

La Nina may have arrived earlier than forecast

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PUTRAJAYA: La Nina has apparently arrived earlier than expected, bringing with it a whole lot of rain.

The flash floods on Thursday night, which left thousands of people stranded in various parts of Kuala Lumpur, were caused by heavy rainfall over the past few days.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said Malaysia was expecting La Nina to occur only in July but heavy rain over the past few days, particularly on Thursday, seemed to indicate that the weather phenomenon is already here.

“If the average heavy rain is 70mm to 80mm, the rainfall on Thursday was between 130mm and 140mm.

“It was not because the main rivers in Kuala Lumpur were overflowing but because the drainage system was inefficient and could not allow water to flow properly, causing the flash floods.

“This, as well as development such as the construction of the MRT, contributed to the incident. I will raise this matter with MRT Corp,” he told a press conference yesterday.

Traffic along several major roads, including Jalan Tuanku Abdul Halim, Jalan Bangsar and Jalan Lingkungan Budi, was temporarily paralysed due to the flash floods.

According to the ministry data, seven incidents of flash floods occurred in Kuala Lumpur in 2014 while eight similar incidents were reported last year.

Dr Wan Junaidi also pointed out that flash floods occurred not because the SMART tunnel failed to function, but because the heavy rain occurred in areas outside the system.

As an immediate measure, Dr Wan Junaidi said he would seek assistance from City Hall to ensure that drains were free of debris.

He added that local authorities must do the same to minimise flash floods in their municipalities.