



A motor boat stranded on Jalan Tun Habab, Kota Tinggi, after flood waters receded.

# Accidental 'flood detector'

By Sim Bak Heng  
news@nst.com.my

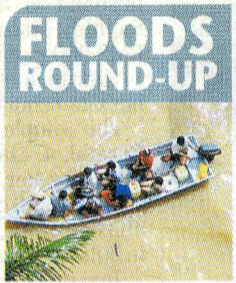
SEGAMAT: Segamat folk make it a point to pass by a modest, double-storey wooden house in Kampung Jawa here every rainy season.

There is nothing unusual about Mawiah Bisri's house, except that it has been an excellent flood indicator for decades.

In fact, some swore that it was a more accurate indicator than the Meteorological Department's forecast.

Mawiah's house earned the dubious honour as it is in a low-lying area and is always the first house in the district to be flooded.

This year was no different. On



Dec 19, some people started to take precautionary measures after seeing flood water covering the entire ground floor of her house at 4pm.

People began to stack up their belongings, but many remained optimistic and thought that the flood waters would recede like in

previous years. But for once, their optimism was misplaced.

Panic reigned when flood water reached half of the height of the first floor of Mawiah's house by 10pm.

By this time, it was too late to salvage much as the flood waters had risen to a level never before seen by the villagers. The entire village and a major part of the district was under water.

Mawiah and her family, of course, bore the brunt of the damage caused by the fast-rising waters.

"We have no choice but to climb onto the roof-top. There was nowhere to go, everyone else, too, were seeking refuge on their

roof-tops in the middle of the night," she recalled.

Mawiah and her family were evacuated to a friend's house as the Kampung Jawa relief centre was packed.

Meanwhile, quick-thinking car owners in Kampung Abdullah here have a soon-to-be-opened hypermarket to thank for "saving" their vehicles.

At least 250 cars were saved from Segamat's worst-ever floods when their owners were allowed to drive the cars onto the roof-top of the Giant Hypermarket building as the water level rose on Dec 19.

The hypermarket building, located on higher ground, was only slightly affected during the floods as the stocks have yet to arrive.