

Floods in Kelantan, Terengganu worsen

MORE AFFECTED: Number of evacuees rises and schools are closed

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THE flood situation in the east coast states of Kelantan and Terengganu worsened yesterday as more people were evacuated and school closures increased.

In **Kota Baru**, three more districts were submerged by floodwaters, increasing the number of evacuees to 830 from 273 on Tuesday. The districts were Bachok, Pasir Mas and here.

On Tuesday, Tanah Merah, Pasir Puteh, Kuala Krai and Machang were hit by floodwaters.

A spokesman from the state flood operations centre said as of 5pm, 338 victims were sheltering at relief centres in Pasir Mas, Tanah Merah (306) and Kuala Krai (71). Other evacuees were in Pasir Puteh (67), Kota Baru (24), Machang (17) and Tumpat (4).

He said waters in Sungai Golok in Rantau Panjang was measured at 10.42m, which is 1.42m higher than its danger level, while Sungai Kelantan was recorded at 17.48m, well past its danger mark of 16m.

The spokesman said five roads in Pasir Putih, Pasir Mas and Tanah Merah were closed to traffic yesterday. The roads were Jalan Rantau Panjang-Panglima Bayu, Jalan Semerak and Jalan Tanah Merah-Kualu-Kampung Ipoh.

The latest wave of floods which hit Kelantan on Tuesday claimed the lives of two teenagers who drowned

in Kampung Pertok in Machang.

The floods also forced 11 more schools to close, forcing nearly 900 students to skip classes.

On Tuesday, 22 schools in four districts were closed because of flood waters. This brings the total number of schools closed in the state to 33.

Kelantan Education director Hussin Awang said seven of the affected schools were from Tumpat, Machang (3) and Pasir Mas (1).

He said the schools included SK Pulau Beluru, SK Pangkal Nering, SK Kampung Kerilla, SK Kampung Rahmat and SK Lubok Setol.

"The pupils were allowed to return home early today (yesterday) after floodwaters rose in their areas. Twelve schools were turned to flood relief centres to accommodate these victims. The centres include SK Bukit Jarum, SK Alor Pasir, SK Sri Ketereh and SK Sri Kelewak."

In **Bachok**, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Dr Awang Adek Hussin said the floods which burdened Kelantan people annually could be reduced or curbed if there had been strong cooperation between the state and federal governments.

"Among the causes were clogged drains. The water could not flow out to nearby rivers," he said after handing out aid, including foodstuff and blankets, to 60 flood victims from Kampung Tasek at SK Pak Badol.

Awang Adek, who is also Kelantan Umno liaison deputy chairman, said the problem could be overcome if the people gave Barisan Nasional the chance to rule Kelantan through

the upcoming general election.

He said it was clear the Kelantan Pas government was incapable of solving the flood problems even after 23 years of ruling the state as it was not on the same wavelength and did not have good relations with the Federal Government.

In **Kuala Terengganu**, the number of flood evacuees jumped from just 758 on Tuesday to 3,474 people as of 4.30pm yesterday.

Besut was the hardest hit with 2,177 people from 513 families evacuated to 26 flood relief centres while there were 648 victims at 10 centres in Hulu Terengganu.

The water in Sungai Besut stood at 8.93 metres, more than seven metres above its normal level.

The Kuala Terengganu-Kota Baru road in Jertih town and the coastal road in Tembila were closed to light vehicles as they were under half a metre of water.

In **Setiu**, 433 people were evacuated and the road linking Sungai Tong to Kuala Berang was closed to light vehicles.

Dungun remained the least affected with only 216 people at the two evacuation centres in Kampung Pasir Raja and at SK Syukur.

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