

Coming too close for comfort

STAR 3/2/07

Singapore reclamation work seems to be having environmental impact

TO the naked eye, it is clear that reclamation work by Singapore have resulted in Pulau Tekong, which belongs to the republic, coming too close to Malaysia, *Utusan Malaysia* said.

The newspaper had sent a team on a boat ride in the Straits of Johor to check on the reclamation there and ascertain if it could have caused the bad flooding in Johor recently.

The team said that from the boat, they could clearly see that Singapore had reclaimed land far into the sea towards Malaysia and the waters on

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the Singapore side have become so narrow that it could not be used even by small boats.

The newspaper said the reclamation had also made the Johor River and the Straits of Johor shallow and

this had affected the flow of water.

Pasir Gogok Fishermen Association chairman Ismail Hassan said he had received many complaints from members that the water which used to be 60m deep was now only 40m.

He believed the narrowing and sedimentation of the Johor River from reclamation work meant that the water could not flow freely into the straits.

He added the shallower river had resulted in the water overflowing its banks and flooding Kota Tinggi.

> *Berita Harian* reported that the National Higher Education Fund had filed court cases against 111 loan defaulters.

This is the first batch of 1,000 who have been blacklisted.

It reported that if they continued to refuse to repay their loans, the defaulters could be arrested and jailed or be declared bankrupt and have their assets sealed.

The newspaper reported that the outstanding amount owed to the fund by 38,484 defaulters since 1999 was a massive RM867mil.

»The shallower river had resulted in water bursting its banks and flooding Kota Tinggi«

ISMAIL HASSAN