

## HIGHER RAINFALL

# METMALAYSIA: LA NINA TO PERSIST UNTIL YEAR END

Phenomenon generates more humidity, leading to heavy precipitation, says D-G

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**M**ALAYSIA, like other parts of the Western Pacific region, is experiencing a mild La Nina season, which results in higher rainfall in the country.

Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia) director-general Muhammad Helmi Abdullah said this year's La Nina season

was expected to continue until year end.

"Although the season is mild at present, its intensity could vary over a period of time.

"A mild La Nina has resulted in the whole of Western Pacific, including our country, to become more humid, consequently leading to higher precipitation than usual.

"However, if the phenomenon gradually weakens, Malaysia's rainfall distribution will not de-

viate from its usual pattern," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

At present, the rainfall distribution is higher than normal.

The current humid weather, he said, was contributed by the "monsoon break" phenomenon.

"During the monsoon break, the wind does not blow predominantly from the southwest direction. Instead, its movement gets weaker and, at times, is concentrated only at certain parts.

"This wind pattern will cause more humid weather, particularly in the northern and western parts of the peninsula and

Sarawak, as well as in western Sabah," he said.

Helmi said the monsoon break was forecast to end early next week, and lead to fewer episodes of rain in the country.

He said thunderstorms might still occur in the mornings in the west coast of the peninsula, northern Sarawak and the west of Sabah.

Malaysia has also been experiencing the southwest monsoon since May 14, which is expected to last until mid-September.

Lately, several parts of Malaysia have been experiencing flooding due to sudden episodes of rain.

Kuala Lumpur, in particular, was hit by a spate of flash floods in recent months.

On June 18, Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Dr Shahidan Kassim said the Kuala Lumpur City Hall had identified 31 flash flood hotspots and had placed sandbags and water pumps in these locations as preemptive measures.

Earlier this month, Shahidan said City Hall and the Department of Irrigation and Drainage would build a high-capacity groundwater storage tunnel to resolve the capital city's flood woes.



A motorcyclist riding his vehicle during a downpour in Kuala Lumpur. FILE PIC