

Traffic chaos in Johor Baru

JOHOR BARU: A 1½ hour downpour caused a flash flood in Jalan Wong Ah Fook and its surrounding areas here and brought traffic to a standstill at noon yesterday.

No injuries were reported. At least 20 vehicles were trapped when they were caught in 1.5m-deep water in the city's main thoroughfare.

The basement of at least one building was submerged. Floodwaters subsided after about two hours.

Other parts of the city, including Jalan Kolam Air and areas near Dang Bay, were also affected.

Johor Baru Selatan police chief, Assistant Commissioner Sulaiman Salleh said traffic policemen helped divert traffic away from the city centre during the flash flood.

He said the road in front of Johor Baru City Square and Komtar Johor Baru City Centre shopping malls was closed to traffic.

A Fire and Rescue Department spokesman said three people were trapped in their vehicles, but firemen helped them get out.

Firemen also inspected flooded underground car parks, but did not find any trapped victims.

City folk recounted their experience being stuck in traffic snarls.

Azizah Ishak, 30, from Pasir Gudang, said she was stuck in a traffic jam for an hour at 1.30pm.

"My husband wanted to go to the city. We wanted to park at the base-

ment of an office tower but got caught in the jam as some vehicles broke down. It was a blessing in disguise because we found out that the carpark that we wanted to park at was inundated."

The last major flash flood here was on July 31, caused by upgrading works at Sungai Segget. Jalan Wong Ah Fook runs parallel to the river.

M. Murilitheran, 24, who arrived here from Subang Jaya, Selangor, yesterday, said his first day in Johor turned out to be a frustrating one.

"I went to Singapore in the afternoon and was greeted by congestion as soon as I stepped out of the Customs complex in Johor."

Lim Tian Mong, 63, a resident here, said he hoped the authorities would ensure flash floods would not recur after upgrading works of Sungai Segget were completed.

Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA), which is in charge of the Sungai Segget project, said the incident was caused by the high tide, downpours over the past few days and the heavy rain yesterday.

"IRDA has taken steps to install suction pumps as a temporary measure to alleviate the problem."

Johor Baru City Council chief whip Datuk Yahya Jaafar said factors, such as the high tide that started at 1.30pm yesterday, would be looked into in the investigation into the flash flood.



Vehicles trapped in the flash flood in **Jalan Wong Ah Fook**, Johor Baru, yesterday. Pic courtesy of Fire and Rescue Dept