

Heatwave over, now come floods

States brace for wet weather as river levels rise following rainstorms

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PETALING JAYA: The weather has gone from extremely hot to extremely wet. Now, several major rivers passing through townships such as Shah Alam, Subang and Sungai Buloh are threatening to burst their banks.

Following heavy downpours over the past week, the water levels at these rivers have shot up, sparking fears of flooding.

An afternoon downpour yesterday caused the reading at Sungai Damansara in Kampung Melayu Subang to rise to 17.72m at 5pm, exceeding the danger level of 17.4m. It ebbed to 16m at 8pm, just shy of the alert level of 16.4m.

Last Thursday, the river level was only 14.69m, according to the Drainage and Irrigation Department's flood information website.

The water level at Sungai Kelang in Tugu Keris, Selangor, has reached 3.63m, just below the danger level of 3.9m.

It was only 2.25m at 4pm before rising due to the heavy showers. On Saturday, the river level was 2.44m.

Sungai Buloh in Sri Aman measured 6.97m, exceeding the warning level of 6.8m. Its danger level is 7.5m.



Dark skies: Lightning striking at 4pm yesterday in Kota Damansara, Selangor. — LOW BOON TAT/The Star

In Johor, Sungai Lenik in Segamat rose to 5.6m as of 5pm yesterday, above its alert level at 5m. Its danger level is 6m, according to the same website.

Two locations along Persiaran Kayangan in Shah Alam were hit by flash floods yesterday, according to Star Radio Traffic.

The two spots were near Concorde Hotel and Darul Ehsan Aquatic Centre.

The Shah Alam police also confirmed that Persiaran Damai was hit with floods which started at

5.20pm and receded by 6pm.

Last Saturday, strong winds and thunderstorms wreaked havoc in parts of the Klang Valley, causing flash floods and trees to fall, as well as leading to traffic jams and blocked pathways.

Putrajaya was not spared either as two vehicles were trapped in flood waters in Precincts 3 and 4.

The Meteorological Department website yesterday said scattered thunderstorms are expected this afternoon in practically all the states, from Kedah to Sarawak.

The department's director-general Datuk Che Gayah Ismail said the rains marked the inter-monsoon season which began in the first week of April and will last until the third week of this month.

"During this season, there will be frequent rain in many parts of the peninsula, western Sabah as well as western and central Sarawak.

Selangor is now preparing to handle any flash flood and to divert excess water off the roads during downpours.

The state's task force on floods

met on Monday to discuss the flood mitigation projects, said the state exco man in charge of infrastructure, Zaidy Abdul Talib.

"All flood mitigation projects now underway will be hastened.

"The mitigation work includes widening drains and water channels, deepening the flood retention ponds as well building new ponds," he said.

He said the 2016 budget to counter flash floods had been increased to RM80mil and the relevant agencies were fully prepared for floods.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar admitted that there had been a lot of "planning mistakes" relating to irrigation and drainage.

"I have taken note of the incidents of flash floods in the country. It is the result of human intervention. Nature is disturbed and it is fighting back.

"As far as we are concerned, we want to educate the local councils on the lack of foresight in planning.

"We have to tell them that mistakes have been made all over the country (in planning for irrigation and drainage), which has caused flash floods," he said.

The minister wants a seminar to bring the attention of all state government planners, local councils and the private sector to discuss the impact of proper planning.