



Mohd Zain Abdul Kadir at his smallholding in Kampung Paya Nedam, Pendang.

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# Rain brings heartache to some

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**ALOR STAR:** Rubber tapper Mohd Zain Abdul Kadir is a worried man.

He had only managed to tap his trees once since the beginning of the month.

Even then, he ended collecting rubber scrap since the sap turned hard due to heavy downpour which started almost immediately after he finished tapping all the 1,400 trees.

His savings is fast drying up and he is waiting anxiously for

the return of "normal" weather when he could again collect as much as 200kg of latex daily on his two-hectare smallholding.

The 66-year-old is among 50 villagers in Kampung Paya Nedam in Pendang, about 40km from here, who depend mostly on their rubber smallholdings as the main source of income.

Mohd Zain, who lives with his wife and their five-year-old daughter, said the unusually wet weather since late last month had badly affected their livelihood.

"Even if the weather returns

to normal, it would take a few days before our trees could produce a lot of latex again," he said.

While the current inter-monsoon period, characterised by late afternoon thunderstorms, proved to be a bane to Zain and his neighbours, the continuous wet spell is a welcome relief to padi farmer Che Amah Ismail.

The 82-year-old is among 2,782 padi farmers in Kedah whose young crop were spoiled by the floods last month.

"I hope the rain will continue for a while since I have just

re-planted the seedlings.

"I hope they will grow fast before the dry season sets in later next month," she said.

Meanwhile, a Penang Meteorological Services Department spokesman said the rainfall would return to the normal monthly 150mm range next month when the inter-monsoon period ceases.

He said there would be more sunny skies in the northern states next month and drier months with below 80mm monthly precipitation in January and February as the North-East monsoon starts in the East Coast states.