



Fallen giant: This huge unipole billboard along Jalan Kepong opposite Kompleks Desa buckled under the storm that hit the Klang Valley over the past few days, causing traffic in the area to be reduced to a crawl. The weatherman is warning that more of such storms will hit the area. — NORAFIFI EHSAN / The Star

Storm valley

**‘Terrible twins’
La Nina and
monsoon to hit
KL and Selangor**

THE Klang Valley will have to brace itself for a wet, wet time as La Nina lashes the area, bringing with it intense and severe thunderstorms. Many major towns and cities in the country will also be affected as the north-east monsoon hits at the same time.

Last Sunday's thunderstorm,

which left trees uprooted and flash floods in several areas, was not the first time the “bad girl” had unleashed her fury, nor will it be the last.

The Meteorological Department said rainfall for the first four days of this month for the western peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak was higher compared with the same period last year.

Earlier, it had warned that rain during this wet season could be at least between 20% and 40% higher.

The authorities said the Kajang flash floods, which left businesses with millions of ringgit in losses, were partly caused by clogged drains.

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'Bad girl' brings wetter days

Weatherman: La Nina expected to cause severe and intense thunderstorms

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PETALING JAYA: The north-east monsoon is when Kelantan and Terengganu suffer bad floods. This year, they won't be alone. The west coast and city centres look set to be badly hit as well by the intense and severe thunderstorms that the *La Nina* (Spanish for the girl) phenomenon is set to bring.

Afternoon thunderstorms in the west coast is a common occurrence during the rainy season but it's going to get worse this time around.

The bad "girl" coupled with strong winds have already caused freak storms, with the latest occurring in the Klang Valley on Sunday.

Sunday's incident saw many trees being uprooted and heavy rain made it very difficult to drive.

"Thunderstorms can become more severe and intense during La Nina.

"Strong winds and heavy rain are common during severe thunderstorms. The current weak to moderate La Nina gives a favourable condition for the formation of severe thunderstorms in the west coast of the peninsula," the Meteorological Department said.

"This is further enhanced by the convergence of the northeasterly and northwesterly winds," it said when asked about the recent extreme weather in some places.

According to the department's statistics, rainfall for the first four days of this month for the western peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak was higher compared with the same period last year. The Petaling Jaya and Subang weather stations recorded 45mm and 35mm

DID keeping tabs on rainfall levels

PETALING JAYA: The Department of Irrigation and Drainage is keeping close tabs on river and rainfall levels in the country with real-time updates available on their flood website.

As of 9pm last night, only Sungai Lenik in Batu Pahat, Johor had surpassed its danger level of 6m with a 6.04m reading while Sungai Golok in Pasir Mas and Sungai Milian in Sandakan had exceeded their alert levels.

The information is available on <http://publicinfobanjir.water.gov.my> and <http://infobanjir.water.gov.my>.

The website also lists flood and heavy rain warnings.

of rain on Sunday.

The department has already warned that during this wet season, some areas could expect at least between 20% and 40% more rainfall.

The department has been issuing regular heavy rain and strong wind warnings on its website for the entire country.

For the next seven days, rain is expected over the coastal areas of the east coast states of the peninsula in the morning.

In the afternoon, scattered thunderstorms are expected over the west coast states and isolated rain over the east coast states.



Rain, rain go away: Kuantan residents braving the floodwaters as high as 1m due to heavy rains yesterday.

Driving in wet weather

Do's

- > Slow down. Driving too fast is the No. 1 cause of accidents on wet days
- > Check tyres and wipers to ensure they are in good condition
- > Signal well in advance for lane changes
- > Turn your headlights on even in light rain. They will help you see better, and allow other drivers to see you
- > Drive in the tyre prints of the car ahead of you for better traction
- > If your car hydroplanes, hold the steering wheel steady and lightly apply brakes until you regain control
- > If your vehicle stalls, pull over and turn on hazard lights
- > For motorcyclists, ease up on the throttle on takeoff
- > Watch electronic warning signs if available

Don'ts

- > Don't use hazard lights while driving. It makes it hard to distinguish turn signals, and might be confused for a distress signal
- > Don't follow large vehicles too closely; the spray from their tyres reduces vision
- > Don't pump or lift your foot off the pedal
- > Don't drive through moving water if you can't see the ground through it
- > Don't drive beyond visibility limits
- > Don't speed through stagnant water
- > Don't brake while in a curve
- > Don't jam hard on your brakes; it could cause skidding
- > Don't weave in and out of traffic; other drivers cannot predict where you will be next

Source: weather.com, ehow.com, policecrunch.com & smartmotorist.com

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DID: Rubbish in drain can cause floods

PETALING JAYA: Do not throw rubbish into drains, rivers or roads as it can have a disastrous effect during the current rainy season.

Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) flood management division director Datuk Zainor Rahim Ibrahim said clogged drains and rubbish-filled rivers could increase the chances of flash floods as the water could not flow smoothly.

"When the water flow is not smooth, it causes rivers and drains to swell and overflow, especially during a downpour when there is an increase in the amount of water in a short time.

"Even littering out the car window has a negative impact as it can get stuck at a culvert," he said.

The heavier rainfall during the current rainy season, Zainor said, could cause flash floods even in non low-lying areas, especially if drains and rivers were clogged.

Zainor Rahim, who visited Kajang yesterday after it was hit by flash floods, said initial findings showed that water flow in Sungai Jelok

was constricted.

"The water was not flowing freely. There were some constrictions, including rubbish that clogged up water passage in the river and the town's drains," he said, adding that the effects of development had played a part.

The Kajang town flash floods, which occurred after a three-hour downpour on Friday evening, caught many by surprise with water levels rising to as high as 1m in some areas.

Property and vehicles were damaged with some businesses reporting huge losses.

Several measures, he said, were being taken to improve the river flow and reduce the constrictions, including raising flood walls.

The DID has several flood mitigation measures in place to brace for the floods, including maintenance and an early warning system with sirens blazing in flood-prone areas.

For more flood-related stories:
See Nation Pg29 and StarMetro

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