

Penang bracing for downpour

King tide season to add to state's annual rainfall

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BUKIT MERTAJAM: Monday night's downpour alone put 200mm into Penang's rain gauges and flooded several areas, but expect more because there is at least another 500mm to go before Penang gets its average rainfall this year.

And next week is king tide season with high tides exceeding 2.2m.

"If we get a storm during king tide, people need to brace for it," said Penang Drainage and Irrigation Department director Shukri Muslim.

According to past records, Penang has only received half its annual rainfall until this month.

"On average, Penang gets about 2,300mm of rainfall per year and we got about 1,300mm so far this year.

"This month itself, we received 400mm and 200mm was from Monday's downpour.

"Between 500mm and 600mm of rainfall is expected in Penang by the end of the year," he said.

Shukri said this Sunday marks several days of king tide season at about noon and midnight each day.

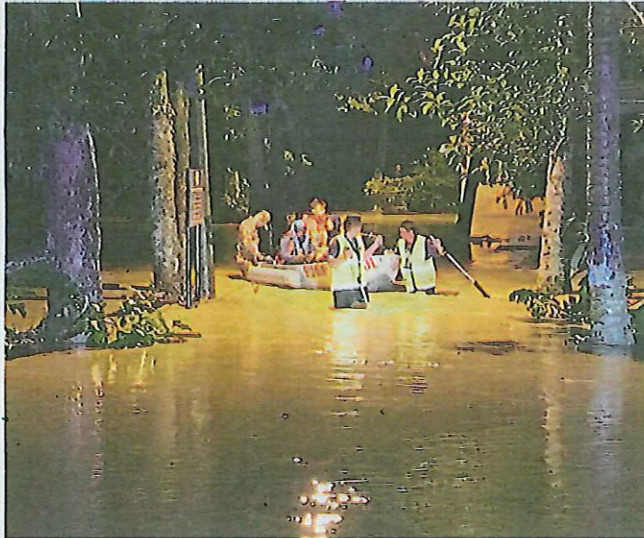
"If it rains when the tide is rising, people need to brace themselves for floods.

"The extraordinary high tide will not affect only Penang but the whole country," he said in a press conference at the Central Seberang Prai land office yesterday.

According to Penang flood mitigation committee chairman Zairil Khir Johari, 47 areas were affected, mostly along Sungai Juru and Sungai Junjung.

"Flood mitigation projects worth some RM65mil have been initiated in the district but until they are completed, the present drainage systems are working at their full capacities.

"Three projects worth about RM60mil are expected to be completed by the middle of next year,



Braving the waters: (Clockwise from top) Volunteers using a raft to bring flood victims to safety at Kampung Machang Bubuk, a resident surveying his flooded home in Taman Sungai Rambai and children playing in floodwaters at Kampung Tok Subuh, in the town of Bukit Mertajam.



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Zairil Khir Johari

while a RM4mil tender to construct a pump house and build a 1km-long bund along the river in Jalan Tembikai will start in December," he said.

Zairil also announced a RM1mil allocation from the state to deepen the 1.5m-deep estuary in Sungai Juru to help water flow out to the sea faster.



In deep water: A family of seven making the best of their situation in their flooded home at Kampung Tok Subuh, Bukit Mertajam. — MUSTAFA AHMAD/The Star

12 families evacuated as floods hit Pontian and Muar



Off to safety: Fire and Rescue Department personnel escorting residents out of their homes at Kampung Pulau, Gelang Patah.

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JOHOR BARU: Heavy rain forced folks from two villages in Pontian to be evacuated to two temporary relief centres.

The affected villages as at 3pm yesterday were Kampung Parit Baslam and Kampung Maju Jaya, where 42 people from nine families had to be moved.

Two locations in Muar were also inundated - Kampung Seri Gelam and Kampung Sari Baru - at 11am yesterday, said state Local Government, Urban Wellbeing and Environment committee chairman Tan Chen Choon.

"Six people from three families were rescued but no relief centres were opened as the water level has receded," he said in a statement here.

The rescue effort involved the Fire and Rescue Department, the

Civil Defence Force (APM), police, Meteorological Department and district office.

Meanwhile, a downpour in Johor Baru also wreaked havoc with several flash floods in Kempas, Taman Mount Austin and Ulu Pulau.

Larkin Fire and Rescue Department operation commander K. Karuppannan said the department received a distress call at 12.28pm yesterday.

"Only one house was occupied and we assisted one man and two women at the location," he said.

The victims, he added, refused to be moved to a temporary relief centre.

"We placed some personnel to monitor the location and provide aid to the victims," he said in a statement here.

Meanwhile, in Kampung Ulu Pulau, Skudai Fire and Rescue Department operation commander Suraini Adnan said that rescue operations were ongoing in

Kampung Pulau and Kampung Ulu Pulau.

"The water has risen up to 5ft in both villages due to high tide and the rescue operation is currently being conducted with help from the police, APM, Rela and villagers," he said.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Dr Sahrudin Jamal said the state government had instructed all drains and irrigation to be inspected state-wide following the flash floods.

"The agencies must make sure that the drains are not clogged, and if it is, then the drains must be cleared.

"The monsoon season is here now with heavy rain and strong winds happening the last few days. I urge the public to take care of themselves and be vigilant," he said after holding a discussion with agencies and departments including the Works Department and Drainage and Irrigation Department.