

1. Police assets damage estimated at RM15.3 million

KOTA BARU: The home ministry has estimated the damage to police assets caused by the floods in Kelantan at RM15.3 million.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the damage involved buildings, vehicles and information and communication technology (ICT) equipment at the state police contingent headquarters.

The damaged buildings included 19 police stations located in Kota Baharu, Pasir Mas, Tumpat, Kuala Krai and Gua Musang.

He said the most affected building was the Kuala Krai police headquarters, adding however, there was no damage at the Pasir Puteh, Machang, Bachok and Jeli police headquarters.

Ahmad Zahid was speaking to reporters after visiting pilot ASP Amirul Adli Ahmad and co-pilot ASP Hasli Hassan at Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Kubang Kerian here late last night.

Both the pilots and two others, identified as Sergeant Major Mohd Hood Abd Majid and Lance Corporal Arhafidah Zakaria had a narrow escape when the police helicopter they were in, crashed in Kampung Rambai, Tanah Merah last Wednesday while on a mission to send food supplies to flood victims.

Ahmad Zahid had earlier spent time reviewing the damage at the state police headquarters building and at the state civil defence department's flood operations headquarters here.

2. Heli, boat needed to ferry patients during floods: Health Ministry

TEMERLOH: The Ministry of Health (MOH) plans to use its own assets during flooding in an effort to enhance services rendered to the people.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said they include having helicopter and boat at the disposal of hospitals and clinics to ferry patients in flooded areas.

"We cannot provide good health services during floods because assets such as helicopters and boats have to be shared with other agencies.

"This is because helicopters were needed to rescue flood victims. I am not blaming others as the assets available were inadequate to meet the high demand," he told reporters after visiting Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Hospital, here today.

As a result, the ministry could not provide health services when the floods ravaged Kelantan on Dec 25.

"We cannot stop providing health services because of floods as people get sick all the time. In future, we may use air service such as Sabah Air in the interior of Sabah and Sarawak."

Subramaniam said the matter will be discussed further in the flood post-mortem at ministerial level soon.

Meanwhile, the total loss to MOH buildings, equipment and assets in the flooded states is estimated at between RM500 million to RM900 million.

A total of 124 health clinics, rural clinics and 1Malaysia clinics were damaged by the floods.--
BERNAMA

NEW STRAITS TIMES Sunday, January 11, 2015

3. Floods: Health Ministry estimated RM500 million losses

TEMERLOH: The Health Ministry estimates more than RM500 million losses due to the recent flood in the east coast.

Its minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said rebuilding cost was estimated at about RM900 million.

"This is an estimated figure so it could be more,"

"So far we have got figures for RM300 million," he told reporters after addressing ministry staff at the Sultan Haji Ahmad hospital here.

He added that the ministry was looking at rebuilding and relocating some of the clinics as well as hospitals at the badly affected areas because they can no longer function.

He expressed appreciation to MOH staffs who were involved directly and indirectly during the floods, also those who worked tirelessly during this worst flood in our history.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Monday, January 12, 2015

4. Floods: MACC creates a special force to monitor funds

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has established a special task force to monitor the distribution of funds meant for flood victims.

The task force was set up in collaboration with the National Security Council and National Audit Department to ensure that there was transparency in the aid given to the victims.

Commissioner Tan Sri Abu Kassim Mohamed said this task force would enable the public to lodge complaints of they feel that there has been a corruption or abuse of funds meant for the east coast flood victims.

5. New passport fee effective today

KUALA LUMPUR: The fee for new passports, has been reduced to RM200, effective today said Immigration department deputy director-general Datuk Sakib Kusmi.

Formerly new passports and renewals, for the term of five years was priced at RM300.

He said that effective today the passport fee for senior citizens, children below 12, Haj pilgrims, and students below 21 and studying abroad had been reduced to RM100.

Formerly, passport for this category of applicants was RM150.

Sakib also said the two-year term for passports would no longer be offered by the department.

"This would prevent the hassle of renewing passports within a short time and reduce congestion in Immigration Departments," he said, adding that more Malaysians would be able to afford to travel with the move.

Exemption of payment is given to the handicapped or disabled person on condition that he or she produces a letter from the Welfare Department.

A memo on the new directives and charges have also been displayed at immigration offices.

Sakib said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced the fee reduction during last year's budget as a means of giving back to Malaysians.

6. Another 15,000 hospital beds needed: Subra

KEMAMAN: The Health Ministry still requires 15,000 hospital beds to accommodate the needs of patients nationwide, especially in densely populated areas like the Klang Valley.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S Subramaniam said, however, the facility could only be provided within the next 10 years.

He said at present urban areas needed additional beds which needed to be given urgent attention.

"In our ministry's current estimation, we require at least 15,000 additional beds throughout the country as the ratio is 1.9 for a population of every 1,000 at present.

"If we can provide at least 15,000 beds, we will get a ratio of 2.5 for every 1,000 population, which is considered moderate. This means every year we have to provide beds and only then we will reach that target," he told reporters after a working visit to the Kemaman Hospital here today.

Subramaniam said the government was constantly taking steps to address the problem as providing such facilities took time and had to be undertaken in stages besides involving high costs.--
BERNAMA

NEW STRAITS TIMES Tuesday, January 20, 2015

7. UPDATE: RM48.5bil budget for development remain: Najib

KUALA LUMPUR: Following are excerpts from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's special address on the nation's current economic situation:

- Proposal to increase electrical tariff this year to be put on hold.
- Foreign workers levy rates to be reviewed and tourist visa fee to be waved, among them tourist from China
- SME-Go to be introduced via SME Bank, an export program initiative for SME's
- Bank Negara to offer RM500m Special Relief Facility to finance SME loans at lower rates
- The RM48.5 billion will continue to be invested in 'people friendly economic projects' such as rail and highways.
- All railway projects including High speed railway KL-Singapore will continue as planned.
- The RM48.5 billion allocated for development under Budget 2015 will remain.
- RM800 million allocated for the rebuilding and repair of basic infrastructure and homes in flood affected states.
- Additional RM5million aid for flood victims. RM500 aid will be given to them starting today.
- Companies urged to register for Goods and Services Tax which will be implement in April.
- The National Service programme to be postponed this year to save RM400 mil
- Economic activities need to be varied for the nation to cope with the decrease in oil prices and commodities.
- The function of the capital market is still continuing in an orderly manner despite the ringgit depreciation.

- The perception that Malaysia is a net oil exporter is not true; we are in fact a net oil importer, although we remain a net exporter of liquefied natural gas.
- Government needs to revise to reduce the projection of average oil price to US\$50 per barrel for 2015
- The new target is still low, compared to the 3.5 percent recorded last year.
- The government's fiscal deficit has been revised to 3.2pc from 3pc.
- Economist estimate the average crude oil for 2015 will be between US\$40 and US\$70 a barrel.
- The decrease of crude oil prices will result in a decrease in the nation's revenue.
- It must be understood that the government is not in control of the global oil prices.
- As a responsible government, the strategies announced will take into account the wellbeing of the people.
- Nation is not in economic crisis but needs to take pro-active measures to align Malaysia with the current global economic climate.
- Specific proactive measures to align ourselves with current global economic climate

NEW STRAITS TIMES Tuesday, January 20, 2015

8. RM26 million for Desa Lestari 2015

MUAR: The Rural and Regional Development Ministry is allocating RM26 million this year for the implementation of the Desa Lestari Programme at 15 villages nationwide.

Its minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said the amount is an increase from the RM20 million that the ministry allocated for the programme last year.

"The programme was introduced two years ago. It is not only a programme that would enhance the facilities in the rural areas but would also enable the local residents to generate income from the various economic activities like homestay programme and agriculture project," said Shafie.

The villages that have chosen for the programme are two each in Kedah and Sarawak and one each in Perlis, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan and Sabah.

9. 265,564 bankruptcy cases recorded in 2014 ; Nancy Shukri

LABUAN: The Department of Insolvency has recorded a total of 265,564 cases of bankruptcy throughout last year, with Selangor being the highest state with 63,767 cases.

The second highest was Federal Territory with 44,532 cases followed by Johor with 37,151 cases.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nancy Shukri said the government was serious of the situation and an awareness drive is required to reduce the number.

She said the government has come up with an initiative to reduce the number with the introduction of a financial education forum through a program dubbed as 'Jerayawara'.

"The program is to educate people on financial management and planning. Financial and credit education is the answer to many of the financial problems people face today," she said at a press conference after officiating the Financial Education forum in Labuan here today.

She said the program also focused on four groups of people such as students of higher learning institutions, fresh workers, newly-weds and retirees.

Nancy said the government, through the Credit Counseling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK), Amanah Raya Berhad and Department of Insolvency, is committed to assist those with bankruptcy cases in providing counseling and planning. -Bernama