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Mudslide-Report

UNUSUAL HEAVY RAIN AMONG CAUSES OF POS DIPANG MUDSLIDE

KAMPAR, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- Unusual heavy rain has been identified as among the causes of the mudslide at the Pos Dipang Orang Asli settlement on Thursday, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said today.

In announcing the preliminary report of the team investigating the mudslide, at Pos Dioang near here, Ramli, who is the chairman of the State Security Council, said that the topographical and geological conditions in the affected area were the other factors.

He said that according to the report, the rain measurement recorded by the Drainage and Irrigation Department last month was doubled that recorded during the same period last year.

The department recorded 461mm of rain last year compared to 281mm during the same period last year, 197mm in 1994 and 137mm in 1993.

The 26-member investigating team including a geologist from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Prof Ibrahim Keno, yesterday tracked along Sungai Dipang towards the direction of Gunung Kinjang.

The team, led by Insp Awang Mohtar, left at 8.45am and returned to Pos Dipang at 2.30pm.

Ramli said the team found that the mudslide started from Sungai Pusat, a tributary of Sungai Dipang, about six to seven kilometres from the Pos Dipang settlement.

He said that the sandy, rocky and loose earth of the steep slope had crumbled when the river swelled following heavy rain.

The landslide brought along with it torrents of water together with debris of mud, sand, rocks and uprooted trees, he said.

Ramli said that this caused several dams created during the heavy rain along several tributaries of Sungai Dipang, among them Sungai Dom and Sungai Sangkut, to break.

When the heavy rain continued, he said, one of the dams created on Gunung Kinjang broke, causing all the other similar dams to break, resulting in the torrents of water overflowing the river banks.

He said that the soft earth of the river banks caused trees along the river to be uprooted and swept by the torrents of water.

The level of the river then was five metres above the normal level, he added.

Ramli said that the team also found traces of a broken dam about 200 metres from the settlement.

He said that the preliminary report would be submitted to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow. Further investigations would be conducted, he added.

Ramli announced the preliminary report after a 45-minute meeting with the search and rescue team and the investigating team soon after his arrival at Pos Dipang this afternoon.

Meanwhile, Prof Ibrahim said that further investigations had to be conducted to determine the actual cause of the mudslide in view of the fact that such incidents had never occurred in the settlement.

He said that residents of the village, occupied for almost 100 years, had never undergone such an experience. -- BERNAMA

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