

Living in fear by the river bank in Penampang

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KOTA KINABALU: Life has been quite good for Justin Goruk the last few years, but on Sunday it all came crashing down when he lost part of his newly renovated family home to a landslide.

A section of his family home of 50 years, situated close to the Moyog River in Kg Pogunon, Penampang, collapsed when the river bank gave way following a week of heavy rain.

"Now I have to rebuild my house elsewhere. I have to start all over again," said the father of a six-year-old girl as he spoke about how the rear portion of his house was swept away by the current.

He said the house was built by his father and he had only recently renovated it.

"We have experienced some erosion problem before, but I never expected the river bank to just give way like that," said the self-employed man, who has since moved into his sister's house while trying to raise money to rebuild his house.

Justin was among the thousands of people in Penampang and other districts including Kota Belud and the city who were affected by a week-long downpour triggered by tail effects of Typhoon Vongfong since Oct 3 that claimed two lives and triggered over 20 landslips.

Recalling the incident, Justin said his family members were at the front porch when they heard a loud noise coming from the back.

"Before I knew it, the back part of my house had collapsed," he said.

"We were lucky that we were in the front portion of the house. Otherwise we could have been badly injured or even lost our lives," he said.

"Erosion has been a long-standing problem here as we are living by the river bank but this time is the worst," he said, adding that this was the second time his house was damaged due to the erosion.

He said many villagers nearby were also worried that their houses would be similarly affected by the erosion and were now trying to find a solution to the long-standing problem.



Total loss: The back portion of Justin's house was destroyed by a landslide in Kg Pogunon in Penampang.