



Wet, wet in Kuching

An aerial view of Jalan Laksamana Cheng Ho in Kuching which was inundated after heavy rainfall. It poured almost half a month's total of rainfall in less than 12 hours, causing massive jams and crippling the city. A student and a would-be rescuer are also missing after falling into a monsoon drain. See Page 8. — FRANCIS HO / The Star

Two missing in Kuching flash floods



Car pool: Heavy flash floods which hit various parts of Kuching yesterday left many vehicles submerged in floodwaters.

Massive inundation leaves city crippled

By VANES DEVINDRAN and YU JI
sarawakstar@thestar.com.my

KUCHING: A student and her would-be rescuer are missing after both fell into a monsoon drain during massive flash floods that left the city crippled.

Kho Ying Oi, 19, and Herman Sihas, a 29-year-old petrol station employee, have yet to be found at press time yesterday.

Kho slipped and fell into the drain while walking to a bus stop to wait for her mother after her car stalled in the floodwaters.

Herman then jumped in to save her but was swept away by the heavy current.

The flash floods inundated various parts of the city due to a combination of continuous rain and high tide.

The floods, with waters swamping even areas that had previously not been affected, caused massive traffic jams.

State Welfare, Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah said five schools were closed. Two Chung Hua primary schools were also reported closed.

As at 5pm, about 1,400 people from 300 families have been evacuated to five flood relief centres. The largest group of 418 evacuees is at Balai Raya Sinar Budi Baru.

State Disaster and Relief Committee chairman Tan Sri Alfred Jabu said the flooding could have been worse if not for the Sungai Sarawak barrage.

"The river could have burst its banks and spilled over to the Waterfront and affected other parts badly.

"On Dec 25 and 26, the water levels were over 10m due to the King Tide as well as the floodwaters flowing into the river," he said.


EDUCATION FAIR 2012


7 & 8 January 2012, 11am - 7pm
Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, KL

Education & Career Talks

Study and Work Overseas
12.45pm on Saturday, 7 January 2012



Topic: Opportunities in Ireland
by Terry McParland, Manager,
International Education Services,
Education in Ireland.

FREE ADMISSION

For other talks, visit
<http://thestar.com.my/edufair>

Jabu added that the committee did not issue alerts earlier because the committee wanted to prevent panic.

"No one could have predicted that there was going to be 150mm of rainfall between 5am and 8am," Jabu said.

Between midnight and afternoon yesterday, the Meteorological Department's weather stations in certain parts here received as much as 210mm of rainfall.

As at 5pm yesterday, live video footage showed the barrage's water level at 9m, about a metre below the alert level.

The department is forecasting strong winds and rough seas until Tuesday. The committee also listed 11 areas in Sarawak as "flood-prone", including Kuching, Bintulu, Kapit, Sibul and Limbang.