

Eroding away

Residents want solution for Sungai Kayu Ara's erosion problem

By VINCENT TAN

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THE banks along Sungai Kayu Ara, particularly behind Jalan SS21/42A, are eroding and residents are worried about flash-floods occurring the next time there is a down-pour and the river overflows.

"Residents have been complaining to the Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) about this problem for the past 10 years but nothing was done until recently when the department promised to send a contractor to carry out remedial works last week.

"However, this also came to nothing as the contractor failed to show up," said Damansara Utama Residents and Owners Association president Rajes Patel.

He said residents found this out when they called the DID to check and were told that the previous contractor's services had been terminated and a new one appointed.

The residents were told the new contractor would come yesterday to rectify the problem.

"Once again, no one came," said Rajes.

The residents also said that during the recent rainy spell, water levels at the river had risen.

"Luckily, we are in the middle of a dry spell.

"Otherwise, we have to worry about floods," he said.

Damansara Utama assemblyman Yeo Bee Yin said besides Jalan SS21/42A, Kampung Cempaka, which was further downstream, was also at risk of flashfloods due to erosion problems at Damansara Utama.

"Currently, the short-term plans that residents discussed with DID involve dredging the

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river bed, which has become shallow due to silt.

"However, a long-term, holistic plan is needed to resolve the problem," said Yeo.

She said additional funding from the Federal Government would be necessary for this, adding that the Selangor DID only had a budget of RM50mil, allocated for maintenance of all the rivers in the state.

Residents M. Selvaraj and Phyllis Teh said the collapsed section previously had a gabion wall to check erosion, but it had since been washed away.

"In fact, a tree, that was uprooted when the banks collapsed seven years ago and fell into the river is still found stuck there.

"This says a lot about the lack of maintenance," said Teh.

A call to the state DID revealed that the new contractor had already received his letter of appointment and had been given approximately one month to repair the collapsed banks as well as dredge the river bed.