

Floods the worst, says Dr M

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Mahathir and wife pay visit to victims of Gunung Pulai incident

PONTIAN, Tues: The floods in Gunung Pulai near here on Dec 27, which claimed five lives, were the worst he has seen, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the scene of tragedy, he said, "The effects of the floods were terrible. I've never seen such floods in Malaysia."

He said press reports on the mudflow, which also swept away four houses in Kampung Sri Gunung Pulai, did not reflect the actual effects.

Mahathir, who was accompanied by Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, spent about an hour inspecting the trail of destruction left by the mudflow in the village and toured the peak of Gunung Pulai where the mudflow started.

Mahathir, who saw the 25m high pile of uprooted trees by the side of the bridge spanning the river, said the effects of the floods were worse than he had expected.

He said the federal gov-

ernment would give whatever assistance to rehabilitate the badly-affected areas.

"Our priority is to help people, so we give money, help those with problems, children without clothes, books. We've already given," he said, adding that similar aid had also been channelled to Pahang, which was also badly hit by floods recently.

Mahathir and wife were accompanied by Johor Mentri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, who is the MP for Pontian and Deputy Works Minister Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

In a brief ceremony later at the village head's house the prime minister handed over his personal contribution of RM500 cash to each of the 10 victims affected by the incident.

Rahmat expressed appreciation to the prime minister for showing sympathy to the victims by visiting them.