

Make mitigating floods a truly national objective

SINCE the 1960s, Malaysia has been faced by the perennial problem of floods, and this year the floods hit the northern states of Perlis and Kedah, while threatening Kelantan.

The current floods, caused by heavy overnight rainfall, have forced more than 1,000 people to leave their homes in Perlis and Kedah. In Kelantan, people in several low-lying areas have been advised by the authorities to be prepared to evacuate if the situation worsens.

We have lofty ambitions of being a developed and high-income economy, which is well and good. We are focusing on attracting high technology investments and in developing the services sector to be globally competitive, yet we are unable to find solutions to these woes recurring yearly.

Where are our planners, engineers, administrators and environmentalists in putting forward solutions to combat this year-on-year anguish? If its a natural disaster beyond the control of mankind, then it is comprehensible, but it is not a despair we cannot find a solution to.

I am not an environmentalist, but could the problem of flooding be due to the indiscriminate felling of our trees and other forms of greenery thereby denying us water absorbing mechanisms?

How is our drainage and irrigation system all over the country? We spend millions every year on infrastructure projects, but why is no emphasis given to mitigate floods?

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