

Malaysia on flood watch

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New storm likely to bring heavy rainfall

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia is bracing itself to face floods in the coming month as one typhoon is downgraded while another tropical storm begins.

Meteorological Services Department deputy director-general Leong Chow Peng said now that Typhoon Durian had been downgraded to a tropical depression, it was now tracking the progression of Utor, a new storm headed for the Philippines.

"Utor is expected to hit central Philippines on Sunday and may have some impact on weather conditions in Sabah, especially rough seas and heavy rains. We will send out a warning if these occur.

"This is likely to be followed

by a monsoon surge from China which may see heavy rainfall in Malaysia," she said yesterday.

Leong was speaking to reporters after attending a meeting called by the National Security Division to coordinate relief efforts in preparation for any flood.

The division's disaster and crisis management director Che Moin Umar said first-responder teams like the police and the Fire and Rescue Services Department had been placed on alert for possible floods until the first week of January.

"We have told these agencies to map out distinctly their areas of jurisdiction as we don't want them to overlap their services.

This is because we have limited resources and assets that we can put in event of a disaster," he said.

"We have also told the Social Welfare Department to improve on their registration of flood victims so that aid can reach them in time," he said.

Che Moin said the Drainage and Irrigation Department had also been directed to have a scheduled releasing of water from reservoirs in the country to prevent them from overflowing.

"At present, surveillance of Sg Kelantan, Sg Golok and Sg Pahang indicate that the water (levels are) still below danger level," he said.