

The Star

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Heating up

IF emissions of greenhouse gases are not curtailed (the “business as usual” scenario), temperatures are projected to hike between 1.1°C and 3.6°C in Peninsular Malaysia and between 1°C and 3.5°C in Sabah and Sarawak by the end of the century. The projection is derived from nine computer simulation models.

More climate variability and extreme weather are anticipated – meaning we will see heavier rains at times, and droughts at others. Rainfall is projected to increase most significantly in western Sarawak. Western Peninsular Malaysia will see more rains while the eastern region, less rain. Nevertheless, rainfall trends for Malaysia are not clearly defined due to large spatial and temporal variation.

The global average temperature has risen 0.74°C over the past century, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Consistent with the warming and increase in atmospheric water vapour, most parts of the world have seen extreme rainfall.

Malaysia is no exception. Thirty-one out of 36 meteorological stations recorded highest temperatures during the 1990s and the years after. The annual mean temperature has hiked 1.1°C since 1969 in Peninsular Malaysia, 1.2°C in Sabah and 0.6°C in Sarawak. Over the whole country, the maximum and minimum temperatures have risen in the past 50 years. Correspondingly, relatively drier years have increased in frequency. Whether we are already facing sea level rise is hard to say as we lack long-term records on tides. – **By Tan Cheng Li**

> *Source: Climate Change Scenarios for Malaysia 2001-2009, Meteorological Department*