

A five-fold rise in disaster victims

BY RAHIMY RAHIM



FACEBOOK



TWITTER



GOOGLE+



LINKEDIN



THE second wave of floods that struck Terengganu and then Kelantan has now hit Pahang in the east coast of peninsular Malaysia.

GOMBAK: More than half a million Malaysians were affected by disasters in the past 10 years, according to the World Disasters Report 2014.

This represented a five-fold increase from 103,168 people between 1994 and 2003 to 532,851 people between 2004 and 2013.

However, the report, *Focus on Culture and Risk*, noted that the number of people killed in the country due to disasters decreased from 660 to 310. It revealed that floods, which accounted for 44% of deaths, were the most frequent natural disasters in the world last year. Storms, which caused 41% of deaths, were the second.

The two deadliest natural disasters last year were Typhoon Haiyan, which hit the Philippines in November and killed 7,986 people, and a flood caused by monsoon rain that claimed 6,054 lives in India.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Asia-Pacific zone director Jagan Chapagain said Malaysia was lucky that it was not situated in a disaster-prone area, as almost 90% of natural disasters happened in the region.

"Malaysia can play a big role in supporting other South-East Asian countries as it assumes the chairmanship of Asean in 2015," he told a press conference at the International Islamic University Malaysia here after releasing the report.

"I hope that it can show huge leadership to neighbouring countries as it also holds a seat in the United Nations Security Council in handling and coordinating humanitarian aid during natural disasters."

He said international aid agencies should consult local communities hit by natural disasters before introducing any development or humanitarian aid programme.

"We always get feedback from the community first as we want to be accountable and we want to change the hand-out mentality to the empowerment mindset," Chapagain added.