

PRIME NEWS

Heavy rain causes floods in Penang

AIRPORT UNDER WATER: Bayan Lepas and surrounding areas worst affected

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HEAVY rain left many parts of Penang flooded on Sunday night and early yesterday, leaving many roads inaccessible and forcing some 50 people to be evacuated.

The worst affected was Bayan Lepas and its surrounding areas.

The apron and runway at Penang International Airport and the waiting lounge for turboprop aircraft were inundated.

At 9pm on Sunday, torrential rain swept across the island, with officials recording 80mm of rainwater in two hours. The rain lasted until early yesterday morning.

Residents blamed the floods on uncontrolled development and poor drainage system.

Housewife Che Siah Saad, 54, said she had to suffer since Saturday and Sunday, as the rain progressed from moderate to heavy in Bayan Lepas.

Checks showed the road along Siah's home, Solok Sungai Ara 2, Sungai Ara, was filled with sand and mud from the hills behind her home.

Siah, who has lived in the rented home with her husband and children for the past seven years, said it was the first time the flood was accompanied by sand and mud.

She believed that excess development on the hill range of late had caused the mud floods.

Johari Ismail, 55, from Kampung Masjid, Teluk Kumbar, said flooding was a normal occurrence as the river nearby overflowed when it rained.

"Whenever it rains, especially at night, I will not be able to sleep for fear that water from the nearby river will inundate my house," he said, adding that he had been staying in the village for 50 years.



Motorists heading to Kuala Lumpur are cut off after Sungai Besi Highway is inundated following a downpour yesterday. Pic courtesy of reader Naemah Salleh

For Abu Hassan Ariffin, 66, the worst flooding was two years ago, when floodwaters reached his chest. "At that time, I suffered major losses as everything in my house was destroyed by floodwaters.

In the 8pm incident on Sunday, more than 20 families from Kampung Suluk, Kampung Nelayan, Kampung Masjid and Kampung Paya were evacuated to a temporary flood relief centre at Dewan Perda Teluk Kumbar after floodwaters rose to 700mm.

They returned home at 8am yesterday after the Civil Defence Department gave them the green light.

A group of disgruntled flood victims from Permatang Damar Laut in Batu Maung held a protest claiming the floods could have been avoided if the drainage system was cleared.

The group's spokesman, Nur Azlin Zulkifli, 32, said a road widening

project by a developer had clogged drains, affecting 50 families in Kampung Permatang Tepi Bendang and Kampung Batu Maung Mk 12.

"This is the fourth time our village had been flooded. We want the authorities to investigate why the road widening project was hastily done."

Floods at Penang International Airport has left authorities wondering what could be done to overcome the problem.

Airport senior manager Arif Jaafar said the backflow of floodwaters from the surrounding drains lining the airport was to be blamed.

Arif said several flights en route to Penang had to stay longer in the air on Sunday as heavy rain caused poor visibility.

The recent floods at the airport had tarnished its reputation as the second busiest air terminal in the country.

Flash floods at the arrival pickup area, arrival hall and budget airlines lounge, which are in a low area, were blamed on heavy rain, resulting in passengers wading through ankle-deep water.

In **Seri Kembangan**, motorists heading into the city were stranded after the Sungai Besi highway became inundated with 0.6m of water following a downpour.

Traffic heading into the city came to a standstill, with only heavy vehicles and motorcycles able to cross the flooded area.

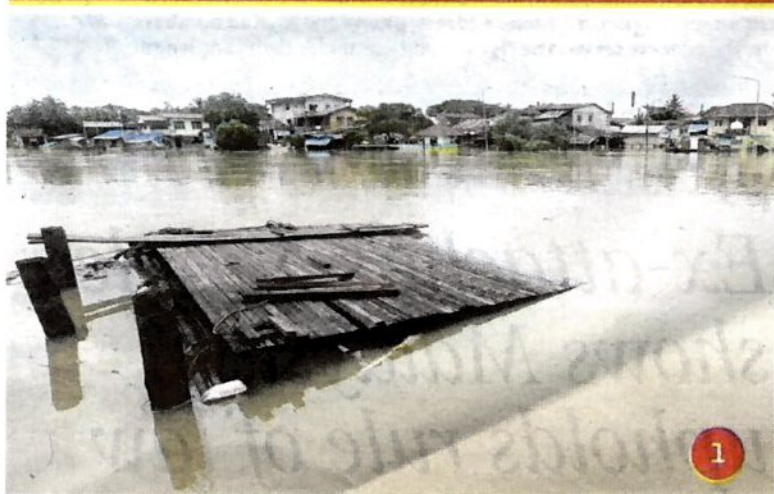
Several stalled vehicles were seen by the side of the road.

By 6.30pm, the floodwaters had receded. Exit 902 heading to Balakong, Sungai Long and Semenyih was accessible to traffic.

The route heading to MRR2 was still cut off.

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FLOOD IMAGES



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1 The water level at **Sungai Golok**, measuring 9.58m, breached the danger level yesterday. Pic by Fathil Asri

2 Villager Ramli Hussein, 58, moving his belongings to the top of his double-decker bed in his house at **Kampung Masjid Teluk Kumbar**, Penang, yesterday. Pic by Shahnaz Fazlie Shahrizal

3 Flood victim Mazlan Ghazali, 49, clearing mud in front of his house in **MK 12 Batu Maung**, Penang, after a mud slide yesterday. Pic by Ramdzan Masiam

Floods wreak havoc

4 Civil Defence Department personnel evacuating flood victims at **Kampung Melinau**, Selangau in Sarawak yesterday.

5 A senior fire officer advising a Kampung Lubok Gong villager, near Sungai Golok, to move to higher ground if the water level continues to rise. Pic by Fathil Asri



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