

# El Nino not dry enough to prevent floods in parts of peninsula

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**PETALING JAYA:** Despite the forecast of the dry El Nino weather phenomenon, parts of Pahang, Johor and Sarawak are expected to be hit by floods soon.

The north-east monsoon season, which begins at the end of this month, is set to bring heavy rains over these states.

The Malaysian Meteorological Department said although El Nino would cause relatively drier conditions over the next few months in the peninsula, it would not be enough to stop the year-end floods from taking place in December.

El Nino is also expected to cause more rain in the western part of Sarawak, raising the likelihood of floods in the area sometime between January and March (see

*graphic on Page 3*).

"We don't expect any extreme level of rainfall in the states on the east coast of the peninsula due to El Nino but we can still expect floods, though not as severe as last year.

"The western part of Sarawak will usually get more rain during El Nino, so the possibility of floods in that area is high from January to March," said department spokesman Dr Hisham Mohd Anip.

El Nino is an irregular weather phenomenon which causes sea temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean to rise, leading to unusually heavy rains in some parts of the world and drought elsewhere.

The last extreme El Nino took place in 1997-98, causing the hottest year on record as well as floods, cyclones, droughts and huge damage to food production.

In December last year, several

states including Perlis, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang were hit by one of the worst floods on record due to the north-east monsoon.

Hisham said the monsoon usually starts in early November but due to El Nino, it was expected to arrive earlier this year, possibly at the end of this month.

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# All geared up for floods

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The north-east monsoon will bring rain to Peninsular Malaysia before moving to the western part of Sarawak.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said the various government agencies were preparing relief centres for evacuees.

He said taking a cue from lessons learnt last year, several measures had been put in place to better serve the victims.

These include installing up to 2,000 portable toilets and showers at the evacuation centres.

Instead of storing food supplies for evacuees in centralised locations in districts, food depots would

be set up in each of the communities likely to be affected, in places such as schools and mosques.

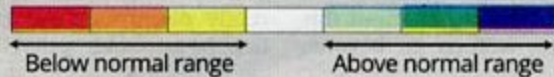
"Decentralising food storage will allow supplies to reach evacuees faster," said Shahidan.

"Supplies would be stored as late as possible based on the department's reports to ensure that there is no theft or spoilage of food items."

He said the authorities were now in the process of contacting non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government-linked companies and the private sector interested in helping out during the expected floods.

"We have already reached out to 83 NGOs and by Thursday we hope to complete the entire process," said Shahidan.

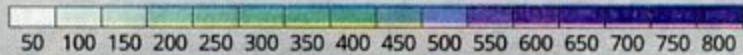
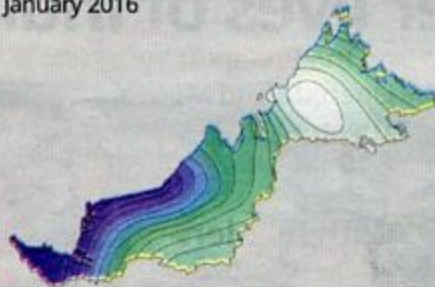
## Projected anomaly in rainfall



Projected rainfall (mm)

December 2015

January 2016



Source: Malaysia Meteorological Department