

Stacked chairs keep boy dry in floods

ORDEAL: Disabled boy's family trapped for 5 hours as Sg Sarawak overflows

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WHEN water flowed into her wooden house at Kampung Sungai Laruh here on Monday, all Nor Aishah Abdullah could think of was the safety of her family, especially her disabled son.

Knowing they could not evacuate in time, Nor Aishah and the rest of her family members started stacking chairs until it was chest-high.

They then placed a foam mattress on the chairs for her son Daniel Hakimiey Ramie, 12, to lie on.

"Our house is near Sungai Sarawak, which overflowed following continuous downpour for hours.

"Water entered our house at 5pm. We decided to stack the chairs so it was high enough to keep Daniel dry," said Nor Aishah, 44, at a temporary relief centre in Kampung Tupong Tengah here yesterday.

Nor Aishah said the family stayed inside the flood-hit house for more than five hours.

"The family evacuated the house after water receded at 1am," she said, adding that the family could only salvage important documents.

Her family was among 43 families relocated to the flood evacuation centre.

Their neighbour, Mastura Kaba, 49, said the occurrence of floods annually was nothing new to her and the rest of the villagers.

"I have been living at the village for about 30 years and every year, the village will be hit by floods. However, this time, we were caught off-guard as the floods inundated the entire village in a short time," she said.

Checks by the *New Straits Times* showed villagers living near Sungai Sarawak had parked their cars on higher ground near the main road.

Deputy State Secretary Datuk Misnu Taha was positive the flood situation in the state would improve as less rain is expected in the state until Friday, beginning tomorrow.

"This are the details we had received from the Meteorological Department. We hope it will be clear weather for the next few days and the floods will recede soon.

"The committee is monitoring the

situation on the ground. We fear the high tides which occur could compound the situation," said Misnu, who is also Sarawak Natural Disaster Committee deputy chairman.

He said the Sarawak River barrage gate had been opened since Monday to ensure normal water level.

"We are prepared to face all consequences. We hope those living in flood prone areas will adhere to the advice of the authorities for their safety," he said after chairing the committee's meeting in Petra Jaya near here yesterday.

More people have been evacuated to higher ground although there was hardly any rainfall yesterday. The number of flood evacuees increased to 3,230 people yesterday from 617 people on Monday.

A Civil Defence Department spokesman said until 8pm yesterday, 25 flood evacuation centres had been activated.

In **Malacca**, the flood situation continued to improve, with only one centre in Alor Gajah district still operating at 3pm yesterday.

In **Johor**, three more flood relief centres in Tangkak and Segamat were closed as flood waters receded.

The only remaining centre at SK Spang Loi in Segamat has 10 flood victims from two families. **Additional reporting by Nurul Hidayah Bahaudin**