

El Nino may not be as severe as forecast earlier

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PUTRAJAYA: Weather conditions for this year may not be as severe as expected earlier.

However, a weak El Nino phenomenon could still be expected, resulting in higher global temperatures, longer hot and dry seasons, and less rainfall, but at a lesser degree of severity than initially predicted.

It had been reported previously that this year would be an El Nino year and the warmest ever on record.

The El Nino phenomenon refers to an abnormal warming of surface ocean waters of the tropical eastern Pacific ocean.

Drainage and Irrigation Department director-general Datuk Keizrul Abdullah said although at present the dams were full from the recent heavy rain, people tend to use more water as temperatures rise.

“Coupled with less rainfall, we may still end up with a bigger deficit of water than in a normal year,” he warned.

A statement on the Meteorological Department’s website stated that a weak El Nino phenomenon was expected to last until May. It also said that higher than usual rainfall was predicted for January and February, before returning to normal from March to May.

Keizrul said the DID would be involved in a climate change study, ordered by the Cabinet last week, to assess the impact of changing weather patterns caused by global warming.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis had announced last week that the Cabinet had directed his ministry to conduct the study.