

# Residents' fear of floods comes true

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Photos by LOW LAY PHON

**O**FTEN city folk have wondered why the authorities take action and rectify mistakes only after a disaster has taken place. Worse still, government agencies do not seem to budge even when residents warn them of the potential dangers.

A recent example was when houses in Jalan Kooperasi Cuepacs 1 in Cheras were flooded in Wednesday's downpour.

The residents were hardly surprised as they predicted it would happen.

They have been highlighting the problem since 1999 and even after two disasters nothing is being done to solve their predicament.

Last week, the monsoon drain at the housing estates overflowed onto the roads and into the houses during the evening downpour.

Floodwaters were knee deep even inside five houses on the roads. They damaged cars, walls and furniture.

Parts of a drain, measuring about 3m in height, were half-filled with silt that flowed from project sites on a hill top about 500m away, said M. Kamaleswaran, 35.

"Worse still, there are bottlenecks along the drain that obstruct water flow," added the accountant.

Kamaleswaran said the Kajang Municipal Council had ordered the developer to widen the drain when the flood first occurred seven years ago.



Photographs provided by the residents show roads and house fronts in Jalan Kooperasi Cuepacs 1 inundated by the floodwaters.

They did. But when the developer's workers arrived at where some utility cables were laid, they did not remove them. Instead, they hid them in concrete slabs that now block half the drain.

The other bottleneck is at a location where the drain runs underneath a major road of the housing area.

Silt accumulating in the drain was cleared in 2000, before former

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to the area.

But, tractors carrying out the works then damaged the wall of a smaller drain and did not remove the debris until today. Subsequently, the clogging has made the situation worse.

"Only the older folk and children stay homes in the afternoon," said sales manager Anthony Johnson. "We are concerned about their

safety, especially during this rainy season," added the 36-year-old.

Another resident M. Rajendran said the authorities had given the developer funds to widen the drain. "But, the developer has taken the easy way out and has provided shoddy work," said the 44-year-old photographer.

"We hope something will be done before we are hit by the fourth wave."