

Reply to the Star Opinion Column
Wednesday 18 August 2010
“Teach Public How to Deal with Tornadoes”

The Malaysian Meteorological Department (MMD) would like to thank En Zahar for his article entitled “Teach public how to deal with tornadoes” as published in The Star dated 18th August 2010.

Over the past couple of years, more damages by severe thunderstorms have been recorded in the country. We agree with En Zahar the upward trend in extreme weather events such as severe thunderstorms is likely due to the changing global climate.

This year, the occurrence of La Nina has further resulted in warmer sea surface temperatures in our region, allowing more severe thunderstorms to form. In some of these severe thunderstorms, embedded small tornadic-like system can occur like the incidents in Jasin, Melaka on the 13th August 2010 and Taman Medan, Petaling Jaya, Selangor on the 15th August 2010. The public should also be aware that the very strong downdrafts in the severe thunderstorms can also sometimes cause sizable damage and even deaths.

The MMD and Majlis Keselamatan Negara in the recent years have intensified their public awareness campaign on extreme weather throughout the country. With the possibility of the extreme weather becoming more severe due to climate change, the MMD will further enhance the public awareness and outreach programs especially on safety measures.