

Sarawak rivers at danger level

ALL READY: Proactive measures taken and personnel on standby

KUALA LUMPUR

WITH the devastation of super storm Sandy still fresh in the minds of the 14,000 Malaysians residing in the hardest-hit east coast US states, Malaysians here are bracing themselves for one of the worst monsoon seasons in recent years.

Since early last week, there have been thunderstorms and incessant rain in Johor, Selangor, Perak and Malacca in the late afternoon and early evening. The number of flood evacuees has risen to more than 4,000 in the four states.

The National Security Council, on its website (<http://portalbanjir.mkn.gov.my/>), said 4,248 evacuees were moved to 30 relief centres on Tuesday evening, compared with 3,675 on Monday.

Johor, it said, continued to be the worst-hit area with 1,979 evacuees, followed by Selangor (1,957), Perak (203) and Malacca (109).

Batu Pahat and Ledang were the worst-hit areas in Johor, while Kuala Langat and Sepang were the most affected in Selangor.

Melaka Tengah and Jasin were flooded in Malacca, while Hilir Perak in Perak was also affected.

A statement from the council yesterday said Sarawak was next on the flood list because the water level at main rivers in Sibu and Kanowit were dangerously high.

It also said Terengganu, Kedah



(From left) Khairil Nizam Abdul Jalil, 31, Muhammad Hafiz Hasbulah, 20, and Ibrahim Salimin, 29, carrying their clothing and other possessions to safety after floods hit Kampung Bukit Changgang in Dengkil, Selangor, yesterday. Pic by Ahmad Irfham Mohd Noor

and Kelantan were next forecast to be affected by floods. A team, it said, was monitoring the situation closely.

The statement said 480 forward bases, five disaster relief storage depots and 5,068 relief centres nationwide had been set up.

The government agencies involved are the police, military, People's Volunteer Corps (Rela) and the Civil Defence Department.

"Personnel from all the agencies have been stationed at their respective bases and all equipment, lorries, boats, water pumps and generators have been deployed to flood-prone districts.

"Basic necessities and food items, stored at the depots, are ready for distribution."

The forward bases are in Kelantan (170), Terengganu (110), Pahang (78), Johor (46), Sabah (23) Sarawak (49) and Kedah (4).

The depots are in Kelantan (for East Zone 1), Marang, Terengganu (for East Zone 2), Bedong, Kedah (for North Zone), Sungai Buloh, Selangor (for Central Zone) and Muar, Johor (for South Zone).

At a meeting last month between the Disaster Management Central Committee and Meteorological Department, it was forecast that floods this year would be on a

"normal level", similar to the previous northeast monsoon seasons.

"But the government has taken proactive measures to prepare for any eventuality."

The statement also said the Welfare Department was using its e-JKM system for quicker registration of flood victims.

Those who want to contribute financially can channel their assistance through the trust funds set up by state governments or the National Disaster Relief Fund.

Flood updates can be obtained at <http://portalbanjir.mkn.gov.my> or its Facebook (www.facebook.com/informasibencana) and Twit-

ter (@portalbanjir).

In Kuantan, heads of government departments had been directed to freeze all annual leave for their staff between Dec 1 and Jan 15.

State Secretary Datuk Seri Muhammad Safian Ismail said 4,000 personnel were on standby.

"Heavy rain is expected."

In Alor Star, some 800 members of the Kedah Civil Defence Department are on standby with boats and life jackets, its director Mohtar Samat said. "We're monitoring water levels at rivers in the Kubang Pasu, Padang Terap, Kuala Muda and Pendang districts, which are below danger level now."