

Complete flood works



IREFER to "Not ready" (*The Star*, Nov 10). It's a very catchy but daunting title considering that the country and its people are bracing for the possibility of major as well as flash floods.

It is rather shocking to read that nothing had been done in flood-prone areas such as Kota Tinggi, which suffered a double wave of deluge in 2007 that displaced more than 100,000 people.

Instead of speeding up the uncompleted flood mitigation projects, all we can see from the news nowadays is the authorities and government agencies saying that they are ready to face the floods instead of preventing them.

Under the 10th Malaysia Plan, the Government was to spend RM5bil on flood mitigation programmes nationwide. As such, allocations for flood mitigation projects should not be an issue.

However, specific timelines or dates for completion were missing, which caused 20 flood mitigation projects to be not fully completed to date.

Moreover, flash floods are getting more frequent in major cities like Kuala Lumpur. As the monsoon season is approaching, more disastrous

inundation can be expected in flood-prone areas.

Records indicate that flooding has been the most significant climatic event in the country over the last century, affecting the greatest number of people. There has been an increasing deaths and monetary losses due to floods over the past decade.

The cost of aid in Johor for the 2007 floods alone was RM1.5bil while other costs such as loss of homes, businesses, clean-up and medical care have yet to be added up.

With the onset of climate change – which some say is now irreversible – more floods are expected and so will the number of flood refugees.

We need a holistic integrated flood management system for the country. Asking the rakyat to face the floods instead of preventing them just does not make sense as we aspire to become a high income nation by 2020.

Specific timelines and deadlines for projects must be complied with to safeguard the rakyat from floods.

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