

Shahrir: Floods a wake-up call for rural progress

KUCHING: The nationwide floods are a wake-up call to the Government to spend more on rural development, Backbenchers Club chairman Tan Sri Shahrir Ahmad Samad said.

He said rural areas had not received enough attention from the Government.

"We have given a lot of basic infrastructure to urban centres. The MRT is one example, it cost billions.

"We also have future plans like the (Kuala Lumpur-Singapore) high-speed rail," he said after visiting flood shelters here yesterday.

Shahrir, who is the Johor Baru MP, said discussions with backbenchers would be held before Parliament resumed on March 9.

He said rural MPs should debate with a sense of "urgency" on why more funds should be channelled their way in the 11th Malaysia Plan.

Meanwhile, the number of evacuees in Sarawak decreased to 1,063 as of 9pm yesterday compared to 1,924 the day before.

According to the National Security Council, there were two flood-hit areas in the state – Samarahan in the south and Limbang in the north.

During the height of the floods last Tuesday evening, there were more than 10,500 evacuees.

The Meteorological Department is forecasting thunderstorms daily this week in the state.

In Sabah, floods in south-western Beaufort receded with 614 people still at relief centres. A district official said the 100 families left at the centres returned home at 12.30pm.