

EARLY FLOOD PREPARATIONS

Community groups to play bigger role in helping govt tackle disasters

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COMMUNITY groups established to manage disasters will play a greater role in assisting the government in preparing for possible major flooding this month.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said the government had deployed assets, such as boats, to the Civil Defence Emergency Response Teams (CDERT) in the peninsula and the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Sarawak as the country prepared for the wet spell.

"Based on information, weather patterns suggest that there will be downpours in November. This will probably lead to a number of floods. The weather is very unpredictable and anything can happen.



Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim and Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas (centre) at the National Preparedness Month 2017 event in Kuching yesterday. PIC BY NADIM BOKHARI

"Having said that, the government is prepared to face floods whether in flood-prone areas or areas that have never been inundated.

"We have natural disaster management committees at the state, division and district levels.

"At the community level, we have CDERT in the peninsula and CERT in Sarawak," he said at the National Preparedness Month

2017 event here yesterday.

Present were Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas, who is state Natural Disaster Management Committee chairman; state Welfare, Community Wellbeing, Women, Family and Childhood Development Minister Datuk Seri Fatimah Abdullah; National Disaster Management Agency director-general Datuk Abdul Rashid Harun; and

Civil Defence Force director-general Major-General (Rtd) Datuk Azmy Yahya.

Shahidan was responding to a statement by Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, who said changes in weather were expected to unleash major floods.

"This time, if a flood occurs, CERT and CDERT will be the first teams to respond, since group members are more aware of the situation in their areas.

"This will help the government reduce delays in helping flood victims."

However, he could not furnish details on the numbers of boats deployed for the use of CERT and CDERT teams.

Instead, he said, the government was looking into ways to improve the delivery of food kits to flood victims.

He said during the floods in Perlis last month, the food kits were sourced from the Klang Valley to be distributed to Perlis.

"We want to change this.

"We want to empower the natural disaster committee at the district level to prepare and provide food kits for flood victims in their areas."

Heavy rain in districts until next month

KUALA LUMPUR: Several districts will experience heavy rain until next month during the fair weather transition to the monsoon season.

Meteorological Department director-general Alui Bahari said the transition would lead to localised downpour, thunderstorms and strong winds.

"Thunderstorms and strong winds are expected to occur from evening to early night in most districts in west coast states and interiors of the peninsula, as well as west coast of Sabah and central Sarawak."

He said last month, the Chuping meteorological station recorded the highest amount of rainfall since 1995 at 389.3mm.

He said the public had been advised to be alert to weather changes and make preparations for any eventuality.

The public can obtain information on the weather via the department's website www.met.gov.my, its Facebook and Twitter pages, the myCuaca mobile application or contact its hotline at 1-300-22-1638.