

Floods worsen in northern Sarawak

Number of evacuees in Limbang increases with several villages badly hit

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MIRI: Flood conditions have improved in most parts of Sarawak except in the north.

The number of evacuees in and around Limbang increased to 1,244 yesterday afternoon, which was roughly 200 more than the day before.

Of the 27 schools still closed statewide, nine are in Limbang while five are in Lawas.

A Limbang to Brunei portion of the Pan Borneo Trunk Road was inundated by floodwaters, leaving scores

of commuters from either side of the border stranded yesterday.

Photographs and ground reports indicated that the road leading to the Tedungan checkpoint was submerged.

The National Security Council also reported congestion at Limbang's petrol stations over public fear of dwindling supply as new stock could not be delivered.

Several villages in the sub district of Medamit were flooded.

The badly hit villages include Kampung Meruyuk, Rumah Assan and Kampung Lubuk Pasu. Nearer to Limbang, Kampung Bidang and

Kampung Tedungan.

Telang Usan assemblyman Dennis Ngau said the weather was not improving.

"It is status quo as far as the rain is concerned. It has not gotten much better (since last weekend) because the rain keeps coming," Ngau said.

Elsewhere in the state, the situation has improved substantially.

From a peak of more than 10,000 victims at flood relief centres on Tuesday, the number has reduced to 6,249 by 4pm yesterday.

In Kuching, there were 3,373 evacuees at 20 shelters, while at Samarahan there were 1,598 evacu-

ees. At the central Sarawak coastal town of Mukah, there were just 34 people registered at the only evacuation centre which was still open.

State Infrastructure Development and Communication Minister Datuk Seri Michael Manyin said a report on damages would be completed by next week.

Early signs point to expensive road repair works caused by landslides.

Areas like Padawan, which is near Kuching, are badly affected, with the main water pipe severed, leaving almost 20,000 villagers without supply.

"Just along one of the roads there, Jalan Puncak Borneo, there are several landslides. The worst one is at least 100m across. That alone will cost between RM5mil and RM10mil. It might take up to a year to get it repaired," Manyin said.

"Current works are on safety measures and putting up diversion signs."

Asked about the water supply cut, Manyin said temporary plastic pipes are being laid.

"I told JKR (Public Works Department), don't look at the cost for now. Just do it," he said.

"We will find the money."