TENAGA NASIONAL

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Armed Forces to help send supplies

INACCESSIBLE: DPM tells relief centres to stock up extra food and essential items

KEMAMAN

THE Armed Forces will help send food supplies and essential items to flood victims in the east coast as many areas are inaccessible by road, said Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Describing the severity of the floods as unexpected and widespread, he also asked all relief centres to stock up extra food and essential items that could last for at least three days.

"We will also ensure the relief centres get clean water supply as some of them are affected by power outage after TNB substations were inundated with floodwaters," he said after visiting flood victims at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Banggol in Paya Berenjut here yesterday.

He said clean water supply would be brought in from outside while mobile filtration systems would also be installed at relief centres.

Muhyiddin, who is the Umno deputy president, took time off from the second day of the party's general assembly at Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur to visit and check on the floods and victims yesterday.

On arriving in Kuantan in the morning, he took a helicopter ride to observe conditions in flooded areas.

He landed at Sekolah Kebangsaan Sultan Ismail before boarding an army truck to visit SMK Banggol, where more than 5,000 evacuees are taking shelter.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Said and Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek, who is the Kemaman member of parliament.

"We never expected the flooding to occur this early and affect areas that have never experienced it before.

"The National Security Council (NSC) and the National Disaster Relief Committee will look into our weather forecast and early warning systems and find ways to improve them," said Muhyiddin adding that advanced technology could help relevant agencies to make better weather forecasts and give early warnings before floods occur.

"With the use of modern technology, we can issue warnings much earlier.

"At present, many of the victims are being evacuated at the last minute," he said, adding that the public must also heed advice given by relevant authorities when natural disasters occur.

On the lack of food and other basic items at some of the relief centres, he said the agencies involved should not use financial excuse as reason not to prepare sufficient stock.

"I've asked NSC to ensure there is adequate stock at each relief centre and it must buy extra food and other items."

Muhyiddin, who also listened to grouses of the flood victims at SMK Banggol, said the cramped condition at the relief centre could not be avoided as it had to house a big number of evacuees, more than its usual capacity.

One of the evacuees, Rosyanti Mohd Sidek, 37, said the conditions at the relief centre were bad as food and other essential items were inadequate.

"There's also no electricity and water supply for the past three days," said Rosyanti, who has to nurse her month-old baby at the centre.

Zainab Ismail, 50, said some of the evacuees had to fast as they dared not scramble for the food distributed by the agencies involved.

"The people here are hungry and will grab whatever they can every time the truck or helicopter comes," said Zainab, who was relocated to the centre with seven children and a three-day-old grandson.

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Deputy Prime Minister ***Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin*** *(left) and Communications and Multimedia Minister* ***Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek*** *(centre) chatting with* ***Alifa Narmasyara Ali****, 30, (right), who is taking shelter with her 48-day-old twins* ***Nur Damia Hawani Nordin*** *and* ***Nur Damia Hubairah Nordin*** *at SMK Banggol in Paya Berenjut, Kemaman, yesterday.* Pic by Aswadi Alias

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