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After the 'surge', now the 'trough'

PAHANG ALERT: More flooding expected in low-lying areas

KUALA LUMPUR

THE Malaysian Meteorological Department (MMD) issued an orange-level alert of continuous heavy rain in several areas of Pahang.

Many areas of the state, namely Kuantan, Pekan, Rompin, Temerloh, Bera, and Maran experienced intermittent rain yesterday and gloomy weather is expected to continue until today.

The situation is expected to cause floods in low-lying areas.

MMD central forecast division director, Muhammad Helmi Abdullah said the heavy rain was due to a weather phenomenon known as "active monsoonal trough", which was different from the normal "monsoon surge" which caused the first wave of floods in the east coast.

"The monsoon trough is an area of convection (build-up of rain clouds) which lies close to the Equator during this time of year, and it spreads across Sabah and Sarawak, and the peninsula."

Helmi said unlike the monsoon surge which can be predicted a week ahead, it is difficult to predict this type of tropical weather system.

"The indications are not clear. Besides, we can only predict the weather when the radar indicates the formation of the clouds." He said the colour warning was usually reserved for monsoonal rain, but due to the rain intensity and its area of coverage, the orange warning was issued.

The warning indicates floods occurring and to warn those in the affected areas to prepare to evacuate if the situation worsened.

Meanwhile, heavy rain and thunderstorm warnings were issued for Perak (Kerian, Larut, Matang, Selama, Kuala Kangsar, Kinta, Manjung and central Perak),

Selangor (Kuala Langat and Sepang), Negri Sembilan (Seremban and Port Dickson), Johor (Batu Pahat, Kluang, Kota Tinggi, Johor Bahru, Kulaijaya and Pontian), Pahang (Cameron Highlands, Lipis and Jerantut) and Terengganu (Dungun and Kemaman).

The heavy rain is expected to continue until tonight and the same weather condition is expected to occur in Pahang (Raub and Bentong).

These conditions are expected to cause strong winds and flash floods.

In **Pahang**, heavy rain pounded several districts yesterday, increasing the flood victims to 39,580 in the evening compared with 38,099 in the morning.

Raub became the latest district to be hit after eight people were moved to shelters while the number of flood victims in Temerloh was expected to increase by midnight after heavy rains yesterday evening.

Kuantan recorded the highest number of flood evacuees at 34,222 followed by Pekan (2,887), Temerloh (847), Maran (784), Jerantut (520), Rompin (153), Bera (106) and Lipis (53).

Four stretches - Km28 Jalan Sungai Lembing-Kuantan, Km72 Jalan Kuantan-Segamat, Km14 Jalan Temerloh-Bahau and Km 51 Jalan Kuantan Kemaman - are still closed to all vehicles after being submerged by more than 1m of water.

In **Terengganu**, the situation was grim despite a decrease in the number of displaced victims yesterday.

As of 5pm, authorities expected the flood, which had receded slightly and saw eight of 76 relief centres statewide closed, to worsen as downpour since 11am did not show any signs of stopping.

Information received from the state's Disaster Operations Centre stated that there was over 85mm



Children helping to clean up and sort through household items after floodwaters receded in Kampung Felda, Seberang Tayor, Kemaman, Terengganu, yesterday.

PM: RM500 for each family affected by floods

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced a cash aid of RM500 to each family affected by floods.

"As a member of parliament whose constituency often floods, I know the difficulties and hardship faced by flood victims.

"The government is sensitive to the needs of the people and I understand this, too," Najib, who is also Umno president and Pekan MP, said in his winding-up speech at the party's general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

"I sympathise with those who are affected by floods in the east

coast, including my constituents in Pekan, Kuantan, Rompin and Kemaman."

Najib, who is also finance minister, expressed his gratitude to Malayan Banking for allowing flood victims to delay scheduled payments to the bank.

"I appeal to all banks to follow this noble approach and delay payment of instalments as a kind gesture to the plight of the flood victims."

He said Malayan Banking was the first commercial bank to allow borrowers affected by the flood to temporarily defer their loan repayments.

rainfall distribution at Sungai Kemaman due to the downpour yesterday, causing its water level to rise rapidly.

The flood caused phone communications in the district to be almost severed.

An officer at the district's Dis-

aster Operations Centre said food and petrol supplies for purchase were scarce, with motorists having to go as far as Kijal and Kerteh, more than 15km away to refuel.

Kemaman district officer Mohd Kamil Othman said they were preparing for the worst.

He said several roads connecting Kemaman to Dadong, Air Putih and Teladas, were cut off due to flooding.

Meanwhile, the overall number of evacuees in the state, as of 4.30pm, decreased to 22,236 compared with 22,678 in the morning.

Kemaman made up the highest number with 18,576 victims in 43 centres.

In **Johor**, 1,639 flood victims were placed at 23 relief centres as more people left the centres for their home. The weather in most parts of the state was reported to be sunny yesterday.

In **Kelantan**, the situation in flood hit areas improved with only Pasir Mas affected. Six centres in Pasir Putih, Machang and Tanah Merah were closed in the morning after the evacuees returned home.

Menteri Besar Datuk Ahmad Yakob yesterday said flood victims in the state will be given cash aid from the Tabung Serambi Mekah soon. Ahmad said each state constituency affected would receive between RM10,000 and RM15,000.

Page 1 pic: Residents of Kampung Seberang Tayor, Kemaman, walking along a road destroyed by floodwaters yesterday.