

## Two Johor eco parks closed to public due to monsoon



(Above) Johor Forestry Department mountain guides conducting training at Gunung Belumut in Kluang to prepare for the monsoon-season. (Right) Island-hopping is one of the activities temporarily unavailable in Mersing due to inclement weather.

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**GUNUNG** Pulau 1 and Gunung Pulau 2 eco parks are closed for all hiking activities throughout the monsoon season.

Johor Forestry Department director Datuk Salim Aman said other eco parks would be closed starting Dec 1, depending on weather conditions.

"We issued notice for closure on Nov 20 for Gunung Pulau 1 and Gunung Pulau 2 in Kulai district.

"We have placed officers and personnel at the location to mon-

itor the situation and ensure no one enters during this period.

"We will not issue any hiking permits for these eco parks for now," he said, adding that legal action could be taken against anyone entering those areas.

Eco parks that will be closed later include Teluk Arong and Gunung Arong Recreational Forest in Mersing, Panti Forest Eco Park in Kota Tinggi and Sungai Bantang Recreational Forest in Labis.

Others slated for closure are Gunung Belumut Eko Rimba Park in Kluang, Taka Melor Eko Rimba Park in Segamat and Soga

Perdana Eko Rimba Park in Batu Pahat.

"However, if the weather worsens (before Dec 1) we might close these places earlier," said Salim.

Separately, Mersing district officer Mohammed Shakib Ali said many island activities were no longer possible due to the monsoon.

"Resorts are still in operation, but island-hopping activities are banned.

"Usually, Mersing will experience heavy rain from late December until January, and floods may occur during this period.

"We have also raised red flags at Pantai Air Papan and Pantai Mersing (indicating rough conditions)," he said.

Mohammed Shakib, who is also Mersing District Disaster Management Committee chairman, said the Welfare Department had distributed food aid to islanders in October.

"Food aid was given to villagers and Orang Asli settlements in Kampung Orang Asli Labong, Kampung Semanyir, Kampung Orang Asli Peta, Kampung Che Wook, Kampung Seri Pantai, Kampung Sri Lumpur and Kampung Bahagia," he said.