



Residents wading through floodwaters in Taman Emas 2, Batu Pahat, yesterday. Pic by Mustapha Ismail

Penang airport hit by flash floods, again

DOWNPOUR: Several districts in Johor, Malacca were inundated, too

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A 30-MINUTE downpour caused a flash flood at the Penang International Airport driveway yesterday, the fifth incident since a new drainage system that was part of the airport's RM250 million upgrading was completed early this year.

Fortunately, the ankle-deep water, which was confined to the taxi and private vehicles lanes, did not spill into the arrival hall as it did on four past occasions since 2009.

The flood also hit many parts of the open air car park, about 10m away the arrival hall.

Penang Gerakan committee member H'ng Khoon Leng, who was at the terminal when the heavy rainfall started at 10am, said despite assurances by the authorities, flash floods remained a perennial problem at the airport, a major point of entry for the state.

"Something must be done fast because we cannot have flash floods haunting us each time it rains heavily in Bayan Lepas."

An airport employee, who did not want to be named, said clogged drains near the driveway worsened the problem.

"Some parts of the arrival hall were also affected by overflowing drain water," he said, adding that the airport operations were not affected by the flash floods.

Many passengers said the flash floods were bringing a bad name to Penang.

"This is nothing new because it has happened before, although the previous cases were worse than today's. We cannot have this recurring. We must put a stop to the source of the flash flood," said an irate passenger who had to wade

through the ankle-deep water at the driveway to get to his car at the parking lot.

State Public Works, Utilities and Transportation Committee chairman Lim Hock Seng said plans were afoot to build a water retention pond near the airport to collect excess rainwater.

"This is under the Federal Government and so, please ask them when this can be done. I am in a meeting now."

In **Johor**, several areas in Batu Pahat were hit by flash floods following heavy rains for the past few days. Yesterday, several areas, including Taman Emas 2, were inundated.

Taman Emas 2 resident Mohd Hafiz Hassan, 27, said non-stop raining had caused floods in the area.

"This is the second time that flooding has occurred in this area this year. The first was in March but the floodwaters subsided quickly as the rain was not continuous."

Batu Pahat district officer Abdul Wahab Ridzuan said a meeting would be held on Wednesday to

discuss flooding in the district.

In **Malacca**, three schools in Melaka Tengah and Jasin were ordered to close for the day due to flash floods as a result of a downpour for more than five hours early morning yesterday. The affected schools were Sekolah Tinggi Perempuan Melaka and SMK Tun Teja in Melaka Tengah, and SK Pulau in Jasin.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Idris Haron said the three schools were inundated by 1m of water.

"We ordered the schools to close for the safety of the students," he said during a visit to Serkam, where he was briefed on the flash flood situation.

Idris said the floods wrecked havoc in Masjid Tanah, Alor Gajah, Tangga Batu, Bukit Katil, Kota Melaka and Jasin.

"Jasin is the worst affected area involving about 800 families with a total of 3,000 victims. The affected areas are Kampung Kilang Berapi, Merlimau Barat, Paya Lengkon, Merlimau Tengah, Merlimau Timur, Batu Gajah and Ayer Tawar."

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