

# DID: Great floods unlikely to recur

**NIGHTMARE:** The recent wet spell that caused flash floods in some parts of Kuala Lumpur have invoked memories of the Great Floods of 1971 when the city became like a sea. Michael Murty, Predeep Nambiar and S.K. Thanusha Devi find out if there is a likelihood of the disaster recurring

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A news clip of the 'Straits Times' dated Jan 6, 1971, showing the submerged downtown area of Kuala Lumpur.

**T**HE Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) has assured the public that the recurrence of the Great Floods of 1971, is "highly unlikely" as the chances of it happening again is one in a hundred years.

It said the volume of water in 1971 reached 650 cumecs (cubic metre per second), an amount that could not be dealt with at that time.

Today, the Smart tunnel can channel 300 cumecs of water and the Batu Jinjang pond another 300 cumecs, making it highly unlikely that the 1971 disaster would recur.

The RM1.9 billion Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (Smart) functions to divert floodwaters from the Sungai Klang catchment area while the Batu Jinjang pond, which cost RM528 million, has flood diversion channels that begin from Sungai Gombak to Sungai Batu, and from Sungai Keroh to

Sungai Jinjang.

DID water resources management and hydrology division director Hanapi Mohamad Noor said the measures implemented to solve the flood problem had worked.

However, he pointed out that issues, such as clogged drains had proved to be a hindrance.

"Water is unable to flow to rivers if drains are clogged. As drains are small in size, they can overflow much easier, leading to floods."

Hanapi said litterbugs should be educated on the effects of their irresponsible action.

"Our monsoon drains are capable of handling large amounts of water

if they are free of rubbish."

He also said Sungai Bunus had partly contributed to the flood problem here as it could only handle 50 cumecs of water.

"Water is unable to flow into rivers if **drains are clogged**. As drains are small in size, they can overflow much easier, leading to floods."

**Hanapi Mohamad Noor**  
DID division director

Following the two-hour downpour on Tuesday, the volume of water in the river reached 200 cumecs, causing it to burst its banks.

The incident caused flash floods along Jalan Tun Razak and other major roads in Kuala Lumpur.

Hanapi explained that two retention ponds in Air Panas and Setapak Jaya, worth

RM20 million, would be built to slow down the flow of water into Sungai Bunus.