

06-16-2009 MALAYSIA - Aladi Hassan FF PSD Search Trapped

## Divers Association

[http://www.thediversassociation.com/index.php?/incidents/&sortby=col\\_1&sortdirection=desc&page=1](http://www.thediversassociation.com/index.php?/incidents/&sortby=col_1&sortdirection=desc&page=1)

In Terengganu, another diver, Aladi Hassan, was killed during a SAR operation for a drowning victim at Tasik Kenyir in 2009. Aged 41, working for the Setiu Fire and Rescue Department, part of a team undertaking a search for a missing person who had fallen from a boat into lake Kenyir. Entangled in the branches of a submerged tree, drowned. Body recovered by colleagues some 7 hours later. Inference is no comms/lifeline. Wife and three children awarded 25,635RM (£4,400) compensation.

## Did giant arapaima cause duo to drown?

<https://www.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Malaysia/Story/A1Story20090619-149553.html>

Jun 19, 2009 The Star/Asia News Network

KUALA BERANG: A giant fish that supposedly caused the deaths of two men on Tuesday could have been the highly predatory and aggressive arapaima gigas. Fish biologist Dr Mohd Fadzil Suhaimi Ramli said the natural habitat of the fish which could reach 4.9m was the Amazon and Orinoco rivers of South America.



He said the fish that the locals dubbed as ikan naga due to its features that were similar to the mystical dragon could have been released into the lake by someone when it became too large.

Monster mystery: Azhar Alias, 27, and his brother showing the location in Tasik Kenyir where the giant fish has been sighted.

"Due to its size, this fish preys on local species which are smaller in size," he told The Star.

Mohd Fahmi said the arapaima would become aggressive when hungry. Arapaima gigas have an elongated body covered with large, thick scales and a small tail.

Its wide mouth faces upward and the colour ranges from dark brown to black with blue highlights and red edges, particularly on the tail.

It could leap several metres into the air and its powerful head could capsize small boats on impact.

Meanwhile, villagers at Kampung Baung - that borders Tasik Kenyir - claimed that they have witnessed the monstrous arapaima leaping high into the air on several occasions.

A villager who did not want to be named claimed that he had once sighted a giant fish the size of a baby elephant.

Another villager Mohd Fahmi Mustafa, 25, said his grandfather told him that an old Chinese man appeared one day at the village in the late 70s and released two fish that resembled a dragon into the then Kenyir river.

"My grandpa said the old man had claimed that the fish were from overseas and that he had to release them as they had become too big," he said.

On Tuesday, bird park supervisor Helmi Sukhri Hisham, 28, drowned after he mysteriously fell off his boat.

State Fire and Rescue Department driver Aladi Hasan, 41, who had gone to the lake to search for him, also drowned.

## **Mystery of dragon fish ... Gigantic Arapaima fish**

<http://gambargambarpelik.blogspot.com/2009/06/misteri-ikan-naqaikan-arapaima-gigas.html>

June 28, 2009

Dragon fish? Not many people know it, but it has been a conversation since the deaths of recent Bird Park project workers and firefighters.

"What fish call fish in Lake Kenyir is actually Arapaima Gigas. Maybe people call it dragon fish because of its size and skin as big as a dragon.

"However, the fish do not eat people and I believe two recent deaths have nothing to do with the fish."

Lake Kenyir boat owner Mohd Bidin Ibrahim, 45, said on some claims that the death of Park Bird project worker Helmi Shukri Hashim, 28, and firefighter Aladi Hassan, 41, was the result of a fish attack that surrounded the lake. .

Helmi drowned after allegedly dropping off a boat on June 14 when she sent her friend to dump water on an island in the lake.

Aladi, who was on a search for Helmi, was found drowned a day after an incident at the base of the lake in the wake of a tree trunk.

Mohd Bidin from Kampung Langgar, here, who spent 20 years looking for sustenance on the 2,600-square-foot lake, said the existence of giant fish in Kenyir Lake was not unusual as he had seen about three meters of fish.

"I have been through the experience of being a giant fish the size of a glass fiber boat that I ride. The incident happened last year and it is one of those events that I

will never forget, "he said.

According to him, the experience was also experienced by some friends who were looking for sustenance on the lake filled with various river fish species such as Toman, Kelah, Lampam, Sebarau, Baung and Tapah.

"Although many lake fishermen have been caught or chased by the giant fish, no one has died since then," he said.

Responding to the question of how the Arapaima Gigas fish can inhabit the Kenyir Lake, though it was once said to inhabit the Amazon River in Brazil, Mohd Bidin claimed that the incident had its own history.

He said the Arapaima Gigas was believed to have escaped from a pond built in a chalet near Lake Kenyir.

"The fish was originally owned by a Chinese man who is also a chalet operator. As it grew so fast, the businessman released the living in a cage built near a chalet in Sungai Petuang.

"Unfortunately, four of the fish escaped, but one died. I understand, this fish can bring good luck, it only eats fish and does not attack and threaten humans," he said.

Mohd Bidin said that in a recent incident on June 20, an employee of a chalet in Sungai Tembat claimed to have seen a fish believed to be Arapaima Gigas.

Confirming the presence of Arapaima Gigas fish in Lake Kenyir, Mod Bidin brought Metro journalist Sunday to meet his friend Shamsuddin Abd Rahman, 45, who had allegedly raised the giant fish to snatch the bait.

Shamsuddin of Kampung Tajin, here, said the incident occurred nine years ago when he was working as a project laborer for the Simpang Pulai Highway and did not expect to catch the fish accidentally.

"It weighed 35 kilograms, while it was two meters long. At that time I didn't know what kind of fish it was because I had never seen it and was shocked when a colleague told it it was a Dragon fish.

"The fish is beautiful and does not look like any other fish. His body was colorful, his head was like a duck's head and his tail was red.

"At the time I did not know the fish was expensive and sold meats that were a bit expensive to a friend for between RM10 and RM12 per kilogram, and many took pictures with him on his way back to Kuala Berang," said Shamsuddin.

He said after news of the discovery of the fish spread, he came to a man from Singapore and offered him RM10,000 to buy the fish.

"I was clapped at the time because the fish was dead and the meat was sold to the public. I am also not bothered to touch it because it looks like a dragon, its scales are thick and its ends are like ducks' noses," he said.

Shamsuddin said that after his success, many fishermen tried their luck to get the fish, but to date no one has succeeded.

He said that if he deliberately sought to see or catch the fish, it was difficult to find it because he was constantly moving rivers in search of food.

Shamsuddin said that besides the Dragon fish, its extensive lake condition caused many other aquatic creatures to be involved in the mystery, including allegations of the existence of giant Tapah fish in the lake.

The discovery of the giant Tapah fish has been acknowledged by Rosli Sulong, 34, who has worked as a boat driver since the opening of the lake.

According to Mohd Bidin's experience, the boat was driven by a Tapah as large as a glass fiber boat and the fish turned around when the boat's engine was turned off.

He said the incident happened on the Lasir River and claimed that the fish was on the river's edge in search of small fish and monkeys.

He said that in addition to the incident, some of his friends also reported the same incident but in different rivers.

"This fish does not disturb humans, it may be attracted by the foam rotation of the boat fan and follow it. But I believe the fish is huge because I've seen the fish," he said.

## **Dead Families Fire Helped**

<https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=ms&u=https://teganukita.blogspot.com/2009/07/kel-uarga-bomba-mati-lemas-dibantu.html&prev=search>

02 July 2009 By: Mohd Shuhaimi bin Ahmad

## **The family of firefighters who drowned while participating in a search and rescue operation in Lake Kenyir recently received a boost after receiving a RM10,000 donation from the state government today (July 2).**

The donation was presented by the Chief Minister, Dato 'Ahmad Said, to Madziah Mohd Ladar, 39, at the teachers' quarters of Kampung Buluh, Setiu.

Madziah, who is also a teacher, was the widow of Aladi Hasan, 41, who was drowned after a rope on her body was stuck on a tree stump in the lake.

In the incident, a Kelantan-based victim and other submarine members were



Dato 'Ahmad visited Aladi Hassan's widow, Madziyah and her son in Queen City, Setiu. -Picture SHUHAIMI AHMAD.

Razak Cup player Rosli Awang, who has been paralyzed since last year, at his home in Gong Badak.

In another development, the Menteri Besar announced that the state government had decided to appoint a company to investigate the cause of the collapse of the Sultan Mizan Stadium roof last month.

He said the company from the United Kingdom was given three months after the appointment, to prepare a report on the incident.

He said the government was now determining the cost of the study and the terms and conditions, to enable it to be handed over to the company.



operating a search for Halmi Shukri Hashim, 28, believed to have been dropped in Lake Kenyir.

Dato 'Ahmad said the state government hoped that the donation would ease the burden of Aladiarham Aladi's family and that he would fulfill his request to move to his native state of Perlis in the near future.

Meanwhile, he also made contributions to former

## Giant fish sightings in Kenyir Lake

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/community/2009/07/08/giant-fish-sightings-in-kenyir-lake>

08 Jul 2009 By R.S.N. MURALI

KUALA TERENGGANU: There is a strong possibility a type of giant fish, the *aparaïma gigas* exists in Kenyir Lake, as there have been reports of its sightings, state Fishery Department director Munir Mohd Nawî said.

The fish - dubbed the Kenyir Monster by locals here, created quite a stir after the death of two men on June 17 supposedly linked to the fish. The possible existence

of this fish in the biggest manmade lake in South East Asia was reported in the The Star the following day.

A team of fish biologists would conduct detailed research on the giant fish, said Munir.

He added there were numerous claims by locals, some even producing photographs to show the existence of the *aparaïma gigas*.

"A research team will embark on an expedition to determine its existence and size," he said after the Agriculture Expo opening at Dataran Shahbandar here recently.

Munir added the department would attempt to collect more facts about the *aparaïma gigas* in Kenyir as the species was once sighted in Johor but there had been no other reports since then.

In the June 17 incident, Kenyir bird park supervisor Helmi Sukhri Hisham, 28, drowned after he mysteriously fell off his boat - believed due to the impact when his boat could have been hit by the *arapaima gigas*.

A few hours later, state Fire and Rescue Department driver Aladi Hasan, 41, who had gone to the lake to search for him, also drowned.

Eyewitness saw Aladi struggling to reach the lake surface after going in to find Helmi. Moments later, a huge water swirl appeared, leading locals to believe Aladi might have been shocked to see the fish, which could have swam close to him. Based on the information obtained from marine encyclopaedia, *arapaima gigas* could reach 4.9m in length in its natural habitat.

The fresh water species is commonly found in the Amazon and Orinoco rivers of South America.

*Arapaima gigas* is covered with large, thick scales and a small tail.

Its wide mouth faces upward and the colour ranges from dark brown to black with blue highlights and red edges, particularly on the tail.

The fish could also leap several metres into the air and its powerful head could capsize small boats on impact.



<https://media.thestar.com.my/Prod/52D6616D-759B-488C-85F9-6CFE1A1EF055>

## **Black involvement in boat (Relax)**

<http://idanradzi.blogspot.com/2009/07/kelibat-hitam-mengekori-bot-santai.html>

July 25, 2009 By ABDUL HAMID HAMID & THE FAMILY OF ZAINUDEEN LIFE

***To this day, there has never been a single incident of serious injury due to a large fish arapaima in Lake Kenyir. Of more concern is the threat to the balance of the local fish population.***

MADZIAH MOHD. LADA, 39, never avenged the 'dragon' associated with the incident of her husband, the late Aladi Hassan, a firefighter who drowned in a search and rescue operation in Lake Kenyir, Terengganu recently.

She was convinced of the fate of her fate as well as the outcome of the investigation into the cause of her husband's death. Reports indicate that the oxygen tank her husband used was pulled off when a strap on the body was stuck on a wooden stump in the lake.

However, the event did little to open the eyes of the 'accused' namely dragon fish or arapaima. The largest freshwater fish species coming from the Amazon River has been labeled as a 'threatening' migrant.

Not only is it threatened to threaten human safety, but fish that can grow up to 4.5 meters long and 200 pounds in weight can affect the ecological and reproductive chain of local fish species in Lake Kenyir.

"We are concerned that the presence of arapaima will affect the population balance of other fish species. Maybe it has not started breeding for now.

"However, as two grow older, their nutritional needs increase," Terengganu State Fisheries Department director Munir Mohd said. Nawi.

According to Munir, all of his department's efforts stemmed from complaints and information received from members of the public, especially businessmen in Lake Kenyir who claimed to have been exposed to arabia.

"Following the complaint, we have been working to monitor the situation and devise an ideal way to catch the fish.

"However, after the ninth day of monitoring (until last Wednesday), there is still no indication of the existence of arabia. Capture tools such as nets and hooks have not been successful," he said, adding that despite the efforts to find a dead end, monitoring operations continued.

## **Income RM10,000**

Munir was also asked if there was a possibility of big fish as alleged by the cheating operator of another fish species.

"If not for arapaima, probably the biggest local fish in Lake Kenyir near its size is tapah. It also features carnivorous predators who love to snatch food.

"Toman, despite having a reputation for violent fish among fishermen, does not reach that size," Munir explained.

Since the state government announced a RM10,000 gift to anyone who could capture the livelihoods of Lake Kenyir, it has sparked the spirit of hunters among those interested in the reward.

For example, on July 5, a group of hardcore fans went to Southeast Asia's largest artificial lake to try their luck. However, until late in the evening, the search did not produce results.

The frustration was also felt by a tourist boat driver, Azman Mohd, 30, who claimed he had previously seen fish as big as fishermen and about 2.4 meters while fishing in the Beruas River.

"I used a 22 millimeter thick rope and an electric wire as a hook and a fishing rod as bait to catch and tie it to a tree. But the fish managed to escape after the tree broke," he said.

### **Whether or not it's true about his existence.**

However, for a number of villagers and visitors who frequent the three rivers in Lake Kenyir, namely Sungai Petuang, Sungai Tembat and Lata Terap, they insist the aforementioned dragon fish exists.

"It has been active for the past two to three years. It pops up on the surface at some point for a while," said another angler, Sabri, who was clearly interested in the offer.

### **Can touch with wood**

He claimed to have been exposed to arapaima several times in Sungai Petuang. "It looks black from afar. But close by he saw the golden green scales. It weighs about 50 pounds," he said.

According to Sabri, his friend once encountered the fish at Lata Terap. In a month he also appeared there. They weigh between 100 and 180 pounds!

"Even with such size, it is impossible to eat or kill people. It's tame. My friend tried to touch it with a stick, he just kept quiet. As we saw it, the fish was playing around with other small fish. It's like a dolphin.

Sabri admits that his fascination with dragon fish began with references through readings, villagers' stories and sources from Universiti Terengganu Malaysia . He added that he and his friends are now trying to capture the fish.

"Not many people dare to bring a camera on a boat. They were worried about falling into the water. So we're working hard to get that footage to prove the fish really exists in the lake. Only until now, the sustenance has not been on our side," Sabri said.

Journal crews who visited Lake Kenyir last week also told a boat driver about the rumors of a black hole in the water enjoying a boat ride.

"Maybe that's the 'friendly' arapaima. I've been running a boat here for a long time, but have never had the opportunity to experience such an experience.

"Whether monitored from a boat or high ground in the morning or evening, it does not appear immediately," he said, adding that he only wanted to be identified as Ahmad.

Ahmad argues that if it were true that the river was released to Lake Kenyir by the original owner who could no longer afford its size in the aquarium, the fish would not have been wild as it was commonly used by humans who provided it with food other than the soft nature of the fish.

"During my time here, there have never been cases of large fish that attack, injure or kill people.

"The fire (Aladi) we already know about the cause of death. Arapaima is not the cause," Ahmad said.

### **A secret**

The arrival of the Journal to Lake Kenyir was realized by a young man who approached and wanted to tell something. Refusing to reveal his name, he whispered a secret.

"A few years ago, there were resort operators on the lake who kept dragon fish in the cage for decoration and accommodation.

"However, when the resort is out of operation and the fish is growing, it is released into the lake," he said.

If the words of the youth were not a lie, it might be one of the few logical explanations of how the alien species could be in Lake Kenyir.

Whether its existence is doubtful, or whether there is a 'happy' swimming pool at the base of Lake Kenyir, many are now watching its development.

In spite of the dangers associated with it, dragon fishing stories will not keep tourists from visiting the lake as some have feared.

The fact that the story of the arapaima, both the dragon and the dragon, is part of the mystery and attraction of nature in Lake Kenyir.

Until the story is published, the RM10,000 reward offer is still pending.  
Cosmo!

## **Bomba Diver Training Not For the Faint-Hearted**

<http://bernama.com/en/news.php?id=1697140>

21/02/2019 By Nur Firdaus Abdul Rahim and Wan Zuratikah Iffah Wan Zulkifli

KUALA TERENGGANU, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- Divers of the Fire and Rescue Department (JPBM) are risking their lives every time they take a plunge.

Not many are aware of the kind of rigorous training needed to become a diver in JBPM's Water Rescue Unit (PPDA), or the level of danger they are routinely exposed to.

Operations can often pose unexpected challenges in the form of merciless waves, dangerous predators like snakes or crocodiles, conditions that lead to low or zero visibility and diving disorders.



As such, it has been made compulsory for every member of the PPDA unit to complete at least 10 hours of diving every month.

These dives, which take place in the sea, rivers, waterfalls and even mining pools, are important to keep PPDA members in top form during search and rescue (SAR) operations.

The Terengganu Deputy Fire Superintendent Zakariya Mohamed said that in addition to that, members also needed to equip themselves with advanced diving skills and be physically and mentally prepared to face challenging conditions like turbid waters and giant waves.

"The PPDA unit has two standard operation procedures (SOPs), namely for surface water and dive rescues. However, during operations, it is the mental resilience and skill of the divers that help missions succeed without complications," he told Bernama in an exclusive interview.

### **KEEPING THE SKILLS SHARP**

There are currently 84 divers in the state PPDA unit and they each have to undergo a strict training regime and multiple fitness tests in the water and on land.

The tests include swimming 400 metres out and then staying afloat for 10 minutes, running 2.4km within a time frame and underwater swimming at six metres deep.

“They also have to attend a month of training at the Terengganu Safety Training Centre to become a certified Public Safety Diver and they need to also pass the health examination conducted by the Royal Malaysian Navy’s diving experts,” Zakariya explained.

He said the training locations include areas in the state where there have been cases of death by drowning such as Pantai Tok Jembal, Kuala Nerus, Pantai Rhu Sepuluh, Setiu and the Belukar Bukit waterfall area in Hulu Terengganu.

JPBM statistics have shown that Terengganu is among the states with the highest number of drowning cases in 2018 where 28 people died, one was hurt and 40 were saved.

This includes the incident on Dec 30 last year involving the three siblings Nurain Sasabila Zawawi, 5, Nurain Sufia, 8, and Nurain Fatma, 10, from Rantau Panjang, Kelantan who died after they were swept by waves into the ocean at Pantai Sura, Dungun.

The state PPDA unit has also lost a member during a SAR operation Pulau Terengganu Mati, Tasik Kenyir. In the 2009 incident, Aladi Hassan, 41, drowned while on a mission to rescue a drowning victim.

Zakariya, 56, who has over 20 years of experience as a PPDA unit, said that in addition to the JBPM headquarters in Kuala Terengganu, the PPDA unit is also operating in four other stations namely the Kuala Terengganu, Chukai (Kemaman), Kuala Berang (Hulu Terengganu) and Jerteh (Besut) fire stations.

## **A FULFILLING JOB**

The Senior Fire Superintendent II Zaharim Yusof, 47, said that it was his passion for the job that enabled him to overcome the challenges and risks that came with every rescue mission.

Zaharim, who joined the unit 15 years ago, still remembers a SAR mission that almost cost him his life.

While swimming in search a drowning victim in Jeram Tanduk, Kemaman, his legs got caught in between the roots of a tree underwater. He struggled for three minutes before being saved by another member of the unit who was on land.

“At the time, the tender rope which was affixed to my person became the line of communication between members in the water and on land. When I send out

distress signals, my colleague would immediately pull me up.

"Things can get quite alarming at times, but it gives me great satisfaction to be able to complete the assignments given as each is an opportunity to help the public, particularly family members of the victims. They rely on us to help find their lost family members, no matter the condition," said Zaharim, who found 15 drowned victims while serving in the unit.

### **MANY A CLOSE SHAVE**

It was also passion that gave Fire Officer Mohd Khairul Abdul Wahab, 35, the courage to face up to the various risks and challenges every time he goes out on a rescue mission.

"I have been a firefighter for 17 years, 15 of which was under the PPDA unit. SAR missions are riddled with risks and there is always the threat of dangerous animals as well as those that you can't see underwater.

"I cannot forget the time that I accidentally fell into a crocodile pit when searching for drowning victims in Kuala Kubu, Selangor in 2007," he said.

While he was in the pit, he could feel something moving and brushing up against his leg. He remained still for a while before signalling to his diving partner who was also the "tender man" of the threat.

Both Mohd Khairul and his friend were unaware that there were wild animals in the area until they were informed by the locals. Fortunately, they were able to find and retrieve the victim's body without incident.

### **KEEPING CALM**

Fire Officer Mohd Faisal Ramli, 49, said that PPDA members needed to have a good handle of their emotions, particularly when dealing with family members of the victims who were desperately hoping that their loved ones would be found safe and sound.

"Sometimes, it can become difficult to keep our emotions in check, especially when we look at the state of the victim's family. It is sadder when the cases involves young children.

"I would be reminded of my children at home and found it difficult to imagine what would have happened had the victim been one of my family members," he said.

Muhammad Azizi Abd Aziz, 23, who has just joined the unit three years ago said that another risk that divers were threatened with was that of diving disorders.

"We are all exposed to various kinds of disorders such as nitrogen narcosis or decompression sickness (DCS)," he said.

Nitrogen narcosis is caused by breathing such a high concentration of nitrogen that the gas functions as a mild anaesthetic. This alteration in consciousness can cause divers to drown.

DCS, also known as "the bends", is a condition in which nitrogen dissolved in the blood and tissues by high pressure forms bubbles as pressure decreases, causing a host of potentially fatal complications.

## Fire and Rescue Dept lost six divers since 2000

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2017/06/247717/fire-and-rescue-dept-lost-six-divers-2000>

June 11, 2017 By HANI SHAMIRA SHAHRUDIN

KUALA LUMPUR: Since 2000, a total of six divers from the Fire and Rescue Department's Underwater Rescue Team have died during operations in the country.

On May 15, 2000, Idris Ahmad went missing during a training session at Pulau Sembilan in Perak. A search-and-rescue (SAR) operation was launched, but his body was never found.



**(File pix) Since 2000, a total of six divers from the Fire and Rescue Department's Underwater Rescue Team have died during operations in the country. NSTP Pix**

During the SAR operation, another personnel involved in the operation, Mohd Noor Harun, also went missing a day after the incident.

In 2004, a Fire and Rescue Department personnel Shuhaimi @ Jimmy Ibrahim was killed when he had a heart attack during a dive training at the Terengganu Safety and Training Centre.

Four years later, Underwater Rescue Team diver Sahsi Ibrahim died during an operation to search for victims of a shipwreck in Kapit, Sarawak.

In Terengganu, another diver, Aladi Hassan, was killed during a SAR operation for a drowning victim at Tasik Kenyir in 2009.

Fire and Rescue Department's Operation Management Department chief Assistant Fire Commissioner Syufaat Kamaron said every time there was a death involving its personnel, the department's federal headquarters would review the standard operating procedure (SOP) to ensure such incidents did not recur.

"It is our job to save victims. For the federal headquarters, it is our job to ensure that our divers are safe. "When a tragedy strikes, we develop and review the SOP to ensure such incidents do not happen again."

He said accidents related to water activities usually happened when the SOP was not followed, such as the requirement for divers to have “dive buddies”.

The Underwater Rescue Team usually comprises seven members — the supervisor or master diver, two primary divers, two for tender (rope holders) and two back-up divers.

Syufaat said divers faced different challenges according to the location of the operation.

“At sea, strong currents can be life-threatening, coupled with threats of dangerous and venomous sea creatures.

“When divers are deployed to lakes or dams, the temperature of the water could be hazardous as it could increase or decrease rapidly.

“The low visibility level at these locations could also pose a challenge.”

Syufaat said the most challenging settings for an operation were at rivers and waterfalls.

“The SOP for divers in river rescue operations is more stringent. Apart from murky water and strong currents, we also are cautious in the event of water column, known colloquially as ‘kepala air’ (Flash Flood),” he said, adding that venomous animals such as snakes, scorpions and centipedes could also be hazardous.

## Understanding the Role of Rescue Members in the Fire Water

<https://bernamanewschannel.com/memahami-tugas-anggota-penyelamat-di-air-bomba/>

By: NHMA

February 21, 2019 By: Nur Firdaus Abdul Rahim

KUALA TERENGGANU - Having 10 hours of diving training at sea, river, waterfall or mine each month is a must for every member of the Terengganu Fire and Rescue Department (PPDA).

Training is essential to ensure that every member is prepared to perform search and rescue operations, not to fear in the face of violent waves or zero visibility, regardless of day or night, in



different locations.

Deputy Chief of Fire, JPBM Terengganu, Zakariya Mohamed said that while each member should be prepared with high level diving skills, they should always be prepared mentally and physically in every situation including stormy water and high tides.

"This is because although the PPDA unit has two common standard operating procedures (SOPs) namely groundwater rescue and diving, the operations are largely dependent on the mental strength and skills of the members to ensure that every mission runs smoothly without any complications," he added in an interview exclusive to Bernama.

### **ALWAYS STRENGTHEN YOURSELF**

Each firefighter of the unit, now numbering 84, had to pass rigorous test discipline and undergo various fitness tests both on the water and on land.

These include a 400-meter swim test and float in 10 minutes, pass a 2.4-kilometer fitness training and swim underwater for six meters.

"In addition, they also have to attend a month-long course to obtain a Public Safety Diver (PSD) certificate from the Terengganu Security Training Center (TSTC) and pass a health check from a Royal Malaysian Navy submarine (RMN) specialist," Zakariya explained.

He said the training sites included areas that had drowned the lives of drowned people in the state and coastal areas including Tok Jembal Beach, Kuala Nerus, Rhu Sepuluh Beach, Setiu and Belukar Bukit waterfall, Hulu Terengganu.



The related skills, he added, need to be reinforced to each member because according to JPBM statistics, Terengganu is among the states with the highest drowning cases in 2018 - involving 28 deaths, one injured and 40 others rescued. They include three sisters, Nurain Sasabila Zawawi, 5, Nurain Sufia, 8, and Nurain Fatma, 10, from Rantau Panjang, Kelantan who were drowned in the surf at Sura Beach, Dungun, late afternoon on Dec 30.

For the record, the Terengganu JPBM PPDA Unit also lost a member, Aladi Hassan, 41, who died in a drowning operation on Terengganu Island in Dead Lake, Lake Kenyir, Hulu Terengganu in 2009.

Zakariya, 56, with more than 20 years of experience as a member of the PPDA, said that apart from the Kuala Terengganu JPBM headquarters, the Terengganu PPBM Unit also operates four district Fire and Rescue stations, Kuala Terengganu Fire Station, Chukai (Kemaman), Kuala Berang (Hulu) Terengganu) and Jerteh (Besut).

### **ASSIGNMENT GIVES SATISFACTION**

Senior Fire Superintendent Mohd Zaharim Yusof, 47, who has been with the PPDA for over 15 years, said his deep interest as a unit member allowed him to overcome various challenges and risks when undertaking rescue tasks.

Relating his experience, he still remembers an incident that cost him his life while participating in a drowning operation in Jeram Horn, Kemaman.

While searching for the victim, he was trapped near the root of the tree at the base of the water and turned around for more than three minutes before being rescued by his roommate.

"At that moment, the 'cord' of communication between the ground and ground, which was attached to my body, signaled that I was in an emergency, so my colleague immediately pulled me up.



"It's a bit daunting, but each assignment brings satisfaction because it helps the community, especially the families of the victims. They really rely on the Fire Department to find the victims, under any circumstances," he said, adding that he has been able to find 15 drowning victims while on duty at the unit.

### **HAVE A DIFFERENT DETAIL**

Meanwhile, Fire Officer Mohd Khairul Abdul Wahab, 35, said his deep interest in his career led him to face various risks each time he participated in drowning rescue operations.

"During his 17 years of service as a firefighter including 15 years under the PPDA unit, he faced many challenges during the drowning and rescue operations, as well as dealing with threats to dangerous animals and other threats not to be seen in the water.

"The most memorable was when I had an anxious moment when I fell into a crocodile during a drowning operation in Kuala Kubu, Selangor in 2007," he said.



As he fell into the ditch, he could feel something moving and touching him causing him to calm down for a moment before alerting his diving partner as well as the 'tender man' (the member who controls the diver's movement).

He and his friends did not know that the area was a wildlife sanctuary and only found out about it after being informed by locals. They were fortunate enough to not have any accidents and even managed to find the victim's body.

### **EMERGENCY CONTROL**

Meanwhile, his friend Fire Officer Mohd Faisal Ramli, 49, said PPDA members should be wise in controlling their emotions especially when dealing with drowning families who always hoped to be found safe.

"Sometimes during surgery, we can't even hold back tears to see the families of the victims, let alone cases of drowning involving young children.



"When dealing with such cases my memory is always directed at the children at home and I cannot imagine what would happen if the body I sought and brought to the surface was one of my immediate family members," he said.

Muhammad Azizi Abd Aziz, 23, who served three years in the PPDA unit, said that members of the unit were also at risk of 'submarine disease'.

"We are exposed to various diarrheal diseases such as Nitrogen Narcosis (Gas poisoning) or Decompression sickness-DCS.

Gas poisoning can cause the diver to lose consciousness while diving into drowning while DCS causes damage to various body tissues including spinal cord, blood vessels, joints and abdomen which can be fatal to the member.

Edited by Sarimah Othman