

RM665,000 for immediate short-term mitigation work



SMK Abdullah
Munshi's
football field is
flooded in
George Town
yesterday. Pic
by Danial Saad

GEORGE TOWN: After continuously playing the blame game for the flash floods in Penang, the state government has finally approved a RM665,000 allocation to carry out short-term mitigation work.

State Local Government Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said work would begin immediately, and would be completed between two weeks and a month.

The work includes deepening Sungai Pinang, dredging the Sungai Pinang river mouth, desilting the Sungai Dondang retention pond, deepening and repairing Sungai Dondang riverbank, deepening and repairing Sungai Air Itam riverbank, repairing faulty pumps and deepening Sungai Jelutong.

"The work will be carried out by the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) without any tenders being called due to the urgent nature of the situation.

"We hope with the work in place, flash floods can be minimised."

Earlier, Chow said a combination of factors, which included continuous heavy rain and overflowing

rivers, were the cause of flash floods and landslides in the state, which affected 21 villages.

Floodwaters of between 1m and 3m, submerged nearly 150 houses in Jalan P. Ramlee and its surrounding areas.

Chow also said the decision to postpone the Lumba Kuda flood-mitigation project was not DID's decision, but made by the state after technical consideration.

"We feel the project will not be effective if the third phase of the Sungai Pinang flood-mitigation project is not implemented. Thus, the postponement of the RM4 million Lumba Kuda flood-mitigation project," he said.

Chow maintained the landslide at the Jalan Balik Pulau-Jalan Teluk Bahang arterial road, which was closed to traffic for the day, was not caused by hill-clearing activities.

"There is no development there. It is caused by natural slope failure.

"People shouldn't think that natural slope is always safe. It may not be as safe as man-made slopes," he said.