

'Penang spent RM300m on study but not to fight floods'

GEORGE TOWN: The DAP-led state government has been told to get its priorities straight by implementing projects that benefit the people.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) yesterday asked the state administration about the rationale behind spending more than RM300 million on feasibility studies for the proposed undersea tunnel, but not on a flood-mitigation project.

A SAM spokesman said it was baffling why the state government could not spend the same amount on a flood-mitigation project.

"You (the state government) spent over RM300 million on feasibility studies for a proposed undersea tunnel, but have done nothing to solve the overflowing of Sungai Pinang, located near Jalan P. Ramlee, when it rains heavily.

"You must review flood-mitigation measures as they have failed, hence the frequent flash floods, including the one on Deep-avali.

"It is high time you put your act together and set your priorities right."

This comes after the state government blamed the Federal Government for not approving a RM350 million allocation to mitigate the flash floods.

State Local Government and Flood Mitigation Committee chair-

man Chow Kon Yeow said federal agencies had delayed the completion of the flood-mitigation project by not approving the allocation.

Chow urged the Federal Government to approve the allocation to prevent flash floods.

The spokesman said the proposed construction of paired roads and the undersea tunnel project would straddle rivers and worsen floods.

Malaysian Nature Society (Penang chapter) adviser D. Kanda Kumar said the state government was too lenient with developers by not making them duty-bound to pay to improve drainage systems surrounding their project sites.

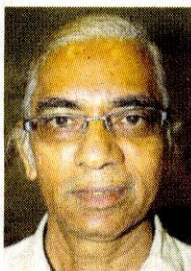
Kanda Kumar said the lack of guidelines to make developers accountable for their drainage systems had contributed to flash floods.

"The developments, regardless of whether they are on the hills, have narrowed the drainage system.

"The increase in the number of high-rise buildings has led to a rise in the discharge of wastewater from residential and commercial units.

"Developers should take responsibility and build new drainage systems or widen existing ones to discharge water, but this ruling is not mandatory.

"It is high time to do so due to the flash floods on Saturday."



**D. Kanda
Kumar**