

Flood woes remain 'unsolvable' in Selangor

→ From Page 14

For most of us, the sound of rain-drops on the roof promises a natural lullaby for a great sleep. For my father, it means a sleepless night; rain-drops could mean trouble as he keeps his ears open for the gushing sounds of rushing water in the dark.

The developers, in their sales talk, promised house buyers there would be no floods and that the ground would be raised. But when the flood tide rose, they were quick to lie low and wash their hands of the problem.

In times like these, you would wish there are developers that build modern versions of the traditional flood-proof Malay house that is elevated on stilts.

So "unsolvable" are the floods of Selangor that the candidates eyeing state assembly seats in the next general election are not expected to make promises that they can get rid of the floods.

Selangor's Pakatan Rakyat government has been unable to get a grip on flood controls in Shah Alam but yet has waded into a controversy by insisting on controlling Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas), the water supply corporation for the state.

As it is, the residents of the flood prone areas in Selangor are more concerned about staying dry than worrying about who would be delivering water to their homes.

You can deepen rivers, raise rivers' bunds, build huge drains and water retention ponds, install water pumps, but indiscriminate developments will never end the floods.

Developers should be held accountable and blacklisted if their projects damage the environment and cause floods, landslides, soil erosion and other harmful effects.

And, there are housing developers who run away from their problems. It has been reported that Selangor has the most number of abandoned private housing projects in the country.

Insurance companies, as usual, won't pay you a single sen and have the ready excuse that "it's a natural disaster" when flood waters damage your car or house. I feel like shouting "it's a man-made disaster. The developers cause it!"

What has happened to Taman TT-DI Jaya and Taman Mesra must not be allowed to become "water under the bridge". Let it serve as a warning to both developers and house buyers. Stay away from the rivers. Stay away from developers who build houses near them and on low lands.

→ Turn



A proper drainage system is vital in flood-prone areas.

When 'longkang' causes misery

FLOOD WOES: A desperate resident in Selangor resorts to building Dutch-like 'dykes' but in vain

IT defies nature and logic. You wake up one fine day to find your house flooded even though there's not a single drop of rain in your area.

That was what happened to the unfortunate people living in Taman Mesra, Shah Alam, recently. The rain pounded Kuala Lumpur and elsewhere, but not Shah Alam, and yet those in Taman Mesra and its bigger neighbourhood, Taman TTDI Jaya, were the ones who suffered.

The nightmare came from right under the home of my father, a resident of Taman Mesra.

Like some horror movie, the blackish foul water gushed out from the drainage hole in his bathroom, causing his kitchen floor to be under sev-

eral centimetres of filthy stinking water.

With the wisdom of Noah, my father, a retired government servant, who has lived through many floods in Shah Alam over the years, thought he was well prepared for such disasters.

Like the Dutch, he had built his own "dykes" at his front door and back door. But, yet, the invading floodwaters broke through his bathroom, rendering his flood defences useless. His neighbours didn't put up barriers and so suffered more as their whole houses were flooded.

This time, my father couldn't put his finger on the source of his woes. He saw no rain and could only suspect that a downpour elsewhere had caused the Sungai Damansara in Shah Alam to spill its contents into the drains that led to his bathroom.

You can forget about calling in your regular plumber with his spanner. Even the state waterworks or Department of Irrigation and Drainage guys couldn't put plug the problem as frustration runs deep in this most mis-

erable part of Selangor.

Residents in flood-prone areas better learn to respect and the *longkang*, which has the important role of diverting rain from their homes.

My father laments that he has to tolerate the dumping of garbage into the drains, and this has led to floodwaters being diverted from going to the retention ponds.

Over the years, the feeling, a sense of helplessness has descended on people living in Taman Mesra and Taman TTDI Jaya and Taman Damansara.

They have come higher and higher, as housing and developments went up after massive land reclamation projects. Badly planned industrial projects conspired with infrastructure, bad drainage traffic in the flood-prone areas worsen the situation.

Taman Mesra literally is a "garden of friendliness" but not habitable-friendly at all. It has become "Taman Sedih" to its residents.

→ Turn



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