



Flooded by garbage

Clogged up

Cleared rubbish lying by the side of Sungai Nyior in Seberang Jaya, Penang. A downpour will only wash it all back into the river. — MUSTAFA AHMAD / The Star

Drains clogged with rubbish are among the main reasons for floods throughout the country. RM828mil is being spent on flood mitigation projects and clearing clogged drains has become an uphill battle for local councils. And it all boils down to irresponsible people who throw garbage into drains and waterways. >See Page 4 for reports

Stop this filthy habit!

Public urged to refrain from throwing rubbish into drains and rivers

KUALA LUMPUR: Even with a RM828mil allocation this year for flood mitigation projects, local authorities are fighting against time to clear clogged drains and prevent flash floods during the current rainy season.

However, there is a better, cheaper and more obvious solution – stop people from throwing rubbish wantonly.

According to Drainage and Irrigation Department's senior director Datuk Zainor Rahim Ibrahim, public awareness and civic consciousness in maintaining clean drains were low.

"The garbage snagged on log booms that are used to trap debris in the rivers prove that people are simply discarding things into drains, which then flow into rivers,"

he said.

He said a DID study pointed to Kajang, Sungai Buloh, Klang, Seri Kembangan and Sungai Besi as "hot spots" for flash floods.

"Clogged drains are one of the main causes for floods in these places," he said.

Zainor said that although drains were designed and built to prevent flooding, deluges could still occur if rainfall exceeded the design's limit.

The DID has taken several steps to prevent floods, including the construction of new water retention ponds and upgrading existing ones.

"The department also helps local authorities by providing technical advice," Zainor said.

"But the operation and maintenance of urban drainage systems are

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– DATUK ZAINOR RAHIM IBRAHIM

under the control of the councils."

Zainor said there should be higher public awareness on the importance of maintaining clean drains.

He said all the public had to do was to refrain from throwing waste into drains, waterways and lakes, adding that communities could also hold

gotong-royong sessions to clean up the drains in their neighbourhoods.

"Recycling of waste should also be done voluntarily to reduce waste at landfills," said Zainor.

"As for housing developers, they should implement the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan (ESCP) to reduce clogging of drains and waterways from silt and sediment," he said.

Zainor said the DID had been working with non-governmental organisations to spread the word on keeping drains clean.

Among the NGOs active in this are the GAB Foundation, Global Environment Centre and Pemandu's River of Life project here.

"I hope more will join in the cause."