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Upgraded forecast system to be completed year-end

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DUNGUN: The Flood Forecast and Alert Programme (PRAB) pilot project, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year, will be in operation in Terengganu, Kelantan and Pahang.

The system will be extended to other states after that, says Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi

TuanKu Jaafar.

"The programme could predict the chances of floods happening at least seven days in advance before it hits an area and has a 95% accuracy rate.

"This programme can help the state authorities make necessary preparations more systematically," he said after visiting and distributing aid to about 20 families who were earlier housed at the SK Durian Mentanganu relief centre

here yesterday.

PRAB is an upgrade from the existing flood warning system used to measure the rise and fall of river water levels.

With the new system, residents would receive evacuation notifications two days before a flood happens compared to two hours normally. An early warning system could minimise damage as victims would have ample time to secure their belongings and move to the

nearest relief centres.

"We will have to go through several processes such as obtaining approvals from state governments to set up stations at strategic locations," he explained.

The Federal Government approved RM550mil for the programme implemented in 2014.

About RM150mil has so far been spent on it.

Under the 11th Malaysia Plan, RM1.1bil was allocated for flood

mitigation initiatives in Terengganu.

Dr Wan Junaidi said RM1.9mil has also been approved to upgrade the drainage systems in Dungun to help alleviate flood situations there.

During a visit to check the RM73mil Tok Jembal beach erosion prevention project, Dr Wan Junaidi said the project there would need to be upgraded as it did not include building a landing area for fishermen to bring in their catch or port their boats.

All schools re-open and flood evacuees return home

KUALA TERENGGANU: All flood evacuees have been allowed to go home after floodwaters receded.

Schools in Terengganu re-opened for classes after 63 of them were closed or used as evacuation centres at the peak of the floods on Jan 4.

During the height of the floods,

over 13,400 victims were housed at more than 150 centres in Terengganu.

The state authorities announced that all relief centres were closed, with SK Durian Mentanganu in Dungun being the last one to shutter at 3.40pm yesterday.

The announcement of the

re-opening of all schools came as good news to many pupils, including nine-year-old Zulatika Shafee from SK Bukit Tadok near here.

"I missed my friends. I couldn't wait for school to re-open, so we could play together again," she said. Her schoolmate Mohd Lokman Haziq Mohd Latik said he, too,

missed his friends and teachers.

SK Bukit Tadok was one of the schools in Hulu Terengganu which was badly hit and was only re-opened on Sunday.

The improved situation also saw state Civil Defence Force (APM) members cleaning houses, schools and evacuation centres.

State APM director Lt Col Che

Adam A. Rahman said the state disaster management centre would be on standby and continue to operate during normal working hours until the monsoon season ends in March.

"If there is a disaster, we will return to operating around the clock," he said.