

FLOODS

Can you hear our pleas?

THE letter from Ken Nee "Act before a disaster occurs" (NST, Dec 30) about never-ending floods raised some salient points, which the authorities should study and promptly act on.

From shopkeepers and office workers to pedestrians and motorists, all of us have put up with the flooding problem for decades.

It is true that many canals, ditches and drains in cities, villages and the countryside are often blocked by construction debris, rubbish and industrial waste. No one bothers to clear them before floods affect the areas.

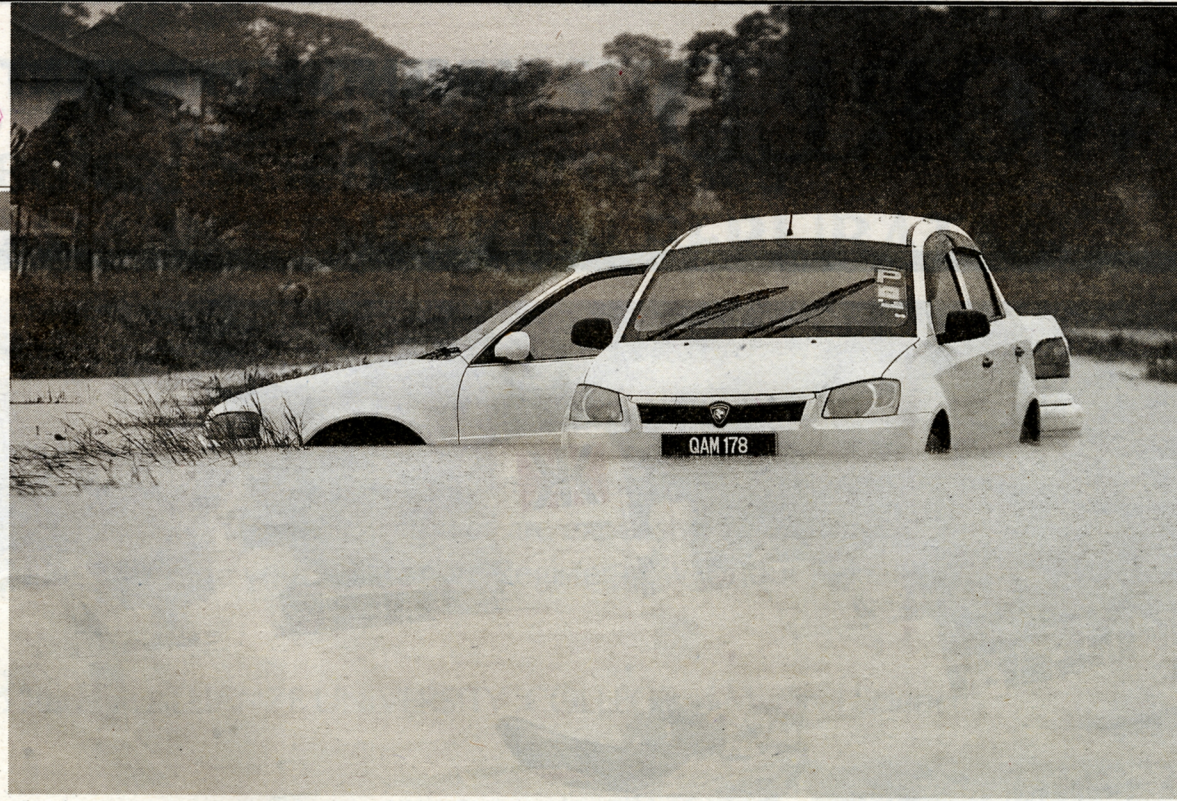
Three factors come to mind: inspection, clearance and enforce-

ment. None of these steps is taken even in the dry season.

Residents and commuters often ask why the country's longest river — Rajang — has never been dredged, widened, reinforced or cleaned. Settlers and builders on both sides of the river use it as a dumping ground. The environmental aspect is not considered at all.

Rajang is an important transport route for students, villagers and traders. Flooding happens when the tide rises or when there is a downpour. For more than 60 years, users and residents have had to bear the inconvenience, hazards and losses.

We cannot blame the monsoon period, flash floods, downpours



*Floods exact an **economic toll** on the country. Pic by Mohd Radzi Bujang*

and unexpected natural disasters for the flooding situation, because we have not taken measures to prevent or alleviate floods in the first place.

More often than not, we know when the downpours will happen, but nothing is done to deal with floods almost all over the country.

In Kuala Lumpur, areas like Jalan Tun Razak and Bukit Bintang are

usually affected by floods. This is a yearly occurrence and yet no steps are adopted to solve the problem. It is as if we are waiting for it to happen and bear with it. Certainly this neither denotes foresight nor common sense.

The question is not what we are going to do about it. It is why we have not dealt with the issue. This is not an urban, district or rural

scourge; it is a national issue.

What are we waiting for? No one wants a disastrous situation to happen and compile the death toll, as had occurred in the Philippines and Thailand.

Shop owners, road users and residents are screaming: do something. Are the authorities listening?

Jenny Tan, Rawang, Selangor