

'Enough with the blame game'

FLASH FLOOD

WOES: Tell us what you are doing, state urged

**AUDREY DERMAWAN
AND BALVIN KAUR**

GEORGE TOWN
news@nst.com.my

THE DAP-led state government has been told to deal with the flash flood woes in Penang instead of playing the blame game every time it happens.

A visibly fed up Malaysian Nature Society Penang branch adviser D. Kanda Kumar asked the state authorities what they were doing to address the problem.

"Tell us (the people) what you (the state government) are doing.

"What is your next course of action? You have been in power for the last eight years.

"What have you been doing? What are you doing to resolve the flash floods, which are expected to worsen in the future?" he asked.

Speaking to the *New Straits Times* yesterday, Kanda said with the flash floods getting worse, it was high time the state authorities seriously looked for solutions.

He also told the state government not to just sit and wait for allocations from the Federal Government for the implementation of the third phase of the Sungai Pinang flood-mitigation project.

"You boast of huge reserves. Why not use the money to benefit Penan-



A bird's-eye view of the flash flood in George Town yesterday. Pic courtesy of NST reader

gites who are suffering due to the flash floods? What is your alternative plan while waiting for the federal allocation?"

Kanda also took potshots at the state government for its "developer-friendly" policy, demanding to know why developers were not bound to construct new drainage systems near their project sites.

Citing an example, he said Jalan Macalister used to be home to several bungalows.

"Today, most of the bungalows

have been sold, and in their place, stand highrise buildings with hundreds of residential units.

"Yet, the drainage system still remains the same to cater to the huge volume of outflow. How can that be? How is that possible? This is why we have flash floods.

"As the Drainage and Irrigation Department rightly pointed out, the existing drainage system has not kept pace with development," he said, urging the state government to make it mandatory for all new de-

velopment areas to have new drainage systems.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia president S.M. Mohamed Idris said Penang needed to review its strategy of development and prioritise efforts to prevent flash floods.

"We expect there will be more flash floods in the state due to more rain, and we must not fault nature.

"If development is not controlled, more green areas and open spaces, including flood plains, are concretised and the drainage system not

upgraded, Penangites are going to suffer more," he said.

Idris also expressed concern over the state-initiated proposed road projects, such as the Pan-Island Link, which was expected to straddle rivers in some areas along the alignment and probably involved meandering through hillslopes in other areas.

"You cut the hills and build on river reserves. What do you expect when it rains? Of course there will be flash floods," he said.