

Penang back in business: Lim

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GEORGE TOWN: Penang is now effectively back in business after Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng declared that the state had mostly recovered from the worst flooding in the state's history.

The major floods last month disrupted the state for around 14 days, and it took the local authorities several additional days to clear up the debris and mud left behind.

According to Lim, this was good news for the tourism sector, saying that there was a constant wave of tourists from China over the last month, but that there was a shortfall in local tourists.

He believes that the domestic tourists might have been put off by the floods.

But Lim assured tourists that things had returned to normal in Penang, and they were encouraged to flock back, especially for their annual year-end visits to the hot tourism spots around the island, as well as for the famed street food.

The floods last month, caused significant damage to the state as it was accompanied by stronger than usual winds which blew away roofs along the coastal stretch, triggered landslides along the hilly areas, and flooded many low lying areas.

Altogether, an estimated 100,000 people were affected, with damages and losses expected to be in the millions, particularly on the mainland which endured the brunt of the rainstorm that inundated most of Penang for 16 consecutive hours on Nov 4 and 5.

Lim also praised the Penang Water Holdings Authority (PBAPP) for their pro-active stance in rehabilitating landslips, which occurred near their elevated dams and water storage facilities following the floods.

It was because of the PBAPP's commitment, that Lim declared that Penang has now effectively recovered from the floods.

In another development, PBAPP has upgraded its 24 hour call centre capabilities by outsourcing the facility to the Telekom's call specialist, TM ONE, with the hope that it could satisfy the 1.7 million water consumers here.

The outsourced facility is supposed to answer every call placed through the hot line of 04-255 8 255 within 30 seconds of when the number was dialed.

The percentage of dropped calls (line disruption) will also be lowered as part of the clientele charter imposed on PBAPP by the National Water Services Commission (SPAN), said PBAPP chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa.

The key objectives in the outsourcing exercise were the need for PBAPP to continue with improving its customer services, benchmarking with international call center standards, compliance with SPAN key performance indicators, cost savings over the long-term and meeting customer satisfaction demands.

PBAPP was believed to be the first water utility body in the country to utilise TM ONE's state of the art data and network security services.

There would also be a high protection rate of the consumer data security and improving the interaction with the complainants, who are usually PBAPP customers.