

Sarawak hit by severe floods

1,023 flee to relief centres as state issues 'orange' alert

By YU JI and ANDY CHUA
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KUCHING: While floodwaters in the east coast of the peninsula have largely receded, continuous rain over the past three days have caused floods in Kuching, Kota Samarahan, Mukah, Simunjan and Limbang.

The Meteorological Department has issued an "orange" alert warning for heavy rain until today over Kuching, Samarahan, Sri Aman, Betong, Sarikei, Sibul, Mukah and Bintulu, placing many low-lying areas and settlements by riverbanks at risk of rising floodwaters.

Shalihan Annuar, the National Security Council's assistant secretary for Sarawak, said as of 9.50pm, at least 1,023 people from all over the state had been evacuated.

Among the worst hit areas were Padawan and Simunjan, about 100km from Kuching, where nine villages are inundated. Further north at Balingian in the coastal town of Mukah, 35 families were evacuated.

Shalihan said 99 families were also moved to relief centres as floodwaters rose rapidly at Limbang.

"The exact number of evacuees



Flooded out: Evacuees resting at SK St Peter, Simpok in Padawan, about 60km from Kuching.

is not known yet," he said, adding that the numbers were expected to increase.

Several major roads in Sarawak were also under water last night, including Jalan Jemuran in Samarahan, Jalan Kampung Selabi and Tempurong in Serian, Jalan Kuching-Serian Lama in Siburan, Jalan Ranau Baru in Lawas, and Jalan Utama, Oya and Sungai Ud in Dalat.

"Four landslides have also been reported in the Bau and Padawan areas," he said.

A 17-year-old girl was reported missing after a longboat sank in the Batang Mukah river during heavy rain at 6am yesterday.

Atikah Rosli of Kampung Tanjung, was with three other passengers, who managed to swim to safety.

Mukah Fire and Rescue Department chief Alimat Sam said the boat was believed to have overturned due to strong currents.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem told reporters that the situation was under control.

"We are prepared for any eventualities," he said after visiting the Kuching Barrage, which regulates the Sarawak River.

Data from the Irrigation and Drainage Department showed that areas in and around Kuching received between 54mm and 125mm of rain yesterday.



See P20
Lessons from
the great floods