

Smarting from litterbugs' bad habits

DUMPING GROUND: Five tonnes of rubbish are collected daily at the Smart's holding pond in Kampung Berembang, Jalan Ampang

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THE Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel's (Smart) holding pond in Kampung Berembang, Jalan Ampang, has become a dumping ground, because of the bad habits of city folk.

Smart control centre director Nor Hisham Mohd Ghazali said five tonnes of rubbish were collected daily at the rubbish trap of the holding pond.

He said rubbish found in the trap installed to filter water flowing into the pond included sofas, clothes, animal carcasses and the occasional refrigerator.

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A worker clearing rubbish at the garbage trap. Pic courtesy of Smart Control Centre.

Awareness campaigns vital

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The rubbish had been dumped in to the Klang and Ampang rivers and found their way into the trap during a downpour when the flood mitigation system was activated.

"The garbage is taken out by the automated rubbish trap, instead of a normal excavator. The filter is sometimes overwhelmed by garbage, which means a greater cleaning cost after the water level subsides. We spend about RM12,000 per month on the cleaning process, on top of the average RM4 million maintenance cost per year.

"We also find damage in the piping. One of the ways to deal with this, apart from physically removing the rubbish, is to raise awareness among the public that they should not throw things into the river because that's where the rubbish comes from."

He added that community programmes were being carried out to increase awareness, including programmes for schoolchildren which is part of the Drainage and Irrigation Department's "Sungai Ku Hidupku" (My River, My Life) campaign.

Earlier, his deputy Zainab Hashim stressed that the main function of Smart was to curb flash floods in the city centre, namely, Masjid Jamek



*The rubbish had been **dumped into the Klang and Ampang rivers** and had found their way into the trap during a downpour.*

and Jalan Tun Perak, when Sungai Klang and Sungai Ampang overflowed.

"Apart from the holding and attenuation (retention) ponds, the other components of the Smart system are traffic lanes, flood diversion tunnel and the Flood Detection System installed at 28 stations.

"Smart has four modes of operation — mode 1 for normal weather with rainfall of less than 70 cubic meter (per second), mode 2 for rainfall with water flow of between 70

and 150 cubic metres. During the first two modes, lanes in the tunnel are open to traffic. The excess water from the rainfall is retained at the lowest level of the tunnel.

"Mode 3 is when there is heavy rain with more than 150 cubic metres of water. Traffic is closed for several hours. The system changes to mode 4 when the volume of water is consistent for more than an hour. After vehicles cleared from the tunnel, the tunnel is closed, the water will fill the whole tunnel," she said.