

# Building's apron collapses after floods

## Owner puts the blame on construction work next door

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**T**HE office complex belonging to Cendana Maju Sdn Bhd has been flooded three times and cracks have appeared on its building and drainage area. The owners claim that this is due to construction work going on at another office complex next door.

Located at Lot 21, Jalan 19/1, Section 19 Petaling Jaya, the complex is divided into two blocks. Block B houses Cendana on the first floor and United Akrib Tech on the ground floor, while Block A is rented by Harvest Community Church.

According to Cendana executive director Philip Chieng Ing Meow, he started noticing the cracks on the office buildings and drainage area in April last year.

"The cracks were due to settlement, a gradual sinking of the structure as a result of the construction work and sheet piling done at the monsoon drain," said the 55-year-old who has over 30 years' experience in civil engineering.

"I notified the developer about the cracks but they claimed that it was unlikely that the cracks were caused by their construction work as they'd taken steps to control the sheet piling."

Chieng said more cracks appeared on the building's floor in June, while the protection wall of the monsoon drain was damaged and even had pieces falling off.

"The bottom of the drain also cracked, which resulted in the water seeping underground and undermining the foundation of our office complex."

"I wrote a letter to the developer asking them to repair the drain and



»I wrote a letter to the developer asking them to repair the drain but to no avail«

PHILIP CHIENG ING MEOW

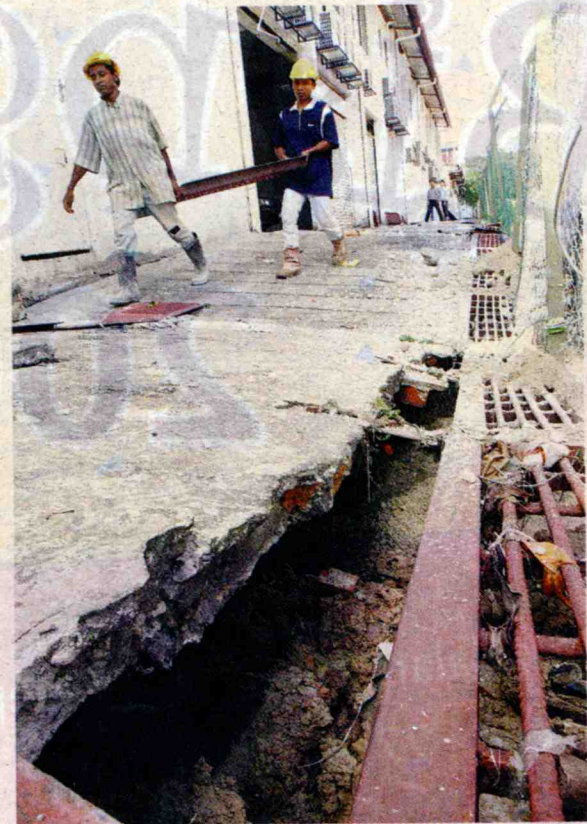
take the necessary precautions, but to no avail.

"I sent them another letter in September requesting them to clear the construction debris that had fallen into the drain as the water in the drain had risen to an alarming level whenever it rained heavily.

"It didn't help that the developer had built a concrete abutment that blocked half of the drain, and also their own small drain diversion using metal drums to divert the water flow."

Chieng also sent letters to the Selangor Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) and the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) explaining

**Before and after:** The walkway apron of the office complex belonging to Cendana Maju before (above) and after (right) it collapsed on Jan 22 this year.



the situation.

However, no action was taken by the developer and, on Jan 15, the first flood happened at Cendana's office complex.

"The water went up to 10cm high, and damaged some of the machinery belonging to United Akrib Tech and books belonging to the Church's bookshop.

"The flood also damaged the flooring and some office equipment of these two offices," said Chieng.

"I called the developer, who then conducted a site visit. Upon my request, they arranged for a cleaner to clean up the flood damage.

"A second flood struck on Jan 18, and the water went up to 15cm.

"Besides some damage caused to office equipment and supplies, the smell caused by the overflow of drain water was worse."

The situation worsened when a third flood caused Cendana's office complex apron to collapse on Jan 22.

This time, the developer took the initiative to call Chieng and had a meeting to discuss the situation.

The developer's representative said they came up with two conclusions: to remove all obstacles in the monsoon drain so there would be no more floods, and to build a temporary embankment on Cendana's side of the building as a temporary solution to prevent the water from seeping in and causing further damage.