

# Experts blame over-development for Penang flooding

**GEORGE TOWN:** Environmental activists are worried Penang is being over-developed while the state government is upset with the Federal Government for delaying the disbursement of RM350mil for flood mitigation.

"Sea water did not rush upriver to stall the rain runoffs that submerged large tracts of George Town," said Malaysia Nature Society Penang branch advisor D. Kanda Kumar.

Kanda also called on the state not

to blame the tides or global warming on the Federal Government as it was low tide when the four rivers here broke its banks on Saturday.

"It's development. By allowing top soil to be cleared off and covering hectares of land with concrete and asphalt, where will the rain go?"

He said while financial aid from the Federal Government slowed the flood mitigation plans, the state government should not allow property construction without sufficient rain-water dispersal planning.

Environmentalist and academician Datuk Dr Leong Yueh Kwong said over-development caused both floods and droughts.

"When rain cannot seep into the ground, the water runoff will flood the surface while the earth beneath stays dry. When the rainy season is over, drought will set in quickly because little of the rain reached the water table underground."

Dr Leong also called for greater attention to hill cutting and clearing.

"One study by Universiti Sains

Malaysia had shown that the development of Bukit Gambier had directly contributed to flooding on the campus and in the Minden Heights area."

Penang Flood Mitigation Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow urged the Federal Government to approve the RM350mil flood solution.

"The first phase of the Sungai Pinang flood mitigation project was completed more than 10 years ago.

"The second phase cannot take place without that allocation."