

Worst over, but dept warns of second wave

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KUALA LUMPUR: The worst of the floods is over, but the Malaysian Meteorological Department (MMD) is not dismissing the possibility of a second wave of floods in northern Malaysia within the next few months.

Its director of forecasting, Saw Bun Liong, told the *New Straits Times* yesterday that the monsoon rain, which is an annual affair in the northern region, is likely to be affected by the La Nina phenomenon.

He said the presence of a moderate to strong La Nina in the central Pacific region this year enhances rainfall and weather extremes in this region as seen in other countries in the region recently.

"Rainfall is expected during the monsoon and will usually consist of normal rain or thunderstorms which won't last more than a few hours. But the monsoon rain, like the one which happened recently, usually lasts a few days. There will be at least five or six occasions of monsoon rain and these are what we'll be looking out for."

Saw did not dismiss the possibility of higher monsoon rainfall that may lead to floods, although he said that it would be hard to predict the mag-

nitude as flooding may still happen with the usual amount of rainfall owing to other factors.

The La Nina is expected to persist until March next year.

"People are advised to be cautious in the coming months in the event of heavy rain. The MMD will continue to monitor the development of rain and put up alerts when necessary on our website and to the media," he said.

Earlier, in a statement, the MMD said the recent heavy rainfall in Kedah and Perlis was due to a tropical depression crossing over the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia on Nov 1.

It was responding to a *New Sunday Times* article entitled "Climate change the cause?" that was published on Sunday.

"In terms of rainfall extremes, the daily rainfall recorded during this episode, that is, from Oct 30 to Nov 3 this year were among the highest in the past 60 years.

"The highest daily rainfall for a 60-year record for Alor Setar for November was 164mm, recorded on Nov 18, 1951 and October was 145mm, recorded on Oct 11, 1986.

"The highest daily rainfall during this episode was 138mm, recorded on Nov 1," it added.



Army retiree Roshidah Kassim, 49, shows part of her belongings that were damaged in the floods at Taman Hijrah. — NST picture by Rashidi Karim

Aid pours into flood-hit states

KUALA LUMPUR: More aid is pouring into the country's flood-hit states.

Rakan Muda, Malaysian Youth Council, Gerakan Belia 4B Malaysia and Umno Youth became the latest organisations to pledge aid, sending out a team of 158 volunteers to help flood victims in Kedah and Perlis, from the Putra World Trade Centre here yesterday.

The volunteers, who came from Malacca, Kapar (Selangor) and Pekan (Pahang), will be stationed at the Kedah Youth and Sports Complex until Nov 12.

The volunteers will be divided into smaller groups and sent to the affected districts in the two states. The affected districts are Padang Terap, Pokok Sena, Kota Setar and Kubang Pasu.

Deputy Umno Youth chief Datuk Razali Ibrahim said the volunteers would help distribute food to the flood victims, clean up the evacuation centres and provide them with social support.

"We will be taking along water supply and utensils for the victims as well

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as a boat to help reach some of the affected areas," Razali, who is also deputy youth and sports minister, said after the convoy was flagged-off by Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor here.

"There are 400 volunteers already in Kedah and Perlis."

At a separate event in Alor Star, Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal

said rubber smallholders in Kedah and Perlis, whose rubber saplings were destroyed by the floods, would receive compensation soon.

The Rubber Industry Smallholders Authority (Risda) will carry out a survey on the affected farmers.

"The authority will submit a list to me soon so that we can determine the extent of the losses and amount to be compensated," he said after visiting the flood relief centre at Stadium Sultan Abdul Halim in Jalan Suka Menanti in Alor Star yesterday.

Shafie said the Kedah Development Authority would also coordinate relief efforts and aid for the hardcore poor in Kedah.

Meanwhile, the National Security Council has started collecting data of all flood victims in Kedah.

Its acting secretary Major Harris Padzillah Mohamed said the council had obtained the data of all flood evacuees who sought shelter at the various relief centres run by the Kedah State Welfare Department.



Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Syabas) personnel, together with members of the armed forces, carrying mineral water into a truck during its humanitarian aid mission to supply clean water to Kedah and Perlis. — NST picture by Rose Razman