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Situation improves in east coast, but Kedah still badly affected

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - While fine weather improved the situation in flood-hit areas in the East Coast, it was not the same in Kedah as the number of evacuees from affected areas continued to increase.

Malaysia Airlines also announced the cancellation of eight flights arriving and departing from Alor Star scheduled today and tomorrow due to flooding at the Sultan Abdul Halim Airport runway following last night's downpour.

The Kota Setar and Kubang Pasu districts remain the worst hit with more than 3,000 victims still at relief centres.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad expressed satisfaction with measures taken to look after the welfare of flood victims in the State.

"I find the victims were taken quickly to evacuation centres and supplied with food and mosquito coils," he said after visiting four flood relief centres in Kubang Pasu.

Describing the situation as serious, Dr Mahathir, who is also Kubang Pasu MP, advised those in flood-hit areas to take precautions.

In Alor Star, the Kota Setar and Kubang Pasu districts are still badly hit by floods with 3,121 victims seeking shelter at relief centres.

It was a day of mixed fortunes. While hundreds in Padang Terap returned home, the number of evacuees in Kota Setar and Kubang Pasu increased.

Until late today, there were 3,436 victims still at relief centres in the State compared to 2,872 yesterday.

Water supply to some 500,000 people which was disrupted on Friday, when two major water treatment plants were flooded, resumed today in some areas.

The department is also using 38 lorries to transport water to areas affected by the problem.

In Padang Terap, which was hit by flash floods, the situation is improving with only 399 people from 88 families still at relief centres.

A spokesman for the Kota Setar flood operations room said 1,846 victims were being housed at 19 relief centres.

"The flood waters remain stagnant. We hope the situation will improve because there has been no rain since yesterday," he said.

In Kubang Pasu, 1,275 flood victims have been evacuated, compared to 691 yesterday afternoon.

In Kota Baru, the situation in flood-hit areas in the State noted an improvement with fine weather. The main roads were also passable.

Some 392 flood victims were still housed at 11 relief centres in two districts today, compared with 409 at 18 relief centres yesterday.

A spokesman for the State flood operations room said the victims returned home yesterday evening.

In Pasir Mas, 281 flood victims are still taking shelter at seven relief centres, while 110 are still at four centres in Tumpat.

Meanwhile, a spokesman for Kelantan Drainage and Irrigation Department's Hydrology Unit said all seven flood assessing points in the State this morning recorded readings below the danger level except at Sungai Golok, Rantau Panjang, which was still above the danger level - at 9.66m.

In Kuala Terengganu, with the exception of 277 victims at seven relief centres in Besut, all evacuees returned home as of noon today.

"We are told that only the 277 evacuees, whose houses have been swept by

flood water recently, remain at the centres," a police spokesman said.

On Thursday, 70 houses in three villages in Hulu Besut were swept away by strong currents from the swollen Sungai Besut.

All the main roads in the State are passable to traffic.

Across the Malaysia-Thai border, a Singaporean fell to his death in the flood-hit town of Haadyai.

Described to be the worst floods in the past 15 years, some 4,000 Malaysians found themselves trapped when floods hit the popular holiday destination.

It is understood that the authorities will carry out a major evacuation exercise if conditions there do not improve.

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