

FLOODS

Take steps to find effective long-term solutions

LAST Friday, many Klang residents woke up to what was deemed the worst flooding episode in its history. It led to demonstrations at housing developers' offices and anger directed at the Klang Municipal Council for a better drainage system and rubbish collection services.

The Monday morning flash floods in Kuala Lumpur caused a sense of utter hopelessness to an already hopeless traffic condition on many highways leading to the city.

The whole of Klang and the Klang Valley faces serious flood problems. We do not see any long-term plan to curb flash floods in various parts in the country, for example in states like Kedah, Kelantan, Sabah and Sarawak, towns and cities like Muar, Kota Tinggi, Kuala Lumpur and other parts of the Klang Valley.

In smaller countries like Singapore, the development of drainage infrastructure in the last 30 years has reduced flood-prone areas from 3,200ha in the 1970s to 124ha in 2008. The Public Utilities Board will reduce it to less than 66ha through the development and improvement of drainage infrastruc-



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ture in Singapore, the completion of the Marina Barrage, and other flood alleviation projects.

Our National Climate Change Policy does not mention any flood mitigation or adaptation-related policies, what more on strategy. We need environmentally sustainable urbanisation policies and strategies.

How many are flood-prone or prone to flooding because of changes to weather patterns? Do we know how many, where and what kind of structural measures are needed to control floods? What about the non-structural measures? Do we have adequate and timely flood forecasting and warning systems in areas known to be flood-prone?

On a broader scale, what was the outcome of the Natural Water Resources Study? Which river basins need to be managed for water resources and flood-mitigation measures?

Do we have a nationwide network of hydrological and flood data collection stations? Do we have agencies collecting important information on the impact of floods socially, economically and environmentally?

Does each state have specific flood mitigation goals like Singapore?

More than RM1 billion was spent on government aid alone during the Johor disaster in 2006. This does not include loss of properties and business.

We do not need multibillion projects while floods wash away billions more. We need investment in and maintenance of an effective flood-mitigation infrastructure — now.

Clogged monsoon drains in urban areas like Klang and Kuala Lumpur are common.

Mattresses, chairs, car bumpers and tyres are found in monsoon drains and rivers. People who dump rubbish have a serious attitude problem.

Industry should work on less packaging requirements for consumer products and practice a take-back policy or comply with the polluters-pay principle.

Those who practise recycling should be rewarded while awareness and education activities are undertaken to ensure environmentally sustainable waste management among commercial and domestic waste generators.

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