



Caught in the middle: A van stranded in a flash flood that hit Jalan Tun Razak after a freak 45-minute downpour yesterday afternoon. The flood waters brought traffic outside the National Library to a standstill. — AZHAR MAHFOF / The Star

Flash floods hit KL, thousands stranded

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KUALA LUMPUR: Thousands of motorists heading home after work were stuck in traffic in many parts of the city after flash floods occurred.

Heavy rain caused Sg Bunus to overflow and thigh-high floodwaters cut off traffic along Jalan Tun Razak in front of the National Library, causing a massive traffic jam.

A group of children and three teachers had to be rescued from a nursery in Jalan Semarak.

The 23 children, aged between three months and nine years, had to be rescued by the Fire and Rescue Department when their premises were submerged under 1.5 metres of water.

A department spokesman said rescue squads from Jelatek and Jinjang fire stations were deployed to take the children out of the premises using a boat.

"Twenty students of a multimedia college located next to the nursery

were also evacuated to higher ground," he said.

Nursery teacher Rodiah Yahya, 28, said the flood waters rose in just a matter of minutes and forced her to confine the children to the upper level of the nursery.

"The floodwaters reached the chest level. The firemen came to our rescue about 30 minutes later," she said.

Acting Kuala Lumpur Traffic chief Supt Rusli Mohd Noor said other roads affected by the flash floods were Jalan Kuching, the whole area of Taman Wahyu, Dato Onn roundabout near Bank Rakyat and Air Panas People's Housing Project (PPR) areas.

However, he said the flood waters subsided by 7pm. The SMART tunnel was closed to traffic from 4.35pm to 8pm.

Its management said the heavy downpour raised the water levels at Sungai Klang and Sungai Ampang above the alert level necessitating closure of the tunnel to traffic.

In Kampung Baru, eight families were evacuated after their houses

were inundated with floodwaters at about 7pm.

The eight families in Jalan Syed Mahadi also had to endure the stench of overflowing sewer water before they decided to get out.

Teacher Masitah Othman, 45, said she and her three children along with her husband Shahrul Ahmad, 38, had to exit by the backdoor after part of the land in front of their house began to sink.

She and the other families were later rescued by the Federal Territory Rescue Team squad led by Sergeant K. Periyasamy, Sergeant Azman Abu and eight others.

Trader Muhd Izwan Sulaiman, 26, who lives with his family, said the area was hit by floods in April but it was not as bad as yesterday.

"I hope the authorities will take action as this is troubling the families here.

"The drainage system had burst because there was no connecting pipes and this might have caused the sinkholes," he added.