

'Third wave' warning for Johor

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PETALING JAYA: A red stage heavy rain warning has been issued for Johor, especially the eastern and southern parts of the state, which has raised fears of a third wave of floods.

As at yesterday, parts of Batu Pahat were still flooded, with the water remaining stagnant in some villages. The situation elsewhere in the state has returned to normal.

The warning issued on the Meteorological Services Department website stated that moderate to heavy rain was expected until this Sunday.

"The northeast monsoon will be more active and winds are getting stronger in the South China Sea at about 40-50kph, and will result in heavier rainfall in Johor and east Pahang," the statement said yesterday.

According to a meteorological officer, the rain was not expected to be as heavy as that of last month or in mid-January. But a red stage warning was issued because stronger winds were bringing more clouds to Johor and because some river levels in Johor had not yet returned to normal.

State Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) director Chong Chee Han said river levels

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had breached their danger mark.

"The water level at the Sembrong dam is now at 12.02m (danger level: 12m) while the Bekok dam is at 18.42m (danger level: 17.5m)," he added.

A check on the DID website (<http://infobanjir.water.gov.my/>) showed that river levels for most parts of Johor were above normal, with the water in some rivers having passed the alert to danger marks.

Chong did not discount the possibility of another round of floods and said the Government's machinery was ready if it occurs.

"We never had 500mm of rain before but it has now happened. We never had heavy flooding twice within a month, but that too has occurred. All we can hope for is that a third wave does not happen or spill over to the middle part of the state."

A red stage warning was also issued for Sarawak where moderately heavy rain, mainly in the late afternoon and night, is expected to continue until Sunday.

The Meteorological Department issued an orange state warning for Pahang, where occasionally moderate rain is expected to last until this Sunday.

Choppy waters with waves up to 4m are expected to continue until early next week for the east coast of the peninsula.

DID director-general Datuk Keizrul Abdullah said, however, it would be "extremely unusual" to have a third wave of floods over such a short period but did not discount the possibility that it might happen.

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