

01 SEP 1996

LEADALL-Mudslide

RESULT OF PROBE INTO POS DIPANG TRAGEDY TO BE KNOWN TOMORROW

KAMPAR, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- The findings of an investigation into last Thursday's mudslide that claimed more than 20 lives at the Pos Dipang Orang Asli settlement will be announced by Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib tomorrow.

Kinta District Officer Mohd Yusop Yahya said Ramli will make public the report after making another visit to the settlement near here.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing a two-hour meeting with the investigating team at the search and rescue operations room at Pos Dipang today.

The 26-member team lead by Kinta police operations head Insp Awang Mohtar trekked upstream of Sungai Dipang towards Bukit Kinjang at 8.45am today.

They returned to Pos Dipang at 2.30pm to prepare the report for Ramli, who briefed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad upon his return from Sabah this evening at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport.

Also in the investigation team were Director-General of the Space Science Division in the Prime Minister's Department, Dr Mazlan Ahmad, and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysian geologist Prof Ibrahim Keno.

After three days of toiling, rescuers found five more bodies, including that of a 10-year-old girl, raising the death toll to 26. Another 16 victims are still unaccounted for.

It is feared that some might be buried in thick mud or trapped under the piles of uprooted trees and rocks that were washed down the Sungai Dipang during the mudslide.

The swift flowing water might also have swept the victims some distance downstream as evident by today's recovery of a woman's body about 15km from the scene.

Based on reports from the search and rescue operations room in Pos Dipang, most of the bodies were recovered in Kampung Sahom off the North-South highway, about 3km from the scene

Most bodies were found in about 0.9-1.2m deep of mud but some were dug out from heaps of tree trunks and rocks.

This afternoon, several Orang Asli whose relatives were killed in the mudslide placed offerings of rice, cans of sardine, coffee drink and cigarettes on their graves.

Thirty-six Orang Asli and six members of a Chinese family were reported missing after a wall of water, mud, uprooted trees and other debris devastated the village housing 100 Orang Asli families and wreaked damage downstream of Sungai Dipang.

The body of an Orang Asli woman, Wak Tarik a/p Bahoi, 28, was recovered from a watery grave in Sungai Kinta, near Kuala Kampar, Malim Nawar, by fisherman about 15km from the scene before noon.

Her body was claimed by her family for burial in the afternoon.

Also at the Kampar mortuary was Bah Dimi a/l Bah Asap, 34, who was there to take home the remains of his daughter, Ronica, 10, who was found near the settlement.

The third body recovered was that of a woman aged between 20 and 30.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, who is also chairman of the National Disaster Relief Committee, visited the settlement and handed over RM100,000 from the Natural Disaster Fund to Mohd Yusop to be distributed to the victims and their families. -- BERNAMA

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