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INCLEMENT WEATHER

GOVT PREPARED FOR 2ND WAVE OF FLOODS

Additional relief teams deployed to affected areas

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THE government has raised its preparedness level in facing floods as the second wave is likely to be worse than last year.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said additional relief teams had been deployed to affected areas, especially in Johor and Pahang.

He said this was based on the rainfall distribution and rising water levels in both states.

"The second wave of floods last year was considered minimal, but this time, I think the situation is quite bad.

"This is based on the report by the Meteorological Department that strong winds and heavy rains are

expected to continue.

"According to the department, there will be several waves from January to March.

"This is a worrying situation as the second wave of floods has started to hit Johor and Pahang.

"The number of evacuees in flood-affected areas is expected to increase," Zahid said after receiving a courtesy call from New Zealand Immigration Minister Michael Woodhouse.

He said the National Disaster Management Agency and relevant relief agencies would continue to help flood victims.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim had been given the responsibility of coordinating aid during the floods.

In **Kota Baru**, authorities reported that the number of flood evacuees in Kelantan, who had been decreasing over the past few days, rose again yesterday as heavy rains hit the interiors of the state, in particular in Jeli and Gua Musang.

The number of evacuees, reported to be 137 in the morning, climbed to 593 at 5pm.

According to the state flood operation room, the highest number of victims were from Jeli (437 people).

In **Tumpat**, many people were still trapped by floodwaters, which had inundated several villages.

Most residents from villages, such as Kampung Bendang Pak Yong and parts of Kampung Simpangan were forced to use boats to reach the main road.

In **Kuantan**, Pahang Civil Defence Force director Zainal Yusoff said seven districts in Pahang had been flooded, resulting in 3,501 people being evacuated as at 6pm yesterday.

In **Gemas**, Negri Sembilan Fire and Rescue Department director Norazam Khamis said 186 residents of Taman Pinggiran Sungai Kelamah, Taman Sungai Gemas and Kampung Jeram Panjang had to be evacuated when floodwaters inundated their homes yesterday. **Additional reporting by Kalbana Perimbanayagam, Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi and Nur Aqidah Azizi**

Page 1 pic: Firemen helping Woo Hoi Chee move his belongings in his house at Taman Sungai Gemas, Negri Sembilan, yesterday

PRECAUTIONARY MOVE

Three heavily-pregnant women, sick man in Kuantan evacuated

KUANTAN: Three heavily-pregnant women and a sick man in his 50s were evacuated from the Sungai Lembing area as a precaution after floodwaters cut off access to several villages, stranding some 4,000 people yesterday.

The authorities used a boat to evacuate them and they were sent to Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital here in ambulances.

Nur Syahira Johar, who is in the 36th week of her pregnancy, said she and the others were evacuated

as the authorities were afraid the situation would worsen.

Non-stop heavy rain lashed Pahang since Monday, inundating several districts.

Syahira, who lives in Kampung Kolek, was evacuated with one of her neighbours, 25-year-old Nur Farah Sahira Ramlee, and Rohani Mohd Nor, 28, from Kampung Kawah.

The fourth person evacuated was 52-year-old Sidek Pendi, who had been ill for the past few days.



Rohani Mohd Nor, Nur Syahira Johar and Nur Farah Sahira Ramlee being evacuated by a boat in Kuantan yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

FLOOD VICTIMS

9,000 in Johor relocated due to heavy rains since Monday



Ibrahim Mahat (left) and his son trying to prevent pieces of wood from drifting into their home in Kampung Batu Badak, Segamat, yesterday. PIC BY ADI SAFRI

KOTA TINGGI: Uncertain weather has caused an extraordinary amount of torrential rain in the past two days, causing more than 9,000 people to be transferred to shelters at the peak of yesterday's floods in Johor.

Segamat, which had previously seen its worst flood in 2011, was the hardest hit this time with 7,113 people relocated to 53 community halls, schools and other relief centres at noon. The figure dropped slightly six hours later, to 6,253 victims in 54 relief centres.

The overall figure of Johor flood victims showed a downward trend with 8,009 people evacuated in five districts as at 6pm yesterday, a drop from the 9,487 people evacuated in eight districts at noon.

The other districts still affected are Tangkak, Kluang, Muar and Kota Tinggi.

A total of 178 flood victims, who had been evacuated to Johor Baru, Mersing and Batu Pahat, were allowed to return home yesterday.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said many areas suffered from heavy rain since Monday.

"The floods were caused by an extraordinary amount of rain that occurred on the first day," he said after visiting 800 flood victims seeking shelter at the Kota Kecil multipurpose hall here.

The temporary flood relief centre was closed at 5pm yesterday when victims returned home.

Johor Health and Environment Committee chairman Datuk Ayub Rahmat said the uncertain weather pattern in the state contributed to the floods.

"The uncertain weather is due to climate change and we cannot do much about this.

"It will happen whenever it happens," he said.

Ayub said that climate change played a big part in the high amount of rainfall, which had not been seen since six years ago.