

Massive deluge in Klang

Combination of downpour and poor flood mitigation system leads to floods

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KLANG: A potent combination of exceptionally heavy rain and high tide, coupled with an old flood mitigation system, saw flash floods hit the coastal town here again, causing hundreds of thousands to be late for work.

The deluge, the worst in recent years, follows Tuesday's floods, angered residents in affected areas, including Taman Sri Andalas, Taman Selatan, Taman Bayu Perdana, Padang Jawa and Taman Chi Liung, and led to the cancellation of classes in 10 schools.

Water levels started to rise within an hour after a severe thunderstorm started around 3.30am yesterday, entering the homes and workplaces of thousands.

It is learnt that about 70mm of rain was recorded within 90 minutes, compared to the daily average of 40mm.

High tide did not help matters as this prevented the rising water from flowing out into the sea.

As Klang residents woke up to a second flash floods in a week, many rushed to wake up their neighbours in an effort to move and salvage their belongings in their water-logged homes.

Many vented their anger at both federal and state authorities, prompting Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim to quickly call for "a 50-year flood plain" encompassing drainage systems and development guidelines.

A 50-year flood plain entails ensuring that there was only a maximum 2% chance of flooding each



Rushing and gushing: A pizza delivery boy standing on his motorcycle as he wades through floodwaters at Taman Bayu Perdana in Klang yesterday. — AZHAR MAHFUF / The Star

year over the next 50 years.

"I've asked the Klang Municipal Council, the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID), the Public Works Department as well as the district and land offices to prepare applications for allocations under the project.

The funds for the project would come from the state government, he stressed.

Khalid also dismissed speculation that delay in opening tidal gates was the main cause for the floods, saying it was a combination of heavy rain

and high tide.

"We should have planned for it. The best is for a 100-year flood plain but it is more expensive," he said at the community hall at Kampung Delek.

Selangor DID director Abdul Qashar Osman confirmed all 348 tidal gates in the Klang district were working.

"We need to design a new storm water management system. There will be new guidelines for development.

"Design for new projects must be

sustainable over a 50-year period.

"The current system cannot cope," he said, adding that the new proposal was estimated to cost RM1.6bil.

Council acting president Ehsan Mukri shot down accusations that the floods were due to uncollected garbage.

District officer Datuk Bakhtiar Hussin said that although it had prepared more than 10 relief centres to accommodate flood evacuees, this proved to be unnecessary as the water subsided relatively fast.