

Rainstorm lashes Penang

FLASH FLOODS:

Motorists, office workers stranded in early morning crawl

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A TWO-HOUR downpour yesterday morning wreaked havoc in various parts of the island and on the mainland, leaving hundreds of motorists stranded in bumper-to bumper traffic crawl due to rising floodwaters.

Among the areas badly affected were Bayan Baru, Sungai Ara and Bayan Lepas, Jalan P. Ramlee here, Jalan Paya Terubong and Bukit Jambul in the northeast district.

All the three districts on the mainland also reported flash floods.

Many people, including students, were late for work and school due to the slow-moving traffic.

Muddy floodwater flowed into some 100 houses at several villages in Bayan Baru, sending their owners scrambling to salvage whatever possible. Dozens of cars and motorcycles were submerged in floodwater.

A check at Kampung Sungai Nibong Kecil in Bayan Baru showed massive clean-up work in full swing in several low-lying areas.

Residents were busy clearing rubbish and clogged drains after the knee-deep floodwater subsided about 9am.

They took about two hours mopping up the floodwater that overflowed from the drains beside their single-storey wooden houses.



Motorists slowly making their way through the flood-hit Jalan P. Ramlee in George Town yesterday. Pic by Shahnaz Fazlie Shahrizal

Security guard R. Kumar, 37, and civil servant Mohamad Ismadi Ishak, 24, were not spared.

Housewife Ramlah Yen, 55, said the rising water seeped into her single-storey wooden house and she had to spend two hours cleaning up the mess.

She said the root cause of the flash flood was the shallow drainage and overdevelopment in the vicinity.

Irate residents in Bayan Baru took to social media to vent their frustration at the state administration.

Former Pantai Jerejak assembly-

man Wong Mun Hoe posted on Facebook: "Heavy flooding and massive traffic jam around Bayan Baru. Took 45 minutes to send my son to school when it is normally 10 minutes.

"Half is act of God but half is man-made. Bad planning policies, cutting of hills, small n clogged drains r the causes."

State Local Government and Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said the flash floods were caused by Sungai Jelutong and Sungai Pinang breaching

their banks.

He said as a short-term measure to minimise the occurrence of flash floods, the state authorities would clear the rubbish trapped in drains.

"As a long-term measure, we will upgrade the Jalan Tun Dr Awang drainage in the southwest district and the irrigation system which is being designed by the consultant engineer.

"As for Sungai Pinang, we have sought federal funding to implement the flood mitigation project. We are still waiting for a decision."