

Nature's wrath

It has been a tumultuous year for Kajang and Hulu Langat residents as they experience the worst flash floods and a fatal landslide. ➤3



Hope springs eternal

Flash floods in Kajang, landslide in Hulu Langat and a long crawl in Seri Kembangan. As 2011 winds down, the residents of these three areas are hoping for a better year, hopefully an end to tragedy and inconvenience.



Sinking feeling: A view of the river running through Kajang town which overflowed causing the flash floods.

Caught off-guard

Kajang flood and landslide in Hulu Langat make headlines

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WITH a landslide tragedy in May and a flash flood early December, Mother Nature did not seem to favour the people in Kajang and Hulu Langat.

On Dec 2, Kajang residents were hit by a three-hour downpour that transformed the *satay* town into a sea, resulting in damage to shop-houses, homes, and vehicles.

The people were caught off guard when the water started rising around mid-afternoon and some motorists were stranded in their vehicles.

Sungai Jelok overflowed onto the main road of Kajang town and the vehicles were trapped due to the quick rise in water level.

By 4pm, the Plaza Metro commercial complex's — a favourite shopping spot for residents of Kajang — basement carpark was flooded up to 1.5m.

The other affected areas were Semenyih town, near the road to Bangi Lama, Kajang wet market,

The orphanage was built 17 years ago without a CF on an agricultural land. The council was formed only in 1997.

— DATUK HASSAN NAWAWI

Jalan Jeluk, Sungai Kantan, Jalan Semenyih and Jalan Kelapa.

When contacted, the council said the cause of the flash flood, said to be the worst since 1971, was caused by "extraordinary rain fall".

Reports by the council stated that the average rainfall recorded (during the flood) was 111mm compared to the normal 40mm.

The total losses suffered by property owners in Kajang town were estimated at RM2,477,200.

Rain and landslide are a bad mix, as exemplified by the Hulu Langat landslide that claimed the lives of 16 people on May 21.

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The landslide, which smashed into the Madrasah Al-Taqwa Orphanage in 14th Mile, Hulu Langat, near Kajang, occurred at about 2.30pm following overnight rain.

The building was found to have no certificate of fitness (CF).

While council president Datuk Hassan Nawawi Abdul Rahman admitted that the council was aware of the orphanage's existence, he said the building was not situated within its "service area".

"The orphanage was built 17 years ago on agricultural land without a CF.

"The council, which was formed only in 1997, did not exist at that time.

"Two years ago, this area (Lembah Semunggis) was included as part of the municipality. However, this is not part of our service area," he said.

Following the Hulu Langat landslide tragedy, the council had begun making its rounds to high-risk areas near slopes with a gradient of more than 25 degrees to urge owners of



Devastating: The Hulu Langat landslide the Al-Taqwa orphanage claimed 16 lives.

buildings without a CF to submit building plans.

"It will take us two weeks to conduct our checks and we will give them three months to apply for a CF. If they still fail to do so, then they will have to bear the consequences if there happen to be any calamities," Hassan had said.

He also said the council would set up a four-member slope unit, headed by a geo-technical engineer.

Aside from the two major disasters, there were several other problems in Kajang such as the sunken

road in Taman Bukit Mewah, Kajang — a housing estate on a hill. Residents are also urging the authorities to check on the strength of the slope in Taman Bukit Permai.

Taman Bukit Permai resident Zaharah Md Salleh once said: "Do we need to wait till someone dies like in the recent Hulu Langat landslide before action is taken?"

Those living in high-risk areas have a New Year's wish — that the relevant authorities take appropriate action before it is too late.