

Killer rip tides a threat at Pantai Dalit

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KOTA KINABALU: Rip tides along the killer Pantai Dalit shoreline might be the cause of the high number of drowning cases at the popular beach spot in Tuaran, a maritime researcher said.

Rip tides are currents flowing away from the shore, and are very powerful, said Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Maritime Institute deputy director Dr Shahbuddin Saad.

He said the seven people who died at Pantai Dalit over the last two months could possibly have been pulled from the shallows into the open sea by rip currents.

"You cannot fight the current,

as it can drag you away even if you are a strong swimmer," he said, advising that people pulled by the rip currents should try and swim out of it and then head towards shore.

Dr Shahbuddin said two types of currents could be found in certain coastlines in Sabah. The other type – which is less dangerous – is the long shore current, which flows shoreward.

He warned that the occurrence of rip currents is not based on seasons and could occur anytime, based as it was on the geographical features of the coastline.

The deaths at Pantai Dalit prompted the state govern-

ment to order the Tuaran district office to put up warning signboards on the prospective dangers at the beach, a popular weekend picnic spot for families.

On Oct 25, schoolboys Rosesaly Mohd Sabir and Janarisam Akmad, both 11, and Dahlan Ab Dal, eight, drowned during a Hari Raya family outing. About 100m away from where the boys died, four secondary school students had drowned while swimming on Aug 22.

All the victims were said to be in shallow waters when they were pulled out into the open sea.