

Motorists wake up to flood nightmare

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GEORGE TOWN: A two-hour down-pour here saw motorists caught in the morning rush nightmare.

Workers reported late for work, deliveries delayed while others gave up doing their chores as traffic came to a crawl in many parts of the island.

In Jalan Bukit Gambir near the Vistana Hotel, traffic was at a standstill since 8am after an uprooted tree blocked the dual-lane road heading to Bukit Jambul.

Firemen from Jalan Perak who were informed at 8.20am, took about 50 minutes to remove the huge tree.

The jam had lined up for several kilometres and those who sought alternative routes found themselves caught in another snarl caused by another fallen tree in Sri Kenari in nearby Sungai Ara.

Motorist S.C. Tan left his home at



Heading for safety: Abd Halim (left) and his parents taking their belongings to higher ground during the flood at Kampung Pinang Nirai in Balik Pulau.

7.30am in Sungai Pinang for work in Bayan Lepas and two-and-a-half hours later, was still sitting in his car in Sungai Ara.

In Balik Pulau, floodwaters were knee-deep in some parts of the district.

Villager Muhd Saad Hashim, 62,

said it started raining heavily at 6.30am and the water levels kept rising for half an hour.

"Floods occur frequently in this area. Every time the Sungai Burung river on the western coast of Balik Pulau overflows, this happens," he said.

Farmer Abdul Halim Awang, 32, was moving his belongings and his pet cat in a wheelbarrow to higher ground.

He knows it would flood whenever it rains heavily in Balik Pulau.

"My family and I have been living here for more than 30 years. It was worse in the past," he said.

He hopes the authorities would improve the drainage system in the area.

A tree also fell in Kampung Pinang Nirai, blocking the village road. Public Works Department arrived at 7am to remove the tree and clear the mess.

State Local Government Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said it was now the south-west monsoon period and it would end in late September.

Meanwhile, in Baling, Kedah, some 15 houses in Kampung Padang Setol and Kampung Binjul were inundated with water after a down-pour in the morning. The flash flood subsided after a few hours.