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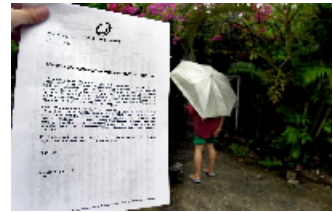
PUB had sent out warning that residents of some low-lying areas could face flooding on Mar 8, 9 and 10

By Kor Kian Beng

YOU could say the warning fell on deaf ears. Since last year, the Public Utilities Board has been issuing advisories on possible floods. And it did so for the floods yesterday. Last November, residents of low-lying areas were warned that they could face flooding yesterday, today and tomorrow.

But few residents paid heed to the warning and had to scramble when flood waters began rising yesterday.

Take Mr Asmar Nooras, 30, of Kampung Lorong Buangkok near Hougang.



He said: 'It's not exactly accurate or reliable so we seldom refer to it (the advisory).
'We usually start making preparations only when we see the water level rising in the drain nearby.'

Added the driver, who was born in the village and still lives there with his family: 'This time wasn't as bad as the last flooding, but it's still inconvenient.'

The 28-household kampung, possibly the last here, was one of the flood-prone areas listed by the PUB.

It makes its predictions with the help of tide tables, computed with data from the Meteorological Services Division of the National Environment Agency.

The tables highlight danger periods when tides rise three metres or more.

In addition to Lorong Buangkok, residents and shop owners in the Chinatown, Boat Quay, Jalan Besar and Dakota Crescent areas were given the advisories and tide tables.

These were to help them protect their belongings against flooding.

Residents were advised that: 'Extreme high tides could occur, with the possibility of stronger than normal south-east winds blowing from the South China Sea during the period.'



CAUGHT UNPREPARED

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Madam Kamariah Awang was another Kampung Lorong Buangkok resident caught unprepared when her house suddenly became flooded knee-high with water yesterday.

She had to scramble to move her belongings to higher platforms and then hurriedly scoop the rising water out of her house.

'It's very tiring to clear the water out of the house. And I have to do it alone, said Madam Kamariah, who's been living there for about 30 years.

'It will take me almost the whole day. I just try to treat it as exercise.'

The 63-year-old part-time cleaner had not read the tide table given by the PUB.

She could prepare for the same to happen today at 12.39pm and tomorrow at 1.20pm, when the tide is high.

And you can bet this time she'll be ready with her buckets.

The village head, Miss Sng Mui Hong, wasn't that perturbed by yet another flooding.

'It's not nice to complain to the authorities, because they had already given us the tide table to take necessary precautions about this,' she said.



'Anyway, it's just a bit of water in the house, which can be easily removed.'

The PUB said the rain is expected to ease by this afternoon.

Getting-to-work blues

GETTING wet was the least of their worries.

Getting going was the big issue.

Yesterday's downpour was so severe that it left some motorists stranded.

At an open car park on Lower Delta Road, motorists like Mr Eric Koh found their cars submerged in flood water.

The 34-year-old sales executive had appointments planned for the afternoon but had to shelve them.

'As soon as I reached the car park, I had a bad feeling my car had turned into a fish tank,' he said.

Mr Koh took off his shoes, rolled up his pants and waded to his 3-year-old Nissan Sunny.

'The interior of my car was soaked right up to the seats, the car alarm went on and on, and I couldn't start the car.

'In fact, most of us who were affected couldn't start our cars, and had to push them out of the car park,' he said.

Another unlucky car owner who wanted to be known only as Mr Tay, faced a similar situation.



Worse, his \$110,000 Subaru Impreza WRX is barely 2 weeks old.

The 29-year-old engineer said: 'Today is the first time I've parked here since I bought this car. My father will be really upset since he helped pay for it.'

Over at Shenton Way, the rain caused water levels to spill onto the pavement.

A few braved the floods to go for lunch.

But despatch rider Jason Ng's day was a washout.

Not only did he have to skip lunch, he couldn't complete his errands either.

'The chain on my motorbike came out of the crank when I rode into the water at Mc Callum Street.

'Now I'm stuck here with my bike because the mechanic won't be here for a couple of hours, and I don't want to get a summons,' he said. - **DOMINIC YING**

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