

# All systems go to handle floods

## Over 80,000 personnel on standby for wet season disaster management

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**PETALING JAYA:** A total of 80,672 officers and personnel from various agencies are on standby for the flood season.

The National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) said there would also be 6,490 assets and machinery, including boats and lorries along with 28,552 cubic tents for the use of relief centres.

"The Health Ministry is also ready in terms of health facilities.

"A total of RM4mil from the National Disaster Relief Trust Fund has been allocated for disaster operations," Nadma said in a statement.

The Welfare Department will be preparing 5,482 flood relief centres, an increase of 34 centres from last year.

"The centres will be able to accommodate 1,626,368 victims.

"A total of 6,044 officers, counselors (165), psychological support teams (942) and 11,559 volunteers will be mobilised when needed.

"All depots and stores at the state and district levels have also been directed to complete their stock improvements before the start of



All in the details: Penang Fire and Rescue Department operations director Muhammad Tarmizi Md Jaafar (third from right) inspecting safety jackets at the Jalan Bagan Jermal fire station. — Bernama

the north east monsoon, which is expected to occur from late October to March next year," Nadma said.

Seven Disaster Supply Storage Depots, state, district, mini container depots (162) and 528 front bases were also ready to deliver services, it added.

"We will also boost the disaster warning system, namely delivering messages, including through social

media, to high-risk communities," it said.

The various initiatives were decided upon during the Central Disaster Management Highest Committee Meeting in Putrajaya on Oct 16, which was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

She also directed the district, state and federal levels to ensure

that preparation of human resources, assets, temporary relief centres, depots, front bases and support supplies was at an optimum level.

Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and east Johor have been forecast to experience floods in December; Johor, Pahang and west Sarawak in January next year and Sarawak the following month.

According to Nadma, it was also decided during the meeting that the leave of officers and personnel involved in disaster management would be frozen from next month until February 2020.

"This encompasses disaster management agencies, district and state offices personnel as well as other essential agencies, including the police, armed forces and the Fire and Rescue Department.

"Flexibility on the leave freeze is up to the discretion of the respective department heads," it added.

The agency also advised the public to always be mindful of latest developments and warnings issued by relevant agencies.

"Those staying in low-lying areas should prepare early to ensure that important documents and belongings are kept at safe places," it said.

Fire and Rescue Department

director-general Datuk Hamdan Wahid said based on their cooperation with the Malaysian Meteorological Department and the Drainage and Irrigation Department, they believed the period between November and February would be a critical time, especially in the northern and east coast regions.

"We are now making logistical preparations for our land, air and water units. Any assets and equipment that require maintenance and repairs are being looked into," he said when contacted.

Hamdan said they would also continue their patrols and monitoring of areas prone to flash flooding and would coordinate their efforts with the relevant agencies.

"We have also issued a directive to our state operation rooms to coordinate with our national operations centre here. They are supposed to conduct exercises and work with their communities.

"We will also work with the local authorities, the Welfare Department and Nadma to compile databases on people with disabilities and those living in flood-prone areas," he said, adding that this was to ensure that no one was left behind during an evacuation.