

08 JAN 2002

Floods-Johor

RECENT FLOODS CLAIMED FIVE LIVES AND CAUSED SUBSTANTIAL DAMAGE, DR
MAHATHIR TOLD

PONTIAN, Jan 8 (Bernama) -- The recent big floods in the Johor claimed five lives and caused RM13.7 million in damage to properties, said State Secretary Datuk Ayob Mion.

He said the biggest damage was to crops, including a plantation of over 400 hectares in Kota Tinggi, estimated at over RM5.7 million.

"The other damages to roads and bridges were estimated at RM3 million, rural health centres and clinics RM1.1 million, schools RM603,000, forest RM836,000, livestock RM137,405 and Felda land schemes RM463,000," he said when briefing Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Pulau Spring Resort near here today.

The Prime Minister also visited the scene where a landslide buried five people and destroyed four houses in a village at the foot of Gunung Pulau.

Ayob said the floods, caused by the tropical storm "Vamei", were unusual since Malaysia is located outside the storm zone.

Following days of heavy rains since Dec 23 as well as the effect of the storm, major floods hit Johor Baharu and Pontian while Kluang, Batu Pahat, Kota Tinggi and part of Mersing were hit by moderate floods.

The rainfall on Dec 27 far exceeded the monthly average of 70mm at 287mm in Ulu Tiram, 241mm in Masai, Johor Baharu and 223mm in Kota Tinggi.

"High tide also occurred several times in river basins in the affected areas and took up to 72 hours to recede, causing the rivers to burst their banks," he said.

At the peak of the floods, 13,195 people were evacuated to 69 centres.

He said 3,880 students in flood affected areas were given educational assistance of RM180 and RM220 each as well as long-term assistance worth up to RM5,000 to each family for food, clothes and house repairs.

Ayob said the Johor government estimated that RM20.4 million would be needed under the Eighth Malaysia Plan for flood mitigation projects especially in the Masai, Sungai Tiram, Sungai Tebrau, Sungai Ulu Pulau, Sungai Pulau, Sungai Air Hitam and Sungai Benut basins.

-- BERNAMA

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