The evacuees in Kota Baru remained unchanged at 34, while the numbers in Tumpat rose to 497 from 491.

The spokesman said only Sungai Golok was recorded at above the danger level as at 6pm. Its water level measured at 10.16m, way above the danger level of 9m.

Seven road stretches remained closed to light vehicles, five of them in Pasir Mas, and two in Tumpat.

In **Pasir Mas**, the affected roads are Jalan Pohon Tanjung-Meranti, Jalan Pohon Tanjung-Rantau Panjang (Jalan Lama) Kampung Siram, Km10 of Jalan Rantau Panjang-Panglima Bayu, Km1 of Jalan Banggol Kulim Lokasi 2 and Km3 of Jalan Pengkalan Rakit.

In **Tumpat**, the affected roads are

Km3 of Jalan Cabang 4/Kampung Jambu/Meranti and Km2 of Jalan Keselamatan (Kesban) Pengkalan Kubor-Kampung Jambu.

In **Kuala Terengganu**, flood waters had subsided in all districts in the state except Kuala Terengganu, where 134 evacuees are still at the SK Guntong relief centre as at 2pm yesterday.

The heavy rain that occurred in all districts the past weeks was replaced with sunny skies, although the strong winds and rough seas persisted.

The last relief centre, with 77 evacuees in Kampung Beris Tok Ku, Setiu, was closed yesterday after the evacuees returned home as Sungai Setiu returned to normal level.

Setiu was the hardest hit district with more than 1,500 people in evacuation centres at the height of the floods last Wednesday.

The situation was also back to normal in Marang, with the last 23 victims in Kampung Pasir Puteh and Kampung Jenang allowed to return home.

In **Kuala Lumpur**, Bernama reports that Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob gave an assurance that supply of daily necessities would be adequate during the flood season.

He said the public need not worry as the government had allowed wholesalers and traders to stock up 30 per cent more of the quantity of goods from the normal due to the flood season.

"There is no reason for supplies to run out or a price hike.

"In fact, food is given free to flood victims by the government," he said.

"If there is food supply shortage in certain areas, it may be due to excess buying," he said, adding that the ministry's enforcement division would continue monitoring the supply and prices of goods to protect consumers' interest.

Less rain in next 3 days

KUALA LUMPUR: Though the rain appears to be easing off for now, the Meteorological Department and non-governmental organisations are still keeping an eye out for changes in weather conditions.

Mercy Malaysia vice-president Associate Prof Dr Mohamed Ikram Mohamed Salleh said its chapters in flood-hit states had the situation under control.

"We are monitoring the situation and preparing hygiene kits, should the need arise," he said over the phone.

Ikram said the hygiene kits, which consisted of soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, towel and blanket, were im-

portant in times of constant flooding.

"If you don't take good care of your hygiene, you could easily contract communicable illnesses," he said.

A spokesman from the Malaysian Meteorological Department said there would be no alerts issued in the next two to three days as rainfall would not be as severe as it was previously.

"There will be isolated rainfall along the east coast areas in the afternoons and nights but not as heavy as before," he said, while advising those in affected areas to keep informed through the department's website.