

# A Facebook chronicle of hope

**STRANDED:** Kelson Chong's harrowing experience teaches him to appreciate the little things

**S**Ocial media has become a platform for flood victims to provide blow-by-blow accounts of what is transpiring in the flood-ravaged east coast.

Kelson Chong from Machang, Kelantan, posted on his Facebook account of his harrowing experience as floodwaters continued to rise.

"I could see the water level increasing rapidly. All we could do was grab anything we could think of. Dogs yelped for help. We knew we could not leave them behind. So I grabbed them and put them in the back of our car. Evacuated from my home," he said in his Facebook posting.

They evacuated to the nearest school but in minutes, the water reached chest level.

"We went to the school and parked our cars at the highest spot we could find. With 32 people and only a few packets of bread, we still helped each other, although we knew that we could not survive long on the bread alone," he said.

"Some of us dived into the water and swam to the nearest coconut trees. The coconuts helped energise us. But we knew we had to come up with something else."

Chong said the evacuees were lucky to even have the bread to begin with.

"We know we must look for clean water to consume. So we took a metal can and boiled it using a few candles. The water boiled and we tried to cook instant noodles in it."

He recalled that there were weird noises playing in their head, sometimes the sound of people asking for help.

"Shouting: 'Help! Help! Help!'"

With the humanity still left in us, we felt sad for them but we couldn't do anything.

"Not a single person could sleep at that time. Imagination ran wild. We could see our vehicles being slowly devoured by the rising floods," he said, adding all they could do was watch the situation deteriorate from the third floor of the school.

He said at dawn, they heard the sound of a boat and shouted for help but the boat did not stop. They then spotted another boat with a friend in it.

"They came and brought us some food. I mean real food, like rice, fried chicken and stuff. The moment we saw the food, tears flowed from our eyes.

"(While in the school) we reflected on every single moment in our lives that we didn't appreciate what we had. Now, we learnt to appreciate food that we have."

He said the leftovers from their meal was given to the dogs accompanying them.

"After we ate, I collected all the leftovers from the others and made sure all the dogs had something to eat," Chong said, adding the boat came back to evacuate them, but it could only take three people at a time.

Eventually, everyone was taken to safety.

"We were all emotional at that time because we were reunited with our siblings and friends. Everyone was transported to the nearest help centre for flood victims."



Flood victims retrieving **food and other necessities** from a **Weststar Aviation Services helicopter** at SMK Temangan in Machang, Kota Baru, yesterday. Pic by Zaman Huri Isa